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Example
MANAGING WORK-LIFE BALANCE OF WORKING MOTHERS

by

H.F. VAN ZYL

MINOR DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

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FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT

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Supervisor: PROF. C. NIEUWENHUIZEN

JANUARY 2013
ABSTRACT

Changes in the corporate landscape and an increase in female participation rates in corporate workforces necessitate a better understanding of female career paths and how organisations can accommodate them better.

The purpose of this study is to identify the most appropriate work-life balance benefits organisations can offer to female employees to assist them in achieving greater work-life balance. The study further aims to identify learning and development opportunities that females who have exited from their professions can follow to remain relevant and up to date in their fields.

Through the literature review the study examines the need for women in corporate workforces, and inspects reasons for the underrepresentation of women in workforces. It further investigates alternative career models female professionals often embark on in an attempt to gain more balance between family responsibilities and career demands and subsequently discusses the costs associated with losing female talent. It then explores how organisations can assist female employees by offering work-life balance benefits.

The study was conducted by using an online questionnaire and respondents were selected by employing a snowball sampling method.

In this study research found that the most appropriate work-life balance benefits are flexible working hours, on-site childcare facilities, parental leave, part-time work, mobile working and virtual or cyber working. Conversely, the most inappropriate work-life balance benefits are weekend work, shift work, overtime, temporary or casual work, term-only working and fixed term contracts.

It further found that employees who have exited from their professions can follow certain learning and development opportunities to assist them to remain relevant and up-to-date in their fields and assist them to return to full-time employment. The following
learning and development opportunities were listed as being most appropriate: Attending continuous professional development courses and workshops, reading and further studies, keeping in touch with colleagues to stay updated with new developments at the office and the organisation, attending seminars and doing ad hoc, private, part-time or consulting work.
DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

I, Henrike Fischer van Zyl, declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. Any assistance that I have received has been duly acknowledged in the dissertation. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Magister Commercii in Business Management at the University of Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or at any other university.

................................................................. .................................................................
(NAME) (DATE)
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To our Creator for giving me the courage, knowledge and talents to embrace this study.

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AFFIDAVID: MASTER'S STUDENTS

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves that I, Henrike Fischer Van Zyl

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Faculty of Management

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This affidavit confirms with the requirements of the JUSTICE OF THE PEACE AND COMMISSIONERS OF OATHS ACT 16 OF 1963 and the applicable Regulations published in the GG GNR 1258 of 21 July 1972: GN 903 of 10 July 1998; GN 109 of 2 February 2001 as amended.
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 The need for women in corporate workforces

“In many parts of the developed world, women now account for more than half of the college and university graduates and in many emerging economies gender gaps in higher education are closing dramatically. Women thus constitute a growing portion of the talent pool available to companies today. Over time, therefore, a nation’s competitiveness depends significantly on whether and how it utilises its female talent” (Schwab, 2010:5).

Internationally, organisations are in the process of recovering from the effects of the global economic crisis. Klaus Schwab (2010:5), the founder and executive chairman of the World Economic Forum, highlights the importance of increasing the presence of women in the workplace, especially in the aftermath of the global economic crisis and stresses the importance for organisations to direct their attention to one of the most critical resources of economic growth available to them – the skills and abilities of their female talent. Women not only make up more than half of the potential talent pool, they also contribute unique perspectives that are indispensable in a complex and modern business world.

Meier-Ewert (2010:5) confirms the importance of enhancing the presence of women in the workforce and states that investing in the economic empowerment of women would be smart economics resulting in a stimulant for sustainable economic development.

Research by Desvaux, Devillard and Sancier-Sultan (2010:6) reiterates that organisations with a strong presence of women in executive committees have a positive effect on organisations’ financial performance and competitiveness.
For this reason, increasing the presence of women in managerial positions could not only benefit organisations, but the global economy as well.

Therefore, in the modern business environment it makes good business sense to establish gender diversity as a major business imperative; it is no longer about “establishing quotas, nor is it about being politically correct” (Szoke, 2011:1). To embrace gender diversity in today’s business world essentially comprises the process of identifying and addressing those systematic barriers that hinder women from significantly contributing to organisations (Szoke, 2011:1).

Thus, as organisations globally recover from the economic crisis and employment opportunities and leadership positions become more readily available again, organisations should, as a strategic business priority, increase the number of women at management and more specifically at senior management and executive levels, to benefit from the unique advantages and skills women bring to organisations (Desvaux et al., 2010:6).

1.1.2 Women in the South African corporate workforce

“Women are one of Africa’s greatest assets. To many of us, this is self evident. But they are an asset too often taken for granted. This is not only unjust but deeply damaging for the continent’s prospects. For Africa’s political, social and economic health and progress depend above all upon the empowerment of her women” (Machel, 2009:1).

In South Africa it is also agreed that greater gender diversity at senior management levels would increasingly benefit the South African economy. According to the Chief Executive of The Nedbank Group, both public and private enterprises will benefit from increasing the number of women in senior management and executive positions, especially as a new business world is emerging (Brown 2011:1).
The Business Women’s Association of South Africa (BWASA), the largest and most prominent association of business women in South Africa and the voice of women in business, promotes greater gender diversity at senior management levels because they too believe it will benefit the South African economy. According to BWASA “women in leadership positions are a catalyst for change” (BWASA Census, 2010:9), and the empowerment of women in business is “a major step towards building a strong, economically viable country”, because, “at board level” women “can and do play a vital role in making South African business globally competitive” (BWASA Census, 2010:11).

BWASA launched their Women in Corporate Leadership Census in 2004. Their research aims to understand and track the role of women in business and to provide ongoing opportunities to advance the interests of women in business.

The 2011 BWASA Women in Leadership Census found that:

- 51.3 percent of the South African population is female, but they constitute only 45.1 percent of the South African workforce.
- In corporate South Africa women hold only 4.4 percent of chief executive/managing director positions, 5.3 percent of chairperson positions, 15.8 percent of all directorships, and 21.6 percent of executive management positions.
- In the South African Government Services the level of women employment is high at 56.3 percent. However, as women ascend the ranks, the numbers of women steadily decline with women holding only 35 percent of all senior management positions in the public sector.
- Globally South Africa compares favourably, with a higher percentage of women holding director (15.8 percent) and executive manager positions (21.6 percent) compared to international counterparts such as Australia, Canada, United States, New Zealand and the United Kingdom.
These results show that although leadership positions are increasingly being filled by women, the change is slow and women in top corporate positions remain a significant minority. It should therefore be asked why females, globally and nationally are so inadequately represented at management and more specifically senior management levels. It seems that finding, appointing and retaining women for leadership positions remain challenging (BWASA Census, 2011:9).

1.1.3 Reasons for the underrepresentation of women in the workforce
Oakley (2000:321) examined the reasons why women have not been able to ascend the corporate ranks as successfully as their male counterparts, and found the following contributing factors:

- Women often lack the necessary line experience especially in operations, manufacturing and marketing areas.
- The career opportunities available to women are inadequate.
- Gender differences, especially in terms of communication and socialisation, and gender based stereotypes could negatively affect women’s corporate advancement prospects.
- Female leadership styles and the traditional leadership styles expected at the top of organisations frequently mismatch and could also negatively impact on women’s career advancement opportunities.
- The pool of suitably qualified women for senior management positions is comparatively small compared to the pool of graduates who entered the workforce, since a large number of female graduates move into less demanding careers instead of climbing the corporate ladder.

Booysen (2011:1) found that organisations in many instances are not willing to appoint working mothers, largely because of the multifaceted roles they have to fulfil and the presumption that this would have a negative effect on their work. According to a Regus Survey (2011:1), globally only 36 percent and in South Africa only 31 percent of all interviewed organisations indicated that they would appoint mothers. Organisations’ major concerns and perceptions about appointing working mothers were the following:
Working mothers are not as dedicated or as focussed as other workers.

Working mothers are not as flexible to work overtime, after hours and weekends as other workers.

Working mothers can take maternity leave.

Mothers’ skills could be out of date if they had not been working for a period and attempted to re-enter the corporate workforce.

The ever-increasing presence of women in the corporate workforce, highlights the deep disconnect between the needs of female workers and the traditional career model which is characterised by full-time, long-term employment with salary and promotion measuring success. This traditional model disadvantages female professionals, particularly during their mid-career stage when many need to find balance between work and family life, and is also a major cause for the underrepresentation of women in the corporate workforce (Cabrera, 2008:187).

A number of studies have explored the ‘female brain drain’ phenomenon, and the work of Mainiero and Sullivan is of particular relevance to this study. According to Mainiero and Sullivan (2005:106), female professionals face three different career issues at the various stages of their careers. In their early careers, challenge or the need to do stimulating work, learn and grow, tends to dominate their career expectations. During the mid-career stage, family responsibilities are often at the forefront and force women to seek balance between work and family life. Finally, authenticity or the need to be true to oneself predominate female professionals’ decisions during their late career stage (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005:106).

Female professionals are likely to make career choices based on the suitability for each stage of their life. Furthermore, women approach their careers in a relational manner and their career decisions are “normally part of a larger and intricate web of interconnected issues, people and aspects that have to come together in a delicately balanced package” (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005:111).
This study focuses specifically on women in their mid-career stage. This period, for numerous career women, is often associated with stress and conflict due to the delicate balancing act that is necessary to balance both work and family responsibilities and is frequently associated with:

- Women who continue to work full-time after they have had children, but, due to the dual roles of caregiver and employee they have to fulfil, are often not totally engaged with their work (Anderson & Kelliher, 2009:14).
- Women who voluntarily off-ramp or exit the corporate environment to pursue an alternative career that will offer them a more balanced life (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2006:238).
- Women who exit the workforce completely to become stay-at-home moms.

Females bring several unique aspects to organisations that substantially contribute to organisations’ performance and public image. Therefore, organisations should be cautious not to lose their valuable female talent and strive to prevent the female brain drain of women in their mid-career phase who ‘off-ramp’ out of their professional careers to create more balanced alternative careers (Cabrera, 2008:187).

Large amounts of time and money are usually invested in the training and development of female employees, and organisations cannot afford to lose these skilled and talented women (Grobler & de Bruyn, 2010:64).

As females exit organisations, the pool of skilled and talented female employees who potentially could fill senior manager positions shrinks, thus reducing the number of potential role models for younger female employees. The lack of female role models and mentors could in turn reduce the attractiveness of organisations to potential female employees (Clarke, 2011:498).
Twenty-first century perceptions of when and how work should be done and advances in the technologies to do the work, enable women who strive to balance family life and career demands, to increase their flexibility and contribute to a more balanced lifestyle (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2006:238).

According to Ten Brummelhuis and Van der Lippe (2010:174) and Sullivan and Mainiero (2007:57), organisations which notice the importance of assisting female employees in gaining greater work-life balance are introducing work-life balance benefits or alternative work arrangement options designed to give female workers more flexibility in scheduling their work time in a way that best suits their situations. A large portion of career women are therefore actively pursuing alternative work arrangements such as part-time work, telecommuting and flexitime options (Enache, Sallan, Simo & Fernandez, 2011:234).

However some women may still decide to off-ramp out of their corporate careers to follow an alternative career for a period of time due to child-raising responsibilities, regardless of the presence or absence of work-life balance benefits. When their children are old enough they might decide to on-ramp back into their corporate careers. But, due to technological advances and an ever increasing body of professional knowledge, women are lagging behind when re-entering or ‘on-ramping’ back into their corporate careers (Regus Survey, 2011:1). This often leaves female professionals despondent about their future career prospects and frequently leads to female professionals rather opting-out of their professional careers.

To overcome this problem, organisations should be aware of appropriate learning and development opportunities they can make available to female employees who decide to off-ramp. These learning and development opportunities should be designed to keep them relevant in their fields, thus enabling them to on-ramp at a more acceptable level. Individuals who consider re-entering or on-ramping back into the corporate workforce when their children are older and more independent,
should take pro-active actions to remain relevant in their fields by utilising the available learning and development opportunities.

Thus, female professionals with young children often find it difficult to balance work and family life during the period in which their children are still young. In an attempt to find balance, they frequently off-ramp out of their careers to craft alternative careers, exhausting the female talent pool of organisations from which future female leaders should be drawn. Organisations that offer work-life balance benefits or alternative work arrangements, improve their attractiveness to potential future employees and are likely to have highly talented females interested in working for them (Anderson & Kelliher, 2009:13).

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT
Female professionals find it difficult to balance family responsibilities and career demands, especially when their children are still young and dependent and often decide to “off-ramp” out of full-time employment to tend to their children.

But technological advances and an ever increasing body of professional knowledge results in women lagging behind when re-entering or on-ramping back into their professional careers (Regus Survey, 2011:1) This often leaves female professionals despondent about their future career prospects and frequently leads the female professionals rather opting-out of their professional careers, leaving organisations drained of their female talent.

Organisations cannot afford to lose their valuable female talent. It will be detrimental to their performance and public image, the large amounts of time, money and resources invested in their training and development will be lost, and the pool of skilled and talented female employees from which future leaders should be developed, will shrink, leaving the organisation deprived of female role models and mentors.
Organisations are therefore challenged to firstly find the most appropriate work-life balance benefits to offer employees to prevent them from leaving organisations in search of increased balance. Secondly, they should make available learning and development opportunities that female professionals can follow during a period of being off-ramped to enhance their re-entering ability.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The primary objective of this study is to:

- Identify appropriate work-life balance arrangements that organisations can offer to employees who strive to balance family responsibilities and career demands more successfully, which would prevent them from opting-out.

The secondary objectives of the study are to:

- Identify appropriate learning and development opportunities that organisations can make available to employees who have off-ramped, to keep them relevant in their fields and therefore to equip and enable them to on-ramp at a more acceptable level.
- Identify pro-active actions that female professionals can follow during a period of being off-ramped to enhance their re-entering ability.

1.4 BRIEF OUTLINE OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.4.1 Population

The relevant population for this study is all female professionals who strive to balance family responsibilities and work demands. They should ideally have young dependent children. However, female professionals who have older children but who can still relate to this problem could also participate. Employment status can be any of the following: Working full-time, working part-time, working informally or not working.
1.4.2 Sample
Female professionals from the described population will be invited to participate using various sampling methods. All respondents who complete the online survey and who qualify as members of the relevant population will constitute the sample.

1.4.3 Sampling methodology
Mixed sampling methods will be used to reach the desired population to ask individuals to participate.

The researcher will utilise a snowball sampling method to distribute the questionnaires to friends and family who fall into the prescribed population and also ask these members to further distribute the questionnaire to their friends and family who also fall into the prescribed population.

The researcher will also utilise a haphazard sampling method by asking the owners of various baby development franchises, (Baby Gym, Aqua Tots, Kindermusik, Pienkvoet Pret, Moms and Babes, Moms and Tots, and others) crèches and nursery schools to distribute the questionnaire to their clients, and finally post the questionnaire on selected online parent support groups’ websites or Facebook pages (Baba en Kleuter, Baby and Toddler, and Your Pregnancy).

1.4.4 Research instruments
An online questionnaire will be the primary research instrument, containing four categories of questions namely: qualifying questions, biographic information, information about career prior to having children, and information about career subsequent to having children.

1.4.5 Data collection
Data will be collected electronically.
1.4.6 Data analysis
Data will be analysed by using descriptive analysis. Calculation of averages, frequency distributions, percentage distributions, tabulation and cross-tabulation will be used to summarise basic data from the respondents.

Following the descriptive analysis process, inferential statistics will be performed to draw conclusions about the entire population by using information gained from the sample.

The researcher has certain ideas or beliefs about the population, and information gained from the sample will be used to test these ideas or beliefs.

The following statistical techniques will be used to compare groups: Chi-square test for independence, the $p$-value of statistical significance, the Kappa measure of agreement, and the Marginal homogeneity test.

Content analysis will be used to analyse responses to open-ended questions.

1.4.7 Validity and reliability
Several measures of validity and reliability will be incorporated into the research project to ensure that the questionnaire measures what it is suppose to measure and to further guarantee that the measurements are stable and consistent.

1.4.8 Ethical considerations
Research participants will be treated with the honesty and respect they deserve. Respondents are fully informed about all aspects of the research and care will be taken to assure that their right to privacy will be maintained.
1.5 OUTLINE OF THE REMAINING CHAPTERS
The remaining chapters will address the following aspects as briefly next. Chapter Two is dedicated to a thorough literature review of the topic, followed by a detailed description of the research methodology used for the study described in Chapter Three. Chapter Four contains the analysis of the results. Finally, in Chapter Five a conclusion will be drawn.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

“The employment landscape is undergoing rapid changes and factors such as globalisation, technological advances, demographic shifts and the emergence of new occupations have vital implications for career management” (Wickramasinghe & Jayaweera, 2011:914). The most significant source of competitive advantage in the modern knowledge economy is human talent (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2002:34). Because of this unique source of competitive advantage, attracting and retaining human talent becomes a pivotal strategic concern for organisations (Cabrera, 2008:187). When considering that the first decade of the twenty-first century will see more than 21 million baby-boomers retire, and that a considerable shortage of new entrants into the labour force exists to fill their positions (Hewlett & Luce, 2006:51), it is apparent that the competition for talent will become increasingly fiercer (Frank, Finnegan & Taylor, 2004:13).

The past three decades have witnessed unmatched changes taking place in the composition of workforces globally with women’s participation in the labour force rising steadily (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011:8). The International Labour Organisation reported that “more women work today than ever before” (Cross & Linehan, 2009:246). Female participation rates in the global workforce have grown substantially (Grady & McCarthy, 2008:599) from 43 percent in 1970 to 59 percent in 2004 (Cabrera, 2008:187) and nearly 60 percent in 2010 (Mather, 2007:1).

A report by McKinsey and Co (2007:3) found that organisations that have a strong representation of women at board and top management levels, have a stronger organisational performance than organisations without such a dynamic
representation of women at similar levels. Women exhibit distinctive female characteristics that enable them to be successful managers in a uniquely feminine way (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011:12).

Ironically, as the competition for talent increases, organisations continue to fail in their efforts to retain female talent (Cabrera, 2008:187). Women and men enter the workforce at a similar rate, but as they ascend the corporate ladder their representation becomes increasingly unequal. Women are awarded more than half of all graduate degrees, but the majority of CEOs of Fortune 500 companies remain men (Hewlett & Luce, 2006:51). In 2008 and 2009, women held 15.2 percent of board seats at Fortune 500 companies (Soares, Carter & Combopia, 2009). This number is slowly increasing with the number of women who held board seats at Fortune 500 companies increasing to 16.1 percent in 2011 (Soares, Cobb, Lebow, Winsten, Wojnas & Regis, 2011).

Sullivan and Mainiero (2008:47) suggest that organisations which have a better understanding of women’s careers can make meaningful changes and thus retain female talent more successfully.

2.2 IMPORTANCE OF FEMALES IN BUSINESS

2.2.1 Benefits of women in senior management positions

In 2011 twelve of the Fortune 500 companies were run by women CEOs (Fortune Magazine, 2011a), of which the following four were in the top 50 companies: (Fortune Magazine, 2011b):

- Patricia A Woertz, CEO of Archer Daniels Midland placed 39th
- Angela F Braly, CEO of Wellpoint placed 42nd
- Indra K Nooyi, CEO of PepsiCo placed 43rd
- Irene B Rosenfeld, CEO of Craft Foods placed 49th, who was also elected as the most powerful woman in business in 2011.
The benefits of having women in senior management positions have been well documented. Clarke (2011:498) offers the following reasons for increasing female participation rates in senior management levels:

- Organisations will gain the opportunity to select successors from a wider talent pool, thus securing the best people to fill senior management positions.
- Females in leadership positions could further act as role models for younger women in the workplace and also make organisations more attractive to potential female employees.
- Organisations that have a strong female representation at top management and board levels have a better organisational performance record than organisations without female representation at the top (Brady, Isaacs, Reeves, Burroway & Reynolds, 2011:85).
- Organisations with more women in senior management positions are 18-69 percent more profitable than organisations with an average amount of women in senior management positions in the same industries (Wolfe, 2009:1) and greater gender diversity results in higher than average stock performance (McKinsey & Co, 2007:3).
- Women in management are more cautious to take risks than their male counterparts (Gold, Hunton & Gomaa, 2009:7).
- Generally, women were found to be more ethical than men (Bilic & Sustic, 2011:200).
- The presence of women on board of directors and audit committees brings about favourable outcomes in corporate monitoring, thus leading to better financial reporting quality (Thiruvadi & Huang, 2011:484).
- Female managers also bring a unique ‘gender edge’ that can lead to an increase in sales as they give different perspectives and investor confidence (Constant, 2006:465).

Following the benefits of having women in senior management positions, it further becomes important to establish which specific characteristics of females contribute to the positive outcomes they have on business.
2.2.2 How unique female characteristics contribute to organisational success

Parente, Stephan and Brown (2012:5) categorise managerial skills into technical (those skills that are specific to a particular field), human (skills required in dealing with human interpersonal matters) and conceptual skills (the ability to analyse, diagnose and integrate), and further divide managerial skills into “hard” and “soft” skills. The traditional management skills such as managing, analysing, diagnosing, critical thinking, problem solving, integration, processes, procedures and techniques are generally referred to as hard skills (Azim, Gale, Lawlor-Wright, Kirkham, Khan & Alam, 2010:388). Conversely, skills associated with human issues such as communication, motivation, influencing others, providing meaningful feedback, conflict resolution, understanding human behaviour, coaching and mentoring subordinates, developing effective work teams, facilitating the transfer of information and knowledge, negotiation, learning and development, professionalism and ethics are labelled as soft skills (Parente et al., 2012:7; Azim et al., 2010:392).

Schein (1973:96) found men to predominantly portray hard skills in their management styles and these skills are also the skills traditionally associated with successful managers. Females are generally considered to possess feminine or soft skills that are not perceived to be conducive to managerial roles (Geddes, 2001:589).

However, the business of any organisation depends on the ability of its human resources to successfully work together to accomplish its objectives and it is the role of the manager to orchestrate this (Azim et al., 2010:393). As the number of women in the workplace and in managerial positions progressively increases their soft feminine or human skills are magnified as vitally important to their success in management, and also to the performance of organisations (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011:12).
2.2.2.1 Female personality traits

One view is that women exhibit feminine personality traits such as being affectionate, warm and emotional (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011:12). Historically, masculine characteristics such as self-confidence, aggressiveness, objectivity and leadership, have been associated with successful managers (Geddes, 2001:589). The recently growing number of women in the workplace and their positive impact on business, especially their emotional availability and ability to establish trust relationships with colleagues (Gutián, 2009:520), have highlighted the importance of feminine characteristics for their success in management (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011:12).

2.2.2.2 Female leadership style

The new generation of female managers have, according to Kooskora and Bekker (2007:71), introduced a leadership style that can best be described as:

- a leadership style that is open and inclusive
- it centres around consensus-building
- it also encourages participation
- it is a caring leadership style

The leadership style that female managers employ can also be described as a transformational leadership style. This means that female managers who employ this type of leadership style share authority and information with co-workers, they actively interact with employees, and encourage involvement in decision making processes. They also respect employees’ self-value and finally encourage employees to be engaged in their jobs (Chao, 2011:763).

By employing a transformational leadership style, female managers are able to achieve organisational goals effectively by bringing collaborative and participative skills to the workplace (Kooskora & Bekker, 2007:73), while at the same time making a positive impact on individuals and groups by being encouraging and caring (Chao, 2011:763).
2.2.2.3 Work-family enrichment

A further aspect that makes women valuable in business is positive spill over or work-family-enrichment. This is the result of experiences in one role improving the quality of life in another (McNall, Masuda & Nicklin, 2010:62). This approach emphasises that family life can enrich a woman’s professional role because of the resources and skills gained as a mother, wife, homemaker and caregiver (Ten Brummelhuis & Van der Lippe, 2010:174).

The following three mechanisms can make family life beneficial to work:

- Women can gain vital energy and fulfilment from their family lives and subsequently re-invest it in their work. Guitián (2009:520) explains that female employees who have to be sensitive to the emotional needs of family members find it easier to be emotionally available and supportive to co-workers. He further explains that working mothers who continuously have to watch their children learn and grow are more patient with co-workers and allow them to develop in their own unique ways.

- Family life can serve as a basis from which women can develop skills and gain knowledge and experience to enrich their work (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006:82). Managing a household’s administrative, financial and interpersonal requirements results in the acquiring of resources that can be applied to one’s work and possibly enhance the quality thereof (Guitián, 2009:520).

- Women who fulfil multiple roles, who attend a variety of events and children’s extramural activities, inevitably meet a diverse selection of other women in a similar position, thus extending their social networks, which could also benefit their careers (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006:83).

2.3 FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN ORGANISATIONS’ MANAGEMENT TEAMS

2.3.1 Statistics of females in management positions

When considering the statistics regarding women in senior managerial positions, it becomes evident that globally and in South Africa women’s progression into managerial positions is less successful than men’s (BWASA Census, 2011):
51.3 Percent of the South African population is female, but they constitute only 45.1 percent of the South African workforce.

In Corporate South Africa women hold only:

- 4.4 percent of Chief Executive/Managing Director Positions
- 5.3 percent of Chairperson Positions
- 15.8 percent of all Directorships

Globally, South Africa compares favourably with a higher percentage of women holding Director and Executive Manager Positions compared to international counterparts such as Australia, Canada, United States, New Zealand and the United Kingdom (BWASA Census, 2011). Table 2.1 reflects the statistics of women in Director and Executive Manager Positions in South Africa and other countries.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Director Positions</th>
<th>Executive Manager Positions</th>
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<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>15.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
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Table 2.1 Director and Senior Manager Positions South Africa compared to global trends.

Source: Adapted from BWASA Census (2011)

2.3.2 Women’s under representation at senior management levels

The ‘leaky pipeline’ (Lewis & Humbert, 2010:239) and the ‘opt-out revolution’ according to the New York Times Magazine are terms used to describe the alarming talent drain of highly educated and trained females from their
professions, and their voluntary exit from the race for senior management positions (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005:106).

Jogulu and Wood (2011:591) suggest that women in their middle management careers face significant challenges and barriers that hinder their progression into more senior roles. Following are some explanations for why professional women are failing to reach the executive positions in organisations:

Firstly, highly educated female professionals are voluntarily leaving the workforce, thus shrinking the pool of female contenders for the top positions (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005:106). Grady and McCarthy (2008:600) found that many women in business weigh the costs and benefits associated with following the traditional career model and often decide that the costs of advancing to a higher managerial level far outweighs the benefits thereof. Heslin (2005:124) further states that these females then often choose an alternative career that enables them to balance career and family thus, availing them the opportunity to be successful on their own terms.

An additional reason for the poor representation of women at the higher managerial levels of organisations offered by Tischler (2004:54), is that women want to work and have a career, they also want to attain top managerial positions, but are forced to reject the traditional career model that must be followed to attain those positions due to the various other roles that they as women also have to fulfil. Therefore, many women choose to become agents of their own careers and are no longer working as employees of organisations, but rather opt for working for themselves, and setting their own terms of employment (Enache et al., 2011:243).

It is also believed that women aren’t prepared to work as hard for, or are not as motivated to reach the top positions as their male counterparts (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005:106). Women who attempt to meet their family obligations successfully often take career interruptions or opt for positions which allow
reduced working hours (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011:12). Women in dual career marriages are more likely to exit out of their careers when it is needed to relocate for their spouse’s careers (Eby, 2001:345). This approach unfortunately reduces their chances of reaching managerial positions and substantially hinders their progression to senior managerial positions.

Women are also seen as being too timid or submissive to claim management positions (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005:106). Character traits such as self-confidence, aggressiveness, leadership, risk taking, competitiveness and objectivity, have traditionally been associated with male managers. These male role stereotypes are perceived to be essential for success in managerial roles (Geddes, 2001:590). Women, however portray more feminine character traits such as communication, motivation, influencing others, providing feedback, conflict resolution, understanding behaviour, coaching and mentoring, developing effective work teams, facilitating the transfer of information and knowledge, negotiating and learning and development (Parente et al., 2012:7; Azim et al., 2010:392). These findings postulate that successful management is generally associated with men and masculinity.

Mainiero and Sullivan (2005:106) suggest that women do not want to have power and find that there are more psychological and social rewards associated with staying at home or following alternative, self-directed careers. It is assumed that the lack for managerial aspiration by women stems from the traditional view that men are usually responsible for the financial wellbeing of the family. Women are then in a position to pursue jobs that will provide them with social significance and psychological rewards. Thus, career advancement and managerial positions are not a major objective for female employees (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011:12).

Additional factors important for understanding why women leave the workforce include perceived lack of career advancement opportunities, discrimination and incompatibility with masculine corporate cultures (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005:106). These factors are explained in more detail next.
A perceived lack of career advancement opportunities: Little evidence exists in the literature to suggest that men make better managers than women or are more successful in senior management positions than women (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011:12). However, the existence of a ‘think male/think manager’ attitude has been suggested, which could lead women to perceive that there are less career advancement opportunities available to them than to men (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011:12). Other organisational practices such as closed senior promotion systems, preferential allocation of men to management positions and women to specialist and support roles reinforce the existence of the “Glass Ceiling” which females infrequently break through to fill senior management or leadership positions (Vinnicombe & Singh, 2003:202).

Discrimination: Truman and Baroudi (1994:129) reported that there are significant salary discrepancies between male and female employees. They found that women, on average, receive lower salaries than their male counterparts even when they are in the same age category, perform at the same job level, and have similar qualifications and job experience. As an example, in 2007 the average salary for female chief executives in the United States was almost thirty thousand dollars per annum less than the average for males in the same positions (Mather, 2007:1).

An incompatibility with a masculine corporate culture: There is consensus about women in management positions and that is that there are too few of them and their progression into these positions is too slow (Cross & Linehan, 2009:246). Organisations’ senior management (often dominated by men) largely influence the development of the organisation’s corporate culture, which is usually characterised by long work hours, presenteeism or face time in the office, and not productivity or work output and quality. Female employees, especially those with young children, often cannot adhere to the set corporate culture and are perceived to be less dedicated to the organisation and their careers and simply do not advance into senior management as readily as their male counterparts (Cross & Linehan, 2009:246).
Finally, a popular belief is that work demands and family needs are incompatible and therefore women opt out of their professional careers to focus on their families. Women’s domestic and childcare responsibilities often accompany them to their work environment, and they therefore prefer to stop working completely or seek for positions which allow them flexibility in terms of working hours to spend more time with their young children and the feasibility of entry and exit as family demands allow. (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011:12).

2.4 GENDER ROLE THEORY

Over the past three decades, women’s participation rates in the labour force has grown substantially and they have made remarkable progress in their managerial careers (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011:8). However, general societal expectations of women remain a significant factor in many women’s lives as they still have the majority of the family and child rearing responsibilities resting on their shoulders, resulting in conflict when both a career and family are being pursued (Jogulu & Wood, 2011:591).

Mintz and Mahalik (1996:806) defined gender role orientation as “the beliefs individuals hold about normal roles of men and women in meeting family and work responsibilities.”

Three primary role types exist, namely traditional, participant and role sharing and there is a link between people’s gender role orientation and how they divide childcare and household responsibilities (Donald & Linington, nd:660).

- The traditional gender role type sees women as being responsible for family and household chores. If the wife pursues a career, it is seen as an additional role to her already existing traditional family role.
- The participative gender role type perceives the parenting responsibilities as a shared objective between both parents, but the household chores remain the responsibility of the wife.
- In the role-sharing type of marriages/relationships, parenting and household chores are a combined responsibility of both parents.
Work-family conflict results due to the variety of roles women have to manage and the pressures from the different domains interfering with one another. Work-family conflict is thus seen as being bi-dimensional in that work interferes with family and vice versa. Individuals normally give more importance to one of the roles and therefore generally invest more time and effort in that role. This results in less time spent on the other role, and therefore conflict arises between the roles (Donald & Linington, nd:660).

2.5 TRADITIONAL DEFINITION OF CAREER

The traditional view of a career was that an individual would work at one, perhaps two organisations throughout one’s lifetime and progress lineally from an entry level position through the various levels towards an ultimate position of authority, income and status (Enache et al., 2011:236). Loyalty to one’s organisation was highly valued and therefore employees would only work at one or two organisations during their careers until retirement (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2006:240). Therefore, managerial progression comprised a series of stages that the individual went through while moving up the proverbial corporate ladder (Vinnicombe & Singh, 2003:201).

A more recent description of career is, a series of work experiences an individual goes through to attain personal and organisational goals partly under the control of the individual, but also influenced by others (Wickramasinghe & Jayaweera, 2011:915). Orpen (1994:27) further conceptualises that a career has four distinctive features:

- It has a long-term orientation.
- It extends beyond the current satisfaction, position and performance of an employee.
- It focuses on both objective and subjective aspects of career success. Thus career effectiveness is viewed as reaching socially accepted positions and realising goals that have personal importance to the employee.
Career outcomes are the joint result of individual efforts and of outside forces over which the individual does not have control.

A concise definition of career is “a series of steps along a progression” (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2006:241).

2.6 FEMALE CAREERS

Females in the labour force, especially those in their childbearing years, are challenged to manage their time and multiple roles and responsibilities (Grady & McCarthy, 2008:599). But there has been found to be a deep disconnect between the needs of women workers and the traditional career model which is characterised by full-time, long-term employment and measures of success such as salary and promotions (Cabrera, 2008:219).

Clarke (2011:499) suggests that women’s careers evolve in a distinctly different fashion than those of men because women’s lives have a tendency to be shaped around traditional female roles and responsibilities such as child rearing, taking care of elderly parents and spouses’ careers. Female professionals are faced with the challenge of sharing professional and domestic duties in a balanced way (Grady & McCarthy, 2008:599). Because women are typically seen as the primary caregivers within family structures and therefore have more non-work responsibilities compared to men, these added responsibilities make following the traditional career conventions more difficult for female employees (Baruch, 2004:37).

Several organisational factors have also been identified as impacting on women’s career progress and include (Clarke, 2011:499):

- Predominantly masculine work cultures;
- Male stereotyping and perceptions of women’s abilities;
- Exclusion from informal organisational networks;
- A lack of relevant management experience;
- Too few mentoring opportunities; and
- An underrepresentation of women in senior managerial positions.
2.7 ALTERNATIVE CAREER MODELS

Enache et al. (2011:234) remarked that the traditional career advancement model emphasises full-time, long-term employment and stern commitment to a single organisation. However, factors such as changing behaviours, increasing life spans, dual career families and single working parents prompt individuals to initiate alternative careers which allow them to fulfil personal needs motivated by their own goals and desires. The traditional upward model of career success is being discarded by those who prefer to define career success on their own terms (Heslin, 2005:127). A steadily growing number of less career-centric professionals are pursuing a dual agenda wherein they concentrate on work and family equally. They achieve this by creating a unique patchwork of job experiences that suit their preferences and family lives (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2006:239). Careers should therefore be defined from a broader perspective and in a more complex manner (Forret, Sullivan & Mainiero, 2010:647).

Sullivan and Mainiero (2006:239) identified two trends that have created a major revolution in how careers are created and developed. The first trend is the ‘push’ factor of technology. Major technological advances have enabled individuals to have more flexibility by changing the way they do work. Laptops enable individuals to work either at home or at the office and wireless Internet can connect an employee to the office from any location. The second trend is the ‘pull’ factor of individuals striving towards a more balanced life. These individuals are often disillusioned by the demands of organisations and the imbalance it creates in their family lives. To remedy the situation, they integrate their work and non-work lives by following alternative careers, such as;

- Kaleidoscope careers
- Boundaryless careers
- Protean careers
2.7.1 Kaleidoscope Career Model

"Like a kaleidoscope that produces changing patterns when the tube is rotated and its glass chips fall into new arrangements, women shift the pattern of their careers by rotating different aspects in their lives to arrange their roles and relationships in new ways" (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005:106). The Kaleidoscope Career Model describes how women’s career patterns change as they re-arrange their different roles and responsibilities to suit a specific period of their lives (Sullivan, Forret, Carraher & Mainiero, 2009:290). In this model, the individual assesses the various available options in terms of opportunities, work demands, personal values and relationships through the lens of a kaleidoscope to establish the most suitable combination at that point in time. The individual is aware that every decision will have a resulting effect on the kaleidoscope career pattern (Sullivan et al., 2009:290).

Mainiero and Sullivan (2005:111) describe that a kaleidoscope uses three mirrors and various pieces of coloured glass to create infinite patterns. Similarly, individuals concentrate on three parameters (the three mirrors) when making decisions about career, family, relationships and values (the pieces of coloured glass) to create their unique kaleidoscope career patterns. These parameters or mirrors are:

- Authenticity which is the need of the individual to have her internal values, her external behaviours and the values and culture of the employer all in alignment. In other words, to be true to herself in doing what she does.
- Balance comprises the individual’s desire to achieve balance between work demands, non-work activities and family responsibilities.
- Challenge is an individual’s need to perform stimulating or challenging work and further to have career advancement opportunities.

Different issues predominate at various stages of a woman’s career. Challenge usually tends to dominate in a woman’s early career stages, with balance becoming more important during the mid-career phase when women tend to also have significant family and childcare responsibilities. Finally, women’s late
careers are usually characterised by a drive towards authenticity. Thus, women make career choices and changes based on the suitability and fit for each stage of life (Clarke, 2011:500).

2.7.2 Boundaryless Career Model

Arthur and Rousseau (1996:31) originally defined the boundaryless career as: “a career not bounded to a single employment setting and independent from, rather than dependent on traditional organisational career arrangements.”

It is built around two axes namely a Boundaryless Mindset (BM) and Organisational Mobility Preference (OMP) (Enache et al., 2011:235).

The Boundaryless Mindset as a general, acceptable attitude of crossing organisational boundaries and feeling comfortable to interact with people from different organisations in seeking out opportunities which will be beneficial to the individual (Briscoe, Hall & DeMuth, 2006:38).

The Organisational Mobility Preference is an individual’s preference to remain with a single employer or to have multiple employers during a career. An individual who has a high organisational mobility preference would feel more comfortable and prefer to have a career which included several different employers (Briscoe et al., 2006:39).

2.7.3 Protean Career Model

The protean career concept suggests that individuals should be able to adapt their careers in response to how their life circumstances change and evolve, and it was thus aptly named after the mythological Greek god Proteus who was able to change his form at will (Cabrera, 2008:188-189).

Employees have traditionally expected organisations to be responsible for shaping their careers, however in the Protean Career Model individuals must be proactive and take responsibility for managing their own careers (Briscoe et al.,
Individuals following a protean career path become self architects of their careers, personal development and professional destiny (Enach et al., 2011:238).

Two central elements characterise the protean career, namely: self directedness and personal value congruence (Briscoe et al., 2006:41).

Self directedness refers to an individual’s reliance on herself to proactively manage her career in terms of setting goals, seeking for opportunities, and personal learning and development, and not a passive reliance on an organisation to provide a detailed career path (Enache et al., 2011:238).

Personal value congruence suggests that a successful protean career is also based on the pursuit of meaningful career goals, a sense of personal accomplishment and family contentment, which can be attained when individuals shape their careers around their own values, motives and needs instead of striving for the more objective, external measures of success such as financial rewards and promotion set by organisations and society (Enache et al., 2011:238). The Protean Career Model is therefore particularly appropriate for women who would rather experience psychological success, than necessarily achieve the traditional measures of success (Valcour & Ladge, 2008:313).

Sargent and Domberger (2007:545) found two values that drive the protean career. The first is being occupied in work that makes a difference in society, and the second is to achieve a work-life balance.

Hall (1996:4) further defined the protean career by its strive towards continuous learning and self development. Thus individuals on a protean career path engage in a constant series of developmental experiences.
Enache *et al.* (2011:238) state that the self-directed nature of a protean career leads to numerous different career cycles of initially exploring, then learning, and finally mastery of each new career cycle.

A final aspect discussed by McDonald, Brown and Bradley (2005:118) that makes the Protean Career Model relevant in the study of female careers is the use of incremental career strategies. Females often have to use shorter-term career strategies to best fit their changing circumstances.

Women can be divided into three groups: home-centred, adaptive and work-centred. Home-centred women prioritise family life and children throughout their lives and prefer not to work at all. Work-centred women on the other hand, prioritise employment and career. They are totally committed to their work and careers and make considerable investments in their education and further learning and development. The biggest group of women is the adaptive group, who aim to combine work and family life and to find as much balance between the two as is possible (Hakim, 2001 in Kooskora & Bekker, 2007:74).

Women in the home-centred group and who have a traditional gender role orientation will view their role as parent and homemaker as more important to their role as career women (Donald & Linington, nd:660) and are the most likely to opt out of their professions compared to women in the work-centred group who are the least likely to opt out of their professions.

Particular attention should be paid to the women in the adaptive group (Hakim, 2001 in Kooskora & Bekker, 2007:74). These women will strive to achieve more balance between their roles when conflict arises, but might opt out of their professions to follow more flexible alternative career paths if they find it too difficult to balance work and family life satisfactorily (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005:106).
Thus female professionals who opt out of the corporate landscape to become career self-agents could be adopting either one of the above careers. The self-directed nature of the alternative career models is beneficial to women who aim to balance work and family responsibilities successfully (Valcourt & Ladge, 2008:307).

2.8 COSTS OF LOSING FEMALE TALENT

The departure of female employees has multifaceted consequences to organisations.

Labour turnover represents a significant and continuous challenge for human resource practitioners globally. It not only affects the workplace by decreasing efficiency and productivity, it also has a severe financial implication for organisations (Davidson, Timo & Wang, 2010:451). Organisations cannot afford to lose highly skilled and talented female employees who play leading roles and in whom large amounts of time and money have been invested (Grobler & de Bruyn, 2010:63).

The first and most measurable cost of female employees opting out of organisations is the turnover costs. Turnover costs refer to the costs an organisation will have to incur to replace a departed employee. Ballinger, Craig, Cross and Gray (2011:111) estimate the direct costs of recruiting and training new employees to range between 25 and 500 percent of the employee’s annual salary depending on job level, criticalness of skill, and the experience of the employee to be replaced.

McKinney, Bartlett and Mulvaney (2007:53) state that the total cost of employee turnover should be calculated by including:

- Separation Costs (separation/severance pay, exit interview, administrative functions)
- Replacement Costs (advertising, short-listing, interviewing, reference checks, psychological and aptitude pre-employment testing, new appointment)
• Training/Placing costs (formal and informal training).

Indirect costs associated with replacing an employee are difficult to accurately determine, as a productive, long-time employee cannot be replaced without disrupting some formal and informal organisational relationships, leading to some loss of productivity, efficiency and quality (Ballinger et al., 2011:115).

Females who opt out of their profession to find balance between professional careers and family life generally do so during their mid-career stage (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005:112). It could therefore be assumed that that they have been in the workforce for a substantial period of time in which they would have accumulated knowledge and skills and developed experience and certain networks. Therefore, the turnover costs of females in this particular group should be a significant factor for organisations to consider.

The 2010 Women Matter Report by McKinsey and Company revealed that there is a positive effect on organisations’ financial performance when they have a strong presence of women in executive positions. Organisations should be cognisant of what the negative effects of women who opt out of the organisation can be on the organisations’ performance.

A further factor to consider when discussing the issue of females opting out of their professions is the loss of the unique contributions females bring to organisations. Organisations who lose female employees, especially those who occupied senior positions, will be drained of their unique feminine personality traits such as being affectionate, warm and emotional (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2011:12). Further, as women opt out of the workforce organisations will lose out on the positive spillover effect that women bring to the organisation (McNall et al., 2010:62) in terms of the resources and skills gained as a mother, wife, homemaker and caregiver (Ten Brummelhuis & Van der Lippe, 2010:174).
A final aspect organisations should be concerned about is that as females exit organisations, the pool of skilled and talented female employees who potentially could fill senior manager positions, shrinks. The effect of fewer female employees being available to fill senior management positions is a considerable reduction in the number of potential role models for younger female employees. The lack of women in senior management positions, therefore also the lack of available female role models and mentors, could reduce the attractiveness of specific organisations to potential female employees (Clarke, 2011:498).

Organisations that are concerned about retaining female talent should take heed of the shift in human resource management systems and learn from organisations that have successfully introduced work-life balance arrangements. These organisations have noticed the unique needs of female employees to balance career demands and family responsibilities and have reduced their risk of suffering the loss of female employees who opt out of their professions to craft more balanced alternative careers. This is done by introducing work-life balance arrangements to enable them to achieve this balance, while at the same time remain competitive in their careers and not be marginalised onto a ‘mommy track’.

2.9 WORK-LIFE BALANCE

As the employment landscape changes and the global economy recovers from the recent economic crisis, organisations will be managing their workforces in new and innovative ways such as introducing work-life balance arrangements or flexible work practices (Sunday Times/Careers, 2009:15).

Major international organisations, like IBM, KPMG, Unilever, British Telecom, Lloyds TBS and Citigroup have started to formally introduce secondary benefits such as work-life balance schemes (Grobler & de Bruyn, 2010:64).

South African organisations have also recognised the need for a change in their human resource management systems. Partially due to the global shift in human
resource management systems, but also due to the brain drain phenomena South Africa is experiencing whereby highly skilled employees are leaving the country to pursue careers globally, South Africa is left drained of skilled and talented employees in critical industries such as the financial, telecommunications and technological sectors (Grobler & de Bruyn, 2010:64).

Organisations such as SAP, Microsoft, ENS, MTN, Ernst and Young, Old Mutual, PwC, and Dimension Data (Best Employers 2012/2013) are all highly ranked on the South African Best Employers’ list of best companies to work for. These organisations have all recognised the need of employees to be able to balance work demands and family responsibilities more successfully and have introduced work-life balance arrangements. A contributing factor to their position on the Best Employers’ List is the fact that their employees feel encouraged to utilise the available work-life balance arrangements, and they do not perceive their utilisation of these benefits to be detrimental to their careers or the organisation in the long term (Best Employers 2012/2013).

The term ‘work-life balance’ gained popularity in the mid to late 1990s as the number of women who entered the labour force started increasing. It represents the concept that women should be able to combine work and family life more successfully and with more ease (MacInnes, 2006:226). Work-life balance refers to strategies adopted by individuals, particularly women, to place a different emphasis on their work and life spheres according to their changing circumstances (Galhofer, Paisey, Roberts & Tarbert, 2010:440).

In a UK’s Department of Trade and Industry survey 78 percent of the respondents agreed that workers should be able to balance work and family life in ways that were suitable to them, and 57 percent believed that it was the responsibility of the employer to assist employees in achieving this balance (Stevens et al., 2004 in Gallhofer et al., 2010). Ten Brummelhuis and Van der Lippe (2010:173) further explain that organisations that have noticed the importance of assisting employees in gaining greater work-family balance are
introducing work-life benefits designed to give workers more flexibility in scheduling their work time in a way that best suits their situations.

Work-life balance arrangements can be categorised into four types of benefits (Colley, 2010:217; Grobler & de Bruyn, 2010:65):

- Flexible work benefits
- Childcare assistance
- Parental leave
- Other leave

2.9.1 Flexible work benefits

The concept of flexible work practices generally refers to a greater degree of flexibility in the workplace (Grobler & de Bruyn, 2010:65).

Gardiner and Tomlinson (2009:671) explain that the term flexible could also be defined as non-standard employment, meaning that it is all forms of employment that are structured differently from standard, (permanent contract of between thirty and forty eight fixed hours a week based at the employer’s premises), employment. It enables employees to use their time more efficiently as it provides the employee with control over working time, either in how long they work (duration), where they work (location) or at what time they work (timing) (Atkinson & Hall, 2011:89; Ten Brummelhuis & Van der Lippe, 2010:174).

Flexible work benefits include a range of workplace practices designed to help employees balance work and family demands (McNall et al., 2010:62). It enables the employee and manager to mutually customise work schedules and work demands to accommodate family responsibilities (Grobler & de Bruyn, 2010:64). It therefore provides a route to flexible working by giving employees a contractual right to flexibility (Atkinson & Hall, 2011:89).

Grobler and de Bruyn (2010:65) classified flexible work practices into office-based and flexi-place practices and explained them as follows:
2.9.1.1 Office-based practices

- **Flexible working hours / Flexi-time**
  Employees are allowed to determine their own starting and finishing times daily. However, to accommodate the employer and its business requirements, the employee may be given certain restrictions.

- **Part-time work**
  This refers to employees who work less than the full standard daily, weekly or monthly hours.

- **Job-sharing**
  An arrangement between the employer and two or more employees where the duties and responsibilities of one job are shared by several employees.

- **Compressed work week / Compressed hours**
  Employees have the option of working their full weekly hours in less than five days per week. This translates to employees working additional hours, ten to twelve per day and during meal intervals to complete the required weekly hours in fewer days.

- **Annualised hours**
  Employees are contracted to perform a certain number of hours in a year cycle. Thus the weekly or monthly hour contract is replaced by a yearly hour contract.

- **Weekend work**
  Employees who only work over weekends, implying they could either work on only Saturdays or Sundays or both.

- **Shift work**
  This constitutes working in blocks of hours and could include working at times outside of normal working hours.

- **Overtime**
  An employee works additional hours onto a day or shift beyond the ordinary hours of work.
• **Temporary / Casual work**
  Workers are employed on a temporary basis, either to perform a pre-determined set of work or for a number of hours, weeks or months.

• **Averaging of hours of work**
  The working hours of an employee are averaged over a specified period.

• **Fixed-term contracts**
  Workers are employed for a fixed number of months or years.

2.9.1.2 Flexi-place practices
Primarily known as Working from Home, but also referred to as Telecommuting or Teleworking. Different options of this practice are available (Colley, 2010:217; Grobler & de Bruyn, 2010:65):

• **Home-based telecommuting**
  An employee predominantly works from home or works from home on a regular basis.

• **Satellite offices**
  Employees work at a mutually beneficial location for both the employee and the customer.

• **Neighbourhood work centre**
  This is a type of satellite office, but houses more than one organisation’s employees. Some resources e.g. telephones, copiers and Internet may be shared.

• **Mobile working**
  This type of work is required when an employee is frequently on the road and must make use of communication equipment e.g. telephone, e-mail and video conferencing to work from any location e.g. home, hotel, plane, train or other form of public transport.
• **Virtual working / Cyber working / Cyber link**

Teams of people are linked to the same project in a virtual space. This group of people, the virtual team, is only assembled together for the duration of the project or business opportunity and disbands on completion of the project and could form new teams with other team members and customers to work on other projects or business opportunities.

2.9.3 *Childcare assistance policies*

Grobler and de Bruyn (2010:65) state that childcare assistance policies are predominantly aimed at employees in professional jobs who have young children, and defined them as follows:

- **On-site childcare facilities**

  A number of organisations have introduced on-site day-care facilities. This assists work-life balance in that one parent is always close in case of an emergency. It reduces the time spent driving to and from day care. Parents could spend their lunch time with their children.

- **Day-care benefit**

  Some organisations will offer a day-care grant to parents with young children. The organisation will specify how the grant should be utilised i.e. day care, or nanny. Some organisations even specify which day-care facilities will be covered by the grant.

2.9.4 *Parental leave policies*

According to Thomson (2008:17), this includes a variety of leave policies for parents of young children and include:

- **Term-only working**

  Parents of young children will only work during the school terms. They might only be contracted to work a certain number of months of the year, alternatively, provision is made for them to take normal leave and supplement the outstanding period with extended leave without pay.
• **Maternity/Paternity leave**
  This form of leave provides time off for new mothers to recuperate after the birth of a baby and to spend some time with their newborn. Organisations may extend between four to six months of paid or unpaid maternity leave. Some organisations may also grant paternity leave for new fathers with the period ranging from 3 days to two weeks (Colley, 2010:214).

2.9.4 Other leave policies

• **Special/family responsibility leave**
  Also known as carer’s leave is available to employees who need to care for their immediate family members (Colley, 2010:221).

• **Leave without pay**
  Some organisations allow employees to take leave for extended periods of time at no pay. This policy was initially designed to appeal to working parents seeking extended periods of leave, especially during longer school holidays (Colley, 2010:221).

2.9.5 Advantages of work-life balance arrangements

Some of the major challenges for organisations today are to devise strategies to reduce employee turnover, increase employee engagement and to retain valuable talent.

Work-life balance strategies such as flexible work practices, family-friendly practices, work-life balance arrangements and alternative work patterns have been suggested as methods to improve employees’ work-life balance (Grobler & de Bruyn, 2010:63). This in turn, according to Muse and Wadsworth (2012:113), will have favourable outcomes such as increased productivity, improved performance and reduced absenteeism and job stress (McNall et al., 2010:63). It also has favourable effects on employee engagement by building employee commitment and increasing job satisfaction, thus having employees who are willing to go the extra mile (Ten Brummelhuis & Van der Lippe, 2010:174). A
further motivation for organisations to introduce work-life balance strategies is to improve their attractiveness to potential employees and assist them in recruiting highly talented employees (Anderson & Kelliher, 2009:13).

Female professionals with young children might consider utilising work-life balance arrangements as a solution to balance career and family responsibilities. This form of employment gives women the opportunity to contribute to the organisation and to remain relevant in their fields, while working where and at times that is convenient to them (Adams, 1995:21).

2.9.6 Perceived benefit value of work-life balance benefit/arrangements
Muse and Wadsworth (2012:113) caution employers that a supportive culture is essential to ensure employees utilise work-life balance arrangements. Employers are also informed that employees, based on their personal situations and needs, will assign different values to various benefits. Therefore, a benefit that one employee may perceive as very important may not be perceived as so important by another employee who has different personal circumstances.

Many organisations introduce work-life balance benefits to improve their attractiveness in the labour market (Anderson & Kelliher, 2009:13), but according to Hayman (2009:328), the perceived usability or the extent to which employees feel free to use the flexible work practices that are formally available is the ultimate indicator of the actual availability of the flexible work benefits. The organisational culture often determines the true availability and appropriateness of utilising flexible work options. Lewis and Humbert (2010:240) found there was a considerable implementation gap between work-life balance policies and practice. Hayman (2009:328) found that the use of flexible work options is discouraged in many organisations as it is believed to have a negative impact on future career prospects.
2.9.7 Complications with work-life balance arrangements

Zacharias (2006:30) questions whether work-life balance arrangements really create a win-win situation and explains that these benefits in reality come at a cost because employees who utilise them, sense that it is frowned upon by colleagues and management to have a life outside of one's career and to also devote time and energy to that life. The overall assumption is that utilising these benefits will result in career damage if not a career death, therefore the utilisation rate is much lower than expected.

The ideal outcome of flexible work arrangements is to assist employees in staying actively engaged in their careers, while working reduced hours to accommodate non-work responsibilities (Adams, 1995:21). However, evidence reveals that flexible working arrangements may sacrifice career advancement opportunities, and it is generally believed that a glass ceiling covers employees’ career advancement opportunities when they enquire about and accept flexible work arrangements (Adams, 1995:21).

Research by Colley (2010:215) revealed that not all employees had the same level of access to work-life balance arrangements due to the fluctuating manager discretion throughout the organisation. Respondents in her study commented that not all managers were equally supportive of these benefits and that access was “too subject to operational requirements” (Colley, 2010:223). This shows that the existence of work-life balance arrangements is a far cry from the implementation of such benefits in practice.

Gregory and Milner (2009:4) recognise that work-life balance arrangements or flexible work arrangements are not as extensively utilised as could be expected and attributes a part of this to the fact that these arrangements are often targeted at highly trained and skilled employees in an effort to retain talented staff. Another factor to consider is that those with managerial responsibilities often find it difficult to utilise flexible work options due to the nature of their work and the
expectation that they always have to be available to do whatever needs to be done (Gregory & Milner, 2009:4).

Gardiner and Tomlinson (2009:672) highlight that there are gender differences in the types of flexible working patterns utilised. Men could be expected to work rotating shifts, and for longer hours, on the other hand, women tend to have casual or temporary contracts, work from home and at non-standard or flexible times.

Zacharias (2006:32) reports that women with children who limit their involvement in paid employment at an organisation by utilising alternative work arrangement, often gets harshly penalised by not being allowed to return to their pre-parenting positions and forced onto the ‘mommy track’ which comprise low-skilled, low-paid jobs with very little career advancement opportunities. Perrons (2000:1720) states that the flexible jobs available to females have limited earnings potential and a lack of career development opportunities. This forces females to be financially dependent on their partners and therefore reinforces traditional gender roles.

Despite the general use of work-life balance, it remains a challenging area as it cannot be assumed that balancing career and family responsibilities means that time is divided equally (Gallhofer et al., 2010:441).

Respondents in a study by Colley (2010:230) revealed that there may be a certain degree of intolerance of flexible work arrangements. More than a third of the respondents in her study agreed that some employees resent others who utilise flexible work arrangement benefits to balance work and family commitments. Some of the concerns were that employees, who work part-time, only work certain hours. In the event that urgent tasks need to be performed, it is always the full-time employees who have to put in extra hours to complete the tasks. Some employees also feel that work-life balance arrangements always put
the family first, but believe that the organisation should also get preference at times.

A final point to consider is that while it cannot be argued that the supportive environment of organisations which offer work-life balance arrangements has tremendous positive benefits to employees, it should also be mentioned that these same benefits could serve as a form of non-financial ‘golden handcuff’ by preventing women from migrating to other organisations even though it might not be beneficial to their careers (Lewis & Humbert, 2010:247).

2.10 LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
Regardless of the presence or absence of work-life balance arrangements, some women may still decide to off-ramp out of their careers for a period of time to tend to their children while their children are still young and dependent on them. When their children are older and more independent they might decide to on-ramp back into their careers again (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2007:48). Due to technological advances and an ever increasing body of professional knowledge, they might lag behind when attempting to re-enter or on-ramp back into their professional careers (Regus Survey, 2011:1). This often leaves female professionals despondent about their future career prospects and frequently leads to female professionals rather opting out of their professional careers.

To overcome this problem, organisations should be aware of appropriate learning and development opportunities they can make available to employees who have off-ramped to keep them relevant in their fields, and therefore to on-ramp at a more acceptable level. Individuals who consider re-entering or on-ramping back into the corporate workforce when their children are older and more independent, should take pro-active actions to remain relevant and up to date in their fields.
2.11 CONCLUSION

The employment landscape is rapidly changing, forcing organisations to re-evaluate their career management systems. One of the most significant sources of a competitive advantage is organisations’ pool of female talent. Women have a variety of roles to fulfil and frequently experience the pressures of the different roles interfering with one another. When conflict arises between the roles, women will strive to achieve more balance between the roles. Unfortunately, it is not always possible and often women will rather decide to opt out of their professions to follow a more flexible alternative career path. This leaves organisations drained of their valuable female talent.

Organisations which are concerned about retaining their female talent have to acknowledge the unique needs of female employees to balance career demands and family responsibilities and should introduce appropriate work-life balance arrangements to help enable female employees to achieve better balance. If the work-life balance arrangements offered are appropriate and the female employees perceive that utilising them will not have a negative impact on their future career success, organisations will reduce their risk of losing these female employees with young dependent children who would otherwise off-ramp out of their professions in an attempt to balance family responsibilities and career demands by following an alternative career path.

However, some women may still decide to off-ramp out of their careers to tend to their children while they are still young and dependent on them. When their children are older they might consider on-ramping back into their careers, but they might not have stayed abreast of all the developments in their fields. This often leaves women despondent about returning to professions and pessimistic about their future career prospects, frequently resulting in women rather opting-out or exiting their careers.
Organisations can assist female employees who decide to off-ramp for a period of time, to remain relevant in their fields by offering certain learning and development opportunities.

Female professionals, who off-ramp from their careers for a period of time, should also take it on themselves to remain relevant in their fields by utilising all available learning and development opportunities.

The availability of work-life balance arrangements and learning and development opportunities will benefit both organisations and female professionals by reducing the number of women who opt out of their careers in an attempt to find a more balanced alternative career.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

According to Zikmund (2000:5), business research can be defined as “the systematic and objective process of gathering, recording, and analyzing data for aid in making business decisions.” The research on which this thesis is based set out to identify the most appropriate work-life balance arrangements that organisations can offer to employees who strive to balance family responsibilities and career demands. It further aims to identify pro-active actions that female professionals can follow during a period of being off-ramped to enhance their re-entering ability.

To achieve the best results for this research, a non-experimental research approach was adopted, wherein participants were asked to complete an online questionnaire. Mixed sampling methods were used to reach the desired population.

Statkon, the Statistical Consultation Service at the University of Johannesburg, facilitated the preparation and administration of the online survey. The software package StatPac was used to perform the statistical analysis of the data.

Clough and Nutbrown (2002:22) succinctly explain research methodology as: “the reasons for using a particular ‘research recipe’.” Therefore, this chapter on methodology will explain why a particular research design was chosen, the rationale why certain research methods and instruments were used, how the population was chosen and the sample was selected, how data was collected, how validity and reliability were maintained, and finally how the data was analysed.
3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2003:83) explain that a person’s research philosophy is determined by the way a person believes knowledge is developed. The researcher in this study had a positivist research philosophy, which according to Bryman and Bell (2003:13), is “the application of methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond.” Thus, the aim of research is “to test theories and to assist in the development of new laws.”

According to Saunders et al. (2003:85), any research will involve the use of theory, and that the extent to which the researcher is clear about the theory at the beginning of the research will determine whether the researcher will use a deductive or inductive approach.

The research approach followed for this particular study was a deductive approach, which according to Bryman and Bell (2003:9) is a process in which the researcher, based on what is known about the topic, constructs a theory and subsequently tests the theory. Saunders et al. (2003:85) explain the deductive approach as a process where a theory is developed, followed by the design of a research strategy to test the theory.

This research project commenced with a thorough literature review of the following topics: Female career paths, the importance of females in business, the importance of females in managerial positions, gender role theory, female personality traits, female leadership styles, why organisations are losing female talent, alternative career models, work-life balance arrangements and the advantages and disadvantages of utilising work-life balance arrangements. The literature reviewed assisted in the development of the following theory:

Female professionals find it difficult to balance family responsibilities and career demands, especially when their children are still young and often decide to opt out or exit from full-time employment, thus leaving organisations drained of female talent.
The literature review also assisted with the formulation of the following three research objectives:

The primary objective of the study is to:
- Identify appropriate work-life balance arrangements that organisations can offer to employees who strive to balance family responsibilities and career demands more successfully, which would prevent them from opting-out.

The secondary objectives of the study are to:
- Identify appropriate learning and development opportunities that organisations can make available to employees who have off-ramped, to keep them relevant in their fields and therefore to equip them to on-ramp at a more acceptable level.
- Identify pro-active actions that female professionals can follow during a period of being off-ramped to enhance their re-entering ability.

3.3 RESEARCH STRATEGY
A research strategy is the general way in which a researcher intends to carry out a research project (Saunders et al., 2003:90).

3.3.1 Research design
According to Maree (2009:33), a “research design is used to describe the procedures for conducting a study and its purpose is to help find appropriate answers to the research questions.”

The research design deemed most appropriate for this particular study was a non-experimental, quantitative method of enquiry. Maree (2009:145) describes quantitative research as “a process that is systematic and objective in its ways of using numerical data from only a selected subgroup of a population to generalise the findings to the population that is being studied,” and a non-experimental research design as a “mode of research in which no manipulation of the variables takes place” (Maree, 2009:152).
Research studies can be conducted over different time dimensions. Longitudinal studies are conducted over an extended period of time. Conversely, cross-sectional studies are conducted only once and represent a snapshot of that point in time (Cooper & Schindler, 2006:141). This particular study was a cross-sectional study as it gives a snapshot of the phenomena investigated (the career paths of female professionals who have young dependent children) at a particular time (Saunders et al., 2003).

3.3.2 Research methods and rationale

Zigmund (2000:167) defines a survey as: “a research technique in which information is gathered from a sample of people by use of a questionnaire.” Welman et al. (2007:149) and Maree (2009:155) further elaborate that surveys do not involve observation of subjects’ behaviour, but rather their personal reports of their behaviour. Consequently, researchers utilise surveys to obtain information about participants’ demographics, likes and dislikes, behaviours, attitudes, values, habits, ideas, feelings, opinions, perceptions and beliefs by asking them to respond to questions, rather than by observing their behaviour.

Quantitative data was collected through a self-administered online questionnaire. Two motives for using this method as noted by Maree (2009:155) were that surveys can accommodate large samples and many variables can be measured, and therefore multiple theories can be tested.

3.3.2.1 Questionnaires

Babbie (1998:36) explains that in survey research a sample of a significant number of respondents from the population is selected. A questionnaire, specifically constructed to obtain information relevant to the research project is then distributed to the respondents. Questionnaires could take on any of the following formats: face-to-face and telephonic interviews, or self-administered questionnaires that were personally handed, posted or e-mailed to respondents. Each respondent’s responses are then coded into a standardised format and
recorded quantitatively. Statistical analysis of the responses is then performed to determine correlation between different respondents’ responses.

Bryman and Bell (2003:141) describe a self-administered questionnaire as a method of obtaining data where respondents answer questions by completing the questionnaire themselves. Self-administered questionnaires do not require the researcher’s presence and can be administered using the pen and paper approach or an online questionnaire approach (Saunders et al., 2003).

Some of the advantages of questionnaires as noted by Bryman and Bell (2003:142) are:

- Questionnaires are relatively inexpensive to administer particularly because the researcher does not have to be present, thus costs are saved in terms of travelling and the researcher’s professional time.
- Questionnaires are quicker to administer. Large numbers of questionnaires can be sent out by post or in the event of online questionnaires, one e-mail can be sent out to multiple respondents at once.
- Since no interviewer is present, a further advantage of a self-administered questionnaire is the absence of interviewer effects.
- Another benefit of self-administered questionnaires is that there is no interviewer variability, thus questions are always asked in the same way and in the same order.
- Self-administered questionnaires are generally more practical for respondents to complete because they can be completed at the convenience of the respondents.

Thomas and Nelson (2001:261) note that a major limitation of the questionnaire is that the results reflect simply of what people say they like or dislike, or what they say they believe and do.
Bryman and Bell (2003:143) also posit the following disadvantages of self-administered questionnaires.

- Due to the absence of an interviewer, there is no one present to assist respondents if they are having difficulty understanding or responding to a question. There is also not the opportunity for the researcher to probe respondents to elaborate an answer.
- Respondents may become tired of questions that are not relevant to them; therefore careful attention should be paid to the significance of all questions.
- Self-administered questionnaires generally work best when the majority of the questions are closed-ended questions, it is advised that only a small number of open-ended questions be asked.
- The researcher can also not be certain that the right people completed the questionnaire.
- When completing questionnaires, respondents may become fatigued, therefore it is recommended that questionnaires do not contain too many questions.
- Questionnaires may also not be appropriate for respondents whose literacy is low or whose first language is not the language in which they have to complete the questionnaire.
- Researchers may receive incomplete questionnaires, because of the lack of prompting or supervision.
- The most damaging disadvantage of self-administered questionnaires is the low response rate often associated with them.

3.4 RESEARCH POPULATION

Maree (2009:147) states that “a research question is always linked to a specific group of sampling units. The entire group of all the sampling units relevant to the research question is referred to as the population.” Welman and Kruger (2002:46) simply state that “the population is the study object.” Sampling units could therefore be individuals, organisations, groups or events.
The relevant population for this study was all female professionals who endeavoured to balance family responsibilities and work demands. They should ideally have young dependant children. However, female professionals who have older children but who could still relate to this problem, could also participate. Employment status could be any of the following: Working full-time, working part-time, working informally or not working.

### 3.5 SAMPLE

Welman and Kruger (2002:46) explain that the size of the population is indicated by $n$. It is also not always possible to reach the entire population to include in a research project, and it is furthermore also impractical and uneconomical to include all the members of a population. Therefore data is only obtained from a sample of the population, which is indicated by an $n$. Maree (2009:147) defines a sample as: “a subset of the population consisting of a predetermined number, the sample size, of randomly selected sampling units from the population.”

#### 3.5.1 Sampling methodology

Zikmund (2000:339) defines sampling as: “the process of using a small number of items or parts of a larger population to make conclusions about the whole population.” Various methods could be utilised to obtain a sample of the population.

A distinction can be made between probability sampling and non-probability sampling.

Welman and Kruger (2002:47) explain probability sampling as a method of sampling in which the probability exists that any unit or member of a population can be determined.

Further, Saunders et al. (2003) explain that in non-probability it is not possible to specify the probability that a unit or a member of a population will be included in the sample.
Relevant to this particular study are two non-probability sampling techniques used to reach the desired population to ask individuals to participate.

The researcher will utilise a snowball sampling method described by (Zikmund, 2000:353) as “a sampling procedure in which initial respondents are selected by probability methods, additional respondents are further obtained by information provided by the initial respondents.” Welman and Kruger (2002: 63) explain the snowball sampling method as a method wherein a few individuals from the relevant population will be approached to participate in the research project. They will also be requested to identify other members of the relevant population for further inclusion in the research project.

The researcher firstly e-mailed an “invitation to participate” to various family members, friends and colleagues who fell into the prescribed population. The researcher further asked these participants to further distribute the e-mail to their friends and family who also fell into the prescribed population. The researcher also handed out hard copies of the questionnaire at various events where females were present. Completed questionnaires were handed back to the researcher who delivered them to Statkon where the information was captured electronically to be included into the results.

A convenience or haphazard sampling method was also used to reach members of the population to include in the research project. Zikmund (2000:350) states that haphazard sampling “refers to the procedure of obtaining units or people who are most conveniently available.

The researcher employed this type of sampling technique by asking the owners of various baby development franchises (Baby Gym, Aqua Tots, Kindermusik, Pienkvoet Pret, Moms and Babes, Moms and Tots) and nursery schools to distribute the questionnaire to their clients, and by finally posting the questionnaire on selected online parent support groups’ websites or facebook pages (Baba en Kleuter, Baby and Toddler, Your Pregnancy).
3.5.2 Sample size
A sample of, \( n=191 \) female professionals from the described population participated in this research project.

3.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS
A thorough literature review of the topic equipped the researcher with adequate background knowledge to guide the development of the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained four categories of questions namely; qualifying questions, biographic information, information about respondents’ career prior to having children, and information about respondents’ career subsequent to having children.

3.6.1 Questionnaires
A provisional questionnaire was developed and assessed by the researcher’s study supervisor for validity of content.

A consultant at Statkon, assessed the functionality and reliability of the questionnaire and suggested a few minor adjustments.

The consultant also facilitated the preparation of the online survey. Initially, a test questionnaire was developed and sent to three people who were not included in the study. They were requested to complete the questionnaire with the purpose of detecting ambiguous questions and raising uncertainty. Ample time was provided for completion of the questionnaire. Feedback from the three pilot participants was received and some minor adjustments were suggested. Of particular significance to this report was the suggestion to include some clarifying comments as introduction to the different section and before particular questions.

Another online test questionnaire was developed and completed by the same people who completed the initial test questionnaire. The feedback was positive and respondents reported that the questions were easier to understand,
specifically in terms of the point at which in their careers they should answer the particular question.

The Statkon consultant provided the researcher with a live link to the questionnaire. The researcher prepared an invitation to participate by e-mail that contained a brief description of the study, specified the relevant population and outlined the objectives. A link to the online questionnaire was also included in the e-mail. The e-mail was distributed to various possible respondents using different sampling methodologies as explained earlier. The questionnaire was open for participation for seven weeks.

See Appendix A for the invitation to participate and Appendix B for the questionnaire.

3.7 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION
Primary and secondary data was collected for the purpose of this research. Secondary data was collected by reviewing available literature of previous studies connected to the topic. Primary data was collected through the use of an online questionnaire. The computerised nature of the online questionnaire provided for each respondent’s answers to be automatically transferred to the software package StatPac utilised for the analysis of the data as soon as the questionnaire was submitted. The questionnaire was programmed to correct improper data entry as the questionnaire was being completed. Open-ended questions and questions where the participants had to specify or explain an answer were labelled and categorised.
3.8 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

Zikmund Babin, Carr and Griffin (2010:55) state that “the main purpose of descriptive research is to describe the characteristics of a population or a phenomenon. Researchers aim to describe a situation by determining the answers to who, what, where, when and how questions.”

In the following section the various statistical methods used to analyse the data will be described.

3.8.1 Descriptive analysis

According to Zikmund et al., (2010:486), “Descriptive analysis is the simple transformation of raw data into a format that will make it easy to understand and interpret. Basic characteristics such as central tendency, distribution and variability are described.” The first form of analysis is typically the describing of responses and or observations. The most common ways of summarising data are; calculating averages, frequency distributions and percentage distributions. (Zikmund et al., 2010:487).

3.8.1.1 Calculating averages

Averages are calculated by dividing the frequency of each value by the total number of observations and multiplying the result by 100 (Zikmund et al., 2010:487).

3.8.1.2 Frequency distributions

A frequency Table is one of the most common methods of summarising a set of data. The number of times a particular value of a variable occurs is recorded and is the frequency of that value (Zikmund et al., 2010:413). Bar graphs of simple frequencies were used to illustrate the relationship between each score.
3.8.1.3 Percentage distributions
A distribution of relative frequency is constructed by dividing the frequency of each value by the total number of observations and multiplying the result by 100 (Zikmund et al., 2010:413). Due to the failure of some of the respondents to answer all the questions the valid percentage (only the percentage of respondents who answered the particular question) for each question will be used. Bar graphs of percentages were used to illustrate the relationship between percentages.

3.8.1.4 Tabulation
Zikmund et al. (2010:488) explain that tabulation is the orderly arrangements of data in a Table or other summary format. Simple frequency Table shows how respondents answered particular questions.

3.8.1.5 Cross-tabulation
Cross tabulation addresses research questions involving relationships among multiple variables (Zikmund et al., 2010:488). It allowed the comparison of differences among groups.

3.8.2 Inferential statistics
Following the descriptive analysis stage, a technique known as inferential statistics is used to draw conclusions about the entire population by using information obtained from a sample of the population (McBurney, 2001:394). Information about the work-life balance benefits respondents preferred, the learning and development opportunities they mentioned as being appropriate and the actions they followed to stay relevant in their fields, were used to draw conclusions about which of these would also be most suitable to the entire population of professional women who have young children.
3.8.3 Statistical techniques to compare groups

Non-parametric statistical techniques were used to compare differences between groups. The following tests were used to determine the statistical significance between the responses of groups or between the responses of the same group prior and subsequent to having children.

3.8.3.1 The p-value of statistical significance

For each hypothesis tested a probability value, known as the p-value can be calculated. However the p-value only concludes whether or not there is a statistical significance (Maree, 2009:210).

3.8.3.2 Chi-square test

The Chi-square test is used to explore the relationship between two categorical variables. Each of the variables to be compared has two or more categories. The Chi-square test compares the observed frequencies of cases that occur in each of the categories, with the value that would be expected if there was no correlation between the two variables being measured (Pallant, 2007:214).

For the Chi-square test to be significant, the Sig. value needs to be .05 or smaller. If the Sig. value exceeds .05 it can be concluded that the results are not significant. This means that there is no significant difference between the two groups, or there is no association between category A and category B (Pallant, 2007:217).

3.8.3.3 Kappa measure of agreement

The Kappa measure of agreement is commonly used to measure inter-respondent agreement. In other words, it is used to test the degree of agreement between two measures (Pallant, 2007:218).

The Kappa measure of agreement value should be above .5 to indicate moderate agreement, above .7 indicates good agreement and above .8 indicates very good
agreement. With all the measures a \( p < .0005 \) should also be indicated (Pallant, 2007:220).

### 3.8.3.4 Marginal homogeneity test
The Marginal homogeneity test is used to measure interrespondent agreement when three or more ordinal categories are being compared to test for agreement. A \( p \)-value of \(< 0.05 \) indicates that there is a difference, and a \( p \)-value \( > 0.05 \) indicates that there is no difference between the groups (Pallant, 2007:222).

### 3.8.4 Content analysis
Content analysis was used to analyse responses to open-ended questions. Maree (2009:101) explains it as a process where the data is looked at from different perspectives in an attempt to identify similarities in the text that will assist in understanding the raw data. The responses to open-ended questions were grouped into pre-prepared list of possible categories. This process assisted the researcher to identify trends and answer the research questions.

### 3.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY
Dawson (2006:111) explains that “for quantitative data analysis, issues of validity and reliability are important because quantitative researchers strive to prove that their chosen instruments measure what they claim to measure. They further have to ensure that their measurements are stable and consistent and that no errors or prejudice is present.”

No particular statistical test could be performed to measure the validity or reliability of the results. However, non-parametric statistical techniques, such as the Chi-square test, the Kappa measure of agreement and the Marginal homogeneity test were used to compare the differences between groups.

The \( p \)-value was used to determine whether or not there was a statistical significance between the results of the groups that were compared.
3.9.1 Validity

Bryman and Bell (2003:33) state that validity is one of the most important principles of research. “It is concerned with whether the findings of the research are really what they appear to be about” (Saunders et al., 2003:101). Validity can be described as the degree to which the independent variable actually affects the dependent variable (Bryman & Bell, 2003:107).

Maree (2009: 217) describes validity as the ability of the instrument (questionnaire, interview or scale) to measure what it is supposed to measure. He further notes that validity should be evaluated in terms of the following four approaches: face validity, content validity, and construct validity.

3.9.1.1 Face validity

Face validity is a form of validity that cannot be measured or tested, but is of vital importance as participants should perceive a measuring instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure. The questionnaire for this research project contained two sections specifically focusing on females’ careers prior and subsequent to having children, and included questions about work-life balance arrangements and enquired about strategies followed during periods of being off-ramped. Information in the cover letter that introduced the questionnaire and questions in the questionnaire matched, and therefore face validity could be recognised as being high.

3.9.1.2 Content validity

Content validity refers to the degree to which the questionnaire covered the full scope of the topic that it set out to measure. A thorough literature review of the topic guided the content development of the questionnaire. Initially, a provisional questionnaire was presented to the researcher’s supervisor for comments and final approval.
3.9.1.3 Construct validity

Construct validity indicates that the experimental evidence generated by the questionnaire is consistent with the knowledge gained from the literature reviewed about the concept. The questionnaire was determined to have construct validity as it yielded results consistent with the theoretical ideas behind the concept.

3.9.2 Reliability

“Reliability is a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, would yield the same result each time (Babbie, 1998: 321).

According to Bryman and Bell (2003:74), reliability should be assessed in terms of its Stability, Internal Reliability and Inter-Observer Consistency.

3.9.2.1 Stability

Stability requires that a measure should be stable over time. A researcher should be confident that a measure would reflect similar results over time and not fluctuate if a measure is re-administered at a later stage (Bryman & Bell, 2003:76). The online questionnaire was completed by a pilot group of three respondents on three different occasions. Even after minor changes were made to the structure of the questionnaire, according to the pilot group’s suggestions, the responses received from the group remained very similar with little variation from their initial responses.

3.9.2.2 Internal reliability

Internal reliability refers to whether the questions that make up the questionnaire are consistent – in other words- do the answers in one question relate to their answers in other questions? (Bryman and Bell 2003:76). The split-half method is a common way of testing internal reliability and was used for this study.
3.9.2.3 Interobserver consistency

Inter-observer consistency is applicable in instances where subjective judgement is involved, such as in content analysis, when categorising open-ended questions or when behaviours are classified (Bryman & Bell, 2003:76). This factor was applicable when open-ended questions had to be categorised. A Statkon consultant captured the responses, but it was left to the researcher to categorise them. This was done according to a pre-prepared list of possible categories.

Saunders et al. (2003:101) suggest the following questions be asked in order to assess reliability:

1. Will the measures yield the same results on other occasions?
2. Will similar observations be reached by other observers?
3. Is there transparency in how sense was made from the raw data?

When this study is assessed for reliability in terms of the suggested questions by Saunders et al. (2003:101), this study proves to be reliable as the answers to all three questions are in the affirmative.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Researchers are often unable to conduct research projects if they do not have the support and assistance of other people (Dawson, 2006:147). Therefore the researcher must be vigilant about any conditions in the research environment that could be harmful to the participants. Harm could include frightening, embarrassing or negatively affecting participants (Thomas & Nelson, 2001:83).

Saunders et al. (2003:203) define ethics in a research context as: “the appropriateness of your behaviour in relation to the rights of those who become the subjects of your work, or are affected by it.”

Thomas and Nelson (2001:84) summarise the rights of participants in research projects as:
• The right to privacy or non-participation entails that information which is not relevant to the research project should not be required, and furthermore the researcher must obtain consent from the participants.

• The right to remain anonymous requires that the researcher should explain to participants that other forms of identification, not their names, will be used to record data.

• The right to confidentiality means that participants should be informed who will have access to original data whereby they could be identified.

• The right to expect experimenter responsibility suggests that the researcher should be sensitive to human dignity and participants should be told what the purpose of the research is.

The researcher strove to maintain high ethical standards and took the following steps to eliminate any ethical issues that might arise.

Firstly, it is a requirement of the University of Johannesburg that all postgraduate research projects that involve human subjects have to be cleared by the Faculty Ethics Committee.

Secondly, an informed consent form was incorporated into the cover letter which accompanied the online questionnaire (see Appendix C).

The development of the informed consent form was guided by Maree (2009:235).

• The participants were fully informed about the purpose of the research and the possible benefits the results could have for individuals as well as for organisations.

• Participants were informed about the probable length of time that would be required to complete the questionnaire.

• Participants were made aware of the nature of their involvement; they were also informed that they could discontinue answering the questionnaire at any time without suffering any negative consequences.
3.11 CONCLUSION
The relevant population for this study was all female professionals who strive to balance family responsibilities and work demands. They should ideally have young dependant children. However, female professionals who have older children but who could still relate to this problem could also participate. Employment status could be any of the following: Working full-time, working part-time, working informally or not working.

Female professionals from the described population were invited to participate using two non-probability sampling techniques namely, a snowball sampling technique and a haphazard sampling technique.

Quantitative data was collected through a self-administered online questionnaire. An invitation to participate containing a link to the online questionnaire was e-mailed to prospective respondents. The same invitation to participate and link to the online questionnaire was also posted on the website of selected online parent support groups or facebook pages (Baba en Kleuter, Baby and Toddler, Your Pregnancy).

The questionnaire was completed by 191 volunteer respondents. Any woman who fell into the desired population was allowed to complete the questionnaire. Specific qualifying questions were incorporated into the questionnaire to ensure that only participants from the desire population could complete the questionnaire.

The aim of the questionnaire was to investigate the following research questions:
1. The most appropriate Work-Life Balance Strategies that organisations can offer to employees who strive to balance family responsibilities and career demands.

2. Pro-active actions that female professionals can follow during a period of being 'off-ramped' to enhance their re-entering ability.

The researcher recognised that her research would not be possible without the help and co-operation of others, and therefore endeavoured to treat them with the honesty and respect they deserved. Care was taken to assure that respondents were informed about all the aspects of the research and that their right to privacy would be maintained.
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 3 explained in detail the research methodology followed. In the following section the research results will be presented and discussed in terms of the three research objectives that were posed.

A structured online questionnaire was used to collect data from the relevant population. A qualifying question, “Do you have children?” ensured that only respondents from the relevant population completed the questionnaire.

Demographic information, information about child-caring responsibilities and information related to respondents’ careers were used to describe the population in more detail and to assist in the validation of some of the research results. A comparison of respondents’ careers prior and subsequent to having children was used to determine how respondents’ careers and career decisions was influenced by child-caring responsibilities.

Information about previous career breaks and information about the careers of respondents who have exited from their professions and their experiences will assist in answering the two secondary research objectives, namely:

- Identify appropriate learning and development opportunities which organisations can make available to employees who have off-ramped, to keep them relevant in their fields.
- Identify pro-active actions that female professionals can follow during a period of being off-ramped to keep them relevant in their fields.
Information about work-life balance benefits was used to answer the primary research objective:

- Identify appropriate work-life balance arrangements that organisations can offer to female employees who strive to balance family responsibilities and career demands.

The research population was all female professionals who strive to balance family responsibilities and work demands. They should also have or have had young dependant children. Employment status could be any of the following: working full-time, working part-time, working informally or not working.

Due to the failure of some respondents to answer all the questions, some variation exists in the number of respondents who answered each question. Respondents might not have understood all the questions or felt that it was not applicable to them and therefore did not answer. In the discussion of the results the valid percentage (only the percentage of respondents who answered the particular question) for each question will be used.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.2.1 Qualifying question

A qualifying question at the beginning of the questionnaire; “Do you have children?” ensured that only respondents from the relevant population completed the questionnaire.

Two hundred and one respondents completed the questionnaire, of which 191 had children (representing 95 percent), 10 (5 percent) did not have children and were therefore not included in the sample.

It was recommended that at least 150 respondents from the relevant population should complete the questionnaire to ensure that the results had statistical significance.
4.2.2 Demographic questions

Demographic information was used to describe the sample in more detail.

4.2.2.1 Age

The majority of the respondents, 117, (63.6 percent) were in the 31-40 years of age category. The second largest age category was the 21-30 years which consisted of 39 respondents (21.2 percent). The age categories 41-50 and 51-60 consisted of 26 respondents (14.1 percent) and two respondents (1.1 percent) respectively.

Two explanations can be offered for the two dominant age categories:

- The research population was female professionals who have young dependent children. This would automatically place most of the respondents in the 21-40 years of age category.
- A snowball sampling method was also used to distribute the questionnaire to the relevant population. The researcher falls in the 21-40 years of age category and most of her friends whom she asked to complete and distribute the questionnaire also fall within this age category.
4.2.2.2 Race

The largest group of respondents, 156 (84.8 percent) were white. Only 11 (6 percent) were black. The coloured and Indian/Asian groups both consisted of eight respondents (4.3 percent).

The sampling method may again be offered as an explanation for why the largest group of respondents fell into the white race group.
4.2.2.3 Household structure
One hundred and sixty nine respondents (92.3 percent) were married. Six respondents (3.3 percent) were single and three respondents (1.6 percent) were widowed or divorced. Five respondents (2.7 percent) were living with their partners.

The research population was female professionals who have young dependent children, or those with older children who could still relate to the problem. It would therefore not be uncommon for the majority of the respondents to fall into the married group category.

4.2.2.4 Household income structure
One hundred and fifty four respondents (84.2 percent) were in a dual income household. Only 29 respondents (15.8 percent) were in a single income household.

The literature shows that more women become qualified and therefore enter the workforce. Literature further indicates that economic conditions necessitate most households to be dual income households. Therefore, the high percentage of respondents in the dual income group.
Qualifications ranged from grade twelve to doctoral degrees. Twenty-nine respondents (15.8 percent) had grade twelve. Fourteen respondents (7.5 percent) had certificates. Thirty five respondents (19 percent) had diplomas. Graduate respondents consisted of 36 respondents (19.6 percent), 38 respondents (20.7 percent) had honours degrees, 29 respondents (15.8 percent) had Master’s degrees and three (1.6 percent) had doctoral degrees.

![Figure 4.5 Household income structure](image)

**4.2.2.5 Highest qualification**

![Figure 4.6 Highest qualification](image)
One hundred and sixty two respondents answered both the questions, “What is your highest qualification attained?” and “What is your current employment status?” For statistical comparison purposes the respondents were grouped into three groups. Respondents with Grade 12 or Certificates were grouped together, respondents with a Diploma or a Degree formed a group and respondents with postgraduate qualifications consisted of the third group.

Thirty seven respondents have either a Grade 12 or a Certificate. Of these respondents 30 are working full-time, six are part-time and one is not working. Sixty two respondents have a Diploma or a Degree. Of these respondents, 45 are working full-time, 13 are part-time and four are not working. Sixty three respondents have a postgraduate qualification. Of these respondents 29 are working full-time, 32 are part-time and two are not working.

For this research, it was important to know what qualifications the respondents had and to compare it with their current (subsequent to having children) form of employment.

The Chi-Square test for independence was performed to explore the relationships between the three groups, highest qualification attained, and current employment status. A warning was reported: 6 cells have (66.7%) an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.11. This meant that the Pearson Chi-Square value for independence and the p-value for significance could not be used.

However, observation of the comparative values of the groups suggests that:

- All three groups have a high number of respondents who are currently working full-time.
- More respondents with postgraduate qualifications work part-time/informal/self. This should be noted, because it confirms that female professionals with high qualifications are exiting their professions, leaving industries and organisations depleted of valuable female talent.
Table 4.1 Chi-Square Test – Highest qualification attained compared with current form of employment

4.2.3 Information about respondents’ child caring responsibilities

The literature on the topic proposes that women’s careers take strain during the period when their children are still young and dependent. The following section of questions investigated how many children respondents had and how concerns about their careers might influence the number of children they decide to have. It further investigated how child-caring responsibilities are shared in households and what additional assistance working mothers have with child-caring responsibilities.
4.2.3.1 How many children do respondents have?
The majority of the respondents, 97 (52.4 percent) had two children. Sixty nine (37.3 percent) had one child. Respondents who had more than two children were significantly less, with 17 (9.2 percent) who had three children and two (1.1 percent) had four children.

![Bar chart showing the number of children respondents have.](chart.png)

Figure 4.8 How many children do you have?

4.2.3.2 Is the concern of balancing career and family preventing respondents from having more children?
Seventy four respondents (40 percent) indicated that the concern of balancing their careers and their family lives prevented them from having more children. Of these respondents, 70 had 1-2 children and four had 3-4 children. One hundred and eleven respondents (60 percent) indicated that the concern of balancing career and family life did not prevent them from having more children. Of these respondents, 96 had 1-2 children and 15 had 3-4 children.

The Chi-Square test was performed to determine if there were significant differences between the responses of the respondents who had 1-2 children and those who had 3-4 children. No warning was reported and therefore the Continuity Correction Value (used with a 2 x 2 Table) should be used.
The Continuity Correction Value was 2.340 with an associate significance level of $p = .125$. To be significant, the $p$ or Sig value needs to be $p = .05$ or smaller. In this case the value of .125 is larger than .05. It can be concluded that the results are not significant. This means that the responses of respondents who had 1-2 children were not significantly different from those respondents who had 3-4 children.

![Figure 4.9](image)

Figure 4.9 Is the concern of balancing your professional career and family responsibilities preventing you from having more children?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-Square Tests</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</th>
<th>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>3.167</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.075</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity Correction</td>
<td>2.349</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>3.422</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.064</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fisher's Exact Test</td>
<td>3.150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>3.150</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.076</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td>.059</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>185</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 Chi-Square test – Number of children compared with is the concern of balancing career and family responsibilities preventing you from having more children
4.2.3.3 How are child-caring responsibilities shared in respondents’ households?

The majority 92 respondents indicated that the mother carries most of the child-
caring responsibilities. Of these respondents, 49 were working full-time, 20 were
working part-time and 16 were entrepreneurs or had their own businesses. Sixty
three respondents shared the responsibility between both spouses. Of these
respondents 49 were working full-time, eight part-time and five were
entrepreneurs or business owners. Only two fathers were primarily responsible
for child rearing responsibilities, in both these cases the mother was working full-
time.

The Chi-Square test for independence was performed to explore the
relationships between the groups, current employment status, and how child-
caring responsibilities were shared in their household. A warning was reported:
14 cells (70.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected
count is 0.01. This meant that the Pearson Chi-Square value for independence
and the p-value for significance could not be used.

However, the results are consistent with what the literature reported on gender
role theory and how in most households the majority of the child-caring
responsibilities were carried out by the mothers. This result should also be noted,
because the dual role responsibilities of mother and female professional could
certainly affect each other.
Figure 4.10 How are child rearing responsibilities shared in your household and current form of employment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-Square Tests</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>13.220</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>15.663</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>2.833</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>162</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 Chi-Square test – How are childcare responsibilities shared compared with current form of employment?

4.2.3.4 What additional assistance with childcare responsibilities do respondents have?
Respondents could mark multiple responses. Eighty five (45.9 percent) of the respondents utilised nursery schools or kindergardens and 25 (13.5 percent) day-care facilities as an option to assist with childcare responsibilities. Seventy eight (42.4 percent) of the respondents had parents/grandparents who significantly contribute towards childcare responsibilities. Domestic workers (63 respondents, 34.2 percent), nannies (28 respondents, 14.7 percent) and au pairs (five respondents, 2.2 percent) were also utilised extensively. Only 18
respondents (9.7 percent) of respondents did not receive any additional assistance with childcare responsibilities.

Female professionals who are working full-time primarily utilise kindergardens, nursery schools, grandparents and domestic help to assist with child-caring responsibilities. The utilisation of external assistance with child caring responsibilities of respondents whose form of employment is not full-time is much lower, however, kindergardens, nursery schools, grandparents and domestic help are also being utilised extensively.

![Figure 4.11 What additional assistance with childcare responsibilities do you have?](image)

4.2.4 Information related to respondents’ careers

A part of the aim of the research was to establish what the effect of child-caring responsibilities was on the careers of female professionals. The following section will look at respondents’ careers prior and subsequent to having children. Data from all the respondents will be used for information about careers prior to having children, but for some of the comparisons data from only respondents who are currently working full-time will be used.
4.2.4.1 Employment status

Employment status prior and subsequent to having children was compared. Of the 141 respondents who were working full-time prior to having children 97 respondents were still working full-time subsequent to having children, 38 respondents were now working part-time/self-employed/informal, and six respondents were not working. Fifteen respondents were working part-time/self-employed/informal prior to having children, 13 respondents were still working part-time/self-employed/informal, seven respondents were working full-time, and one respondent was not working. No respondents indicated that they were not working prior to having children.

Employment status prior and subsequent to women having children was compared. The Marginal Homogeneity Test was used to determine if there was agreement between the groups prior and subsequent to having children. The Marginal Homogeneity value was 1.512 with a significance of $p = .131$. In this case the $p$-value of .131 is larger than .05 which means that there is no significant difference between respondents’ employment status prior and subsequent to having children.

![Figure 4.12 Employment status prior to and subsequent to having children](image-url)
### Marginal Homogeneity Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Distinct Values</th>
<th>Off-Diagonal Cases</th>
<th>Observed MH Statistic</th>
<th>Mean MH Statistic</th>
<th>Std. Deviation of MH Statistic</th>
<th>Std. MH Statistic</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>rC4 &amp; rD17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>56.000</td>
<td>52.000</td>
<td>2.646</td>
<td>1.512</td>
<td>.131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 Marginal Homogeneity Test – Comparison of employment status prior and subsequent to having children

#### 4.2.4.2 Is this your preferred form of employment?

The previous results showed that there was no statistical significance between respondents’ employment status prior and subsequent to having children. However, 72 respondents (45 percent) indicated that their current form of employment was not their preferred form of employment. Only 88 respondents (55 percent) indicated that they preferred their current form of employment.

Figure 4.13  Is this your preferred form of employment?
4.2.4.3 What would you prefer your form of employment to be?
Of the 72 respondents who had indicated that they would prefer their employment status to be different, five respondents indicated that they would prefer to work full-time, 62 respondents would rather work part-time, and five respondents indicated that they would prefer not to work.

This result could be of particular interest to organisations who probably have numerous female professionals with young children who are working full-time because there are no other options available, but who might have rather opted for a part-time position if it were available.

![Bar chart](image)

Figure 4.14 What would you prefer your employment status to be?

4.2.4.4 How long have you been working for in completed years?
Thirteen respondents (7.3 percent) had been working for five years or less. One hundred and seventeen respondents (66.1 percent) had been working between five and fifteen years. Forty seven respondents (26.6 percent) had been working more than fifteen years.
One hundred and fifty six respondents answered both the questions, “How long have you been working for in completed years?” and “What is your current employment status?”

Eleven had been working less than five years with the most respondents (four) working either full time or part-time/self-employed. One hundred and five respondents had been working between five and fifteen years, with the most respondents (66) working full time. Thirty five respondents work part-time/self-employed and only four were not working. Forty respondents had been working more than fifteen years with the most respondents (29) working full time. Eleven respondents worked part-time/self-employed and none were not working.

The Chi-Square test for independence was performed to determine the relationship between the group’s current employment status, and how long they had been working for in completed years. A warning was reported: 12 cells (57.15%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 0.03. This meant that the Pearson Chi-Square value for independence and the p-value for significance could not be used.
Figure 4.16  Period worked for compared with current form of employment

Table 4.5  Chi-Square test – Period worked for compared with current form of employment

4.2.4.5 Would you or your husband/partner compromise your careers to accommodate your family?

Hundred and fifty female respondents (94.3 percent) indicated that they would compromise their careers to accommodate their families. Conversely, only 64 of the respondents (40 percent) indicated that their husbands or partners would compromise their careers to accommodate their families.
This result is also in line with the relevant literature, which found that female professionals compromised their careers more often to accommodate their family responsibilities and also their spouse’s careers.

![Figure 4.17 Would you or your husband/partner compromise your careers to accommodate your family?](image)

4.2.5 Comparisons of respondents’ careers who worked full-time prior and subsequent to having children.

Information about respondents’ careers who returned to full-time employment subsequent to having children was compared to information about their careers prior to having children. The comparison was performed to determine whether having children and the responsibilities associated with it had any effect on respondents’ careers and whether respondents preferred an alternative career or assistance to balance work demands and family responsibilities.

4.2.5.1 In what industry did/do you work?

Industries were compared prior and subsequent to women having children. The Kappa measure of agreement was used to determine if there was agreement
between the industries female professionals worked in prior and subsequent to having children.

The Kappa Measure of Agreement value was .793 with a significance of p< .000. A Kappa value above .7 represents good agreement. Therefore, the level of agreement between industries worked in prior and subsequent to having children is good. This shows that the female professionals who returned to full-time employment predominantly returned to the industries they had been working in prior to having children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Agreement</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Asymp. Std. Error</th>
<th>Approx. T</th>
<th>Approx. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kappa</td>
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<td>.045</td>
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<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>91</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 Symmetric measures – What industry did/do you work in?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry prior to having children</th>
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Table 4.7  Industry prior to having children compared with industry subsequent to having children
4.2.5.2 What was/is your occupation?

Occupations were compared prior and subsequent to women having children. The Kappa measure of agreement was used to determine if there was agreement between the occupations female professionals had prior and subsequent to having children.

The Kappa Measure of Agreement value was .737 with a significance of p < .000 a Kappa value above .7 represents good agreement. Therefore, the level of agreement between occupations held prior and subsequent to having children is good. This shows that the female professionals who returned to full-time employment predominantly returned to the occupations they had prior to having children.

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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical/Specialist work, (e.g. IT)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.8 Occupation prior to having children compared with occupation subsequent to having children

Table 4.9 Symmetric measures – What was/is your occupation?
4.2.5.3 Where in the company hierarchy did/do you fit in?

Respondents’ position in the company hierarchy was compared prior and subsequent to female professionals having children. The Kappa measure of agreement was used to determine if there was agreement between the groups prior and subsequent to having children.

The Kappa Measure of Agreement value was .490 with a significance of p< .000. A Kappa value below .5 represents below moderate agreement. Therefore, the level of agreement between respondents’ position in the company hierarchy prior and subsequent to having children is below moderate.

However, when the actual values were scrutinised it was found that most of the respondents had returned to the same level in the company hierarchy as they had been in prior to having children. The only two groups that had significant changes were; senior management level from where two respondents (50 percent of the respondents) had moved to executive levels, and the operational management group that lost six respondents (43 percent to non-management levels) and three respondents 21 percent to middle management.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company hierarchy subsequent to having children</th>
<th>Executive level</th>
<th>Senior level management</th>
<th>Middle-level management</th>
<th>Operational-management</th>
<th>Non-management</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Executive level</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior level management</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle-level management</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operational-management</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-management</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10 Position in company hierarchy prior to having children compared with position in company hierarchy subsequent to having children
4.2.5.4 Did/do you aspire to reach a more senior position?

Female professionals’ aspirations to reach more senior positions prior and subsequent to them having children were compared. The Marginal Homogeneity Test was used to determine if there was agreement between their aspirations prior and subsequent to having children. The Marginal Homogeneity value was .119 with a significance of $p = .906$. In this case the p-value of .906 is larger than .05, which means that there is no significant difference between respondents’ aspirations prior and subsequent to having children.

However, upon closer inspection of the results it should be noted that there is a considerable number of female professionals who opted for lower level managerial positions subsequent to having children than prior to having children.

Prior to having children, 46 respondents indicated that they did aspire to reach a more senior position. Subsequent to having children, only three of the original six respondents still aspired to reach an executive position. Nineteen respondents aspired to reach senior management level positions, but subsequent to having children, only 13 respondents still aspired to reach a senior management positions. Thirteen respondents aspired to a middle-management position and subsequent to having children, nine still aspired to reach middle-management positions. Six respondents aspired to reach operational management positions prior to having children, but subsequent to having children, four respondents aimed to reach middle-management positions. The two respondents who wanted to be in non-management positions prior to having children, aspired to be in senior management positions subsequent to having children.
Figure 4.18  Management level aspired to prior to having children compared to management level aspired to subsequent to having children

Table 4.11  Marginal Homogeneity Test – comparison of aspirations to reach more senior positions prior and subsequent to having children

### 4.2.5.5 How many people reported/report directly to you?

Prior to having children, 73 respondents reported that they had 10 or less, and 11 respondents had more than 10 people who reported directly to them. Subsequent to having children, 69 respondents still had 10 or less, and 10 respondents more than 10 people who reported directly to them.
The Kappa Measure of Agreement value was .619 with a significance of p< .000. A Kappa value above .5 represents moderate agreement. Therefore, the level of agreement between the number of reportees prior and subsequent to having children is moderate.

Figure 4.19 Number of reportees prior to having children compared to subsequent to having children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Agreement</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Asymp. Std. Error</th>
<th>Approx. T</th>
<th>Approx. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kappa</td>
<td>.619</td>
<td>.132</td>
<td>5.643</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.12 Symmetric values – How many people did/do report directly to you?

4.2.5.6 How many hours did/do you work?

Prior to having children, 41 respondents worked 40 hours or less and 49 respondents worked more than 40 hours per week. Subsequent to having children, 22 respondents still worked 40 hour or less, but 19 respondents now worked more than 40 hours per week. Forty seven respondents still
worked more than 40 hours and only two respondents worked 40 hour or less per week subsequent to having children.

The Kappa Measure of Agreement value was .513 with a significance of p< .000. A Kappa value above .5 represents moderate agreement. Therefore, the level of agreement between the number of hours worked prior and subsequent to having children is moderate.

This means that female professionals are working more or less the same number of hours subsequent to having children than prior to having children.

![Figure 4.20 Number of hours worked prior to having children compared with number of hours worked subsequent to having children](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Agreement</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Asymp. Std. Error</th>
<th>Approx. T</th>
<th>Approx. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kappa</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>5.297</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13 Symmetric values – How many hours did/do you work?
4.2.5.7 How often did/do you take work home

Prior to having children, 71 respondents seldom took work home and 17 respondents frequently took work home. Subsequent to having children, 55 respondents still seldom took work home and 16 respondents started taking work home frequently. Twelve of the respondents who took work home frequently prior to having children still do so, but five respondents now only do so seldomly.

The Kappa Measure of Agreement value was .386 with a significance of p < .000. A Kappa value below .5 represents below moderate agreement. Therefore, the level of agreement between how often respondents took work home prior and subsequent to having children is below moderate.

Upon inspection of the actual values, it seems as if there are slightly less female professionals who take work home subsequent to having children than there were prior to having children.
Figure 4.21  Frequency of taking work home prior to having children compared to the frequency of taking work home subsequent to having children.

Table 4.14 Symmetric values – How often did/do you take work home?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Agreement</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Asymp. Std. Error</th>
<th>Approx. T</th>
<th>Approx. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kappa</td>
<td>.386</td>
<td>.106</td>
<td>3.821</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.5.8 When at work, how engaged were/are you with your work?

Prior to having children, 12 respondents indicated that they were distracted and 76 respondents indicated that they were engaged while at work. Subsequent to having children, eight of the previously distracted respondents were now engaged and four were still distracted. Only eight of the previously engaged employees were distracted subsequent to having children, the remaining 73 were still engaged.
The Kappa Measure of Agreement value was .356 with a significance of \( p < .000 \). A Kappa value below .5 represents below moderate agreement. Therefore, the level of agreement between respondents’ level of engagement with their work, while at work, prior and subsequent to having children is below moderate.

This means that there is a somewhat significant difference between female professionals’ levels of engagement prior and subsequent to having children.

![Figure 4.22](image-url)  
**Figure 4.22** Level of engagement with your work while at work prior to having children, compared to level of engagement with your work while at work subsequent to having children
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Agreement</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Asymp. Std. Error</th>
<th>Approx. T</th>
<th>Approx. Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kappa</td>
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<td>.150</td>
<td>3.496</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>88</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.15  Symmetric values – How engaged were/are you with your work when at work?

4.2.5.9 How often do you experience work/family conflict? Describe the work family conflict you experience

Fifty nine respondents (65.6 percent) reported that they sometimes experienced work/family conflict. Twenty one respondents (23.3 percent) indicated that they often experienced work/family conflict. Seven respondents (7.8 percent) and three respondents (3.3 percent) indicated respectively that they never and always experienced work/family conflict.

Of the respondents who indicated that they did experience work/family conflict, 47 respondents (51.6 percent) reported that the conflict they experienced arose because work demands interfered with family responsibilities. Thirty two respondents (35.2 percent) reported the contrary, family responsibilities interfered with work demands and therefore caused the respondents to experience conflict.
Figure 4.23  How often do you experience work/family conflict?

Figure 4.24  What type of work-family conflict do you experience?
4.2.6 Information about previous career breaks

Information about previous career breaks can assist in identifying actions that female professionals can follow during a period of being out of their profession to assist them to return to their professions at an acceptable level.

4.2.6.1 Have you had any previous career breaks to accommodate family and child-caring responsibilities?

Fifty one respondents (31.9 percent) had previous career breaks and 109 respondents (68.1 percent) did not have any previous career breaks.

![Bar chart showing the percentage of respondents who had or did not have previous career breaks]

Figure 4.25 Have you had any previous career breaks to accommodate family and child-caring responsibilities?

4.2.6.2 Have you taken any conscious actions to equip yourself to remain relevant in your field and to successfully return to your field?

Nineteen respondents indicated that they consciously took actions to equip themselves to remain relevant and to successfully return to their field.
The respondents who answered ‘yes’ to this question, had to qualitatively describe the specific actions they had taken to assist them to remain relevant in their professions. The responses were coded and the following is a summary of the actions the respondents took to remain relevant.

- Undertook further studies in their field
- Attended Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses
- Did ad hoc/consulting work
- Kept in touch with colleagues and remained updated with developments at the office
- Attended external courses
- Kept up to date by reading relevant literature

Figure 4.26 Have you consciously taken any actions to equip yourself to remain relevant and to successfully return to your field?
4.2.6.3 How successful were you at returning to your field?

Of the respondents who consciously undertook actions to remain relevant in their field, 11 respondents were completely successful, five respondents were somewhat successful and one respondent was completely unsuccessful at returning to their professions after a career break.

![Bar graph showing the number of respondents' responses.](image)

Figure 4.27 How successful were you at returning to your profession after a career break?

4.2.7 Information about work-life balance benefits

The primary objective of this study is to identify the most appropriate work-life balance benefits companies can offer female employees with young children to assist them to balance career demands and family responsibilities more successfully.
4.2.7.1 Which work-life balance benefits did/does your company offer and which of these benefits would you consider following?

Respondents could mark multiple responses for this question. The four work-life balance benefits that were mostly available are: flexible working hours (78 respondents), part-time work (22 respondents), mobile working (20 respondents) and parental leave (34 respondents). Forty respondents indicated that their organisations did not offer any work-life balance benefits.

Respondents could also mark multiple responses for the question regarding to which of these benefits they would consider following. Benefits will be listed from the benefits with the most responses to those with the least responses.

- Flexible working hours (117 respondents)
- On-site childcare facilities (87 respondents)
- Parental leave (76 respondents)
- Mobile working (71 respondents)
- Childcare allowance (66 respondents)
- Part-time work (66 respondents)
- Virtual work (61 respondents)
- Averaging of hours worked (46 respondents)
- Satellite offices (43 respondents)
- Telecommuting (42 respondents)
- Compressed work week (39 respondents)
- Consulting (35 respondents)

The remaining benefits all received less than 20 responses.
Figure 4.28 Which of the following work-life balance benefits did/does your company offer compared with which of the work-life balance benefits you would consider following.

### 4.2.7.2 What is the appropriateness of each of the work-life balance benefits?

Respondents were asked to indicate the appropriateness of each of the listed work-life balance benefits.

The six most appropriate work-life balance benefits were: flexible working hours, on-site childcare facilities, parental leave, part-time work, mobile working, and virtual/cyber working. These were also the six least inappropriate work-life balance benefits.

The six most inappropriate work-life balance benefits, weekend work, shift work, overtime, temporary/casual work, term only working and fixed term contract were also the six least appropriate work-life balance benefits.
It is interesting to note that term-only working was indicated as being an inappropriate work-life balance benefit, especially in lieu of the remarks respondents made about their struggles with childcare arrangements during school holiday times. The inappropriateness could possibly be attributed to the negative financial implication term-only working would have on respondents.

Satellite offices, consulting, telecommuting, averaging of hours work, childcare allowance and compressed work week were indicated as being relatively appropriate, while neighbourhood work centres, annualised hours and job sharing were indicated as being relatively inappropriate work-life balance benefits.

The correlation between the appropriateness and inappropriateness of each work-life balance benefit gives reliability to the results of this question.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Appropriate</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Most Inappropriate</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible working hours / Flexi time</td>
<td>72.7</td>
<td>Weekend work</td>
<td>55.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site childcare facilities</td>
<td>60.7</td>
<td>Shift work</td>
<td>50.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental leave</td>
<td>59.6</td>
<td>Overtime</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-time work</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>Temporary / Casual work</td>
<td>41.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile working</td>
<td>55.4</td>
<td>Term-only working</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual / Cyber working</td>
<td>54.4</td>
<td>Fixed-term contract</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satellite offices</td>
<td>51.3</td>
<td>Neighbourhood work centres</td>
<td>27.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>Annualised hours</td>
<td>26.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommuting</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>Job sharing</td>
<td>26.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Averaging of hours work</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>Childcare allowance</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare allowance</td>
<td>46.0</td>
<td>Compressed work week</td>
<td>23.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compressed work week</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>Averaging of hours work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job sharing</td>
<td>41.3</td>
<td>Telecommuting</td>
<td>18.8</td>
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<td>Annualised hours</td>
<td>40.3</td>
<td>Satellite offices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Neighbourhood work centres</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>Consulting</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed-term contract</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>Part-time work</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term-only working</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>Mobile working</td>
<td>14.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overtime</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>Virtual / Cyber working</td>
<td>13.6</td>
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<td>Temporary / Casual work</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>On-site childcare facilities</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
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<td>Shift work</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>Parental leave</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend work</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>Flexible working hours / Flexi time</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.16 Most appropriate and most inappropriate work-life balance benefits

4.2.7.3 Did you have the confidence to enquire about utilising any of the work-life balance benefits?

Relevant literature has indicated that employees did not always have the confidence to enquire about utilising any of the available work-life balance benefits due to the negative impact employees perceive it could have on their careers.

Ninety five respondents (61.3 percent) indicated that they did have the confidence, and 60 respondents (38.7 percent) indicated that they did not have the confidence to enquire about utilising some of the available work-life balance benefits.
The respondents who answered ‘no’ to this question had to qualitatively describe why they did not have the confidence to enquire about utilising any of the available work-life balance benefits. The responses were coded and the following is a summary of the reasons that respondents had given:

- To utilise work-life balance benefits is not the norm and therefore employees are discouraged from enquiring about the possibility of utilising any.
- Due to operational requirements of certain occupations, utilising any work-life balance benefits is not a possibility.
- Organisations do not currently offer any work-life balance benefits. Some respondents furthermore felt that there are too many other policies and red tape that would have to be by-passed and could not foresee such benefits in the near future.
- Many organisations are still male dominated and therefore the work-life balance problem working mothers are faced with is not adequately understood or catered for.
- Respondents were afraid to ask for these benefits due to the assumption that their management would think they were too lazy to work. Some respondents were also afraid that they would be victimised for enquiring about such benefits.
- In some organisations it is just not an appropriate thing to ask.
- Respondents indicated that their managers would be unapproachable for such a request or that it would not even be considered.
- Respondents also felt that there was no transparency in the process of allowing employees to utilise work-life balance benefits.
4.2.7.4 Have you enquired about the possibility of utilising any of the available work-life balance benefits?

Seventy four respondents (50.7 percent) indicated that they had enquired, and 72 respondents (49.3 percent) indicated that they had not enquired about the possibility of utilising any of the available work-life balance benefits.

It was further asked what the responses to those who had enquired was. Qualitative responses were coded and consisted of the following:

- Some requests had been accommodated.
- Some managers merely said “no”, no reasons were offered. In other instances feedback was that the request could not be accommodated.
- Operational requirements of some organisations and positions also made it unpractical to attempt to utilise work-life balance benefits.
• Some organisations did not have such benefits available and could therefore not accommodate the request.

Respondents who answered that they had not enquired were also asked to specify why they had not enquired. Qualitative responses were also coded and consisted of the following:

• Some respondents had already decided to resign and therefore did not enquire about the possibility of utilising any of the work-life balance benefits.

• A number of respondent did not have the courage.

• Some respondents were not aware of the availability of work-life balance benefits and others simply did not consider to enquire about the possibility of utilising them.

• Organisations have none available.

• Respondents knew that their requests would not be granted.

• Organisations or managers are unapproachable to such requests.

• Organisational requirements would not allow for such requests to be granted.

• Some respondents felt that it should not be the organisation’s problem.

• Some respondents did not have the need for it.
4.2.7.5 What would the consequences of following any of the work-life balance benefits be on your career?

Seventy six respondents (50.7 percent) indicated that following work-life balance benefits would have a positive effect on their careers. Thirty five respondents (23.3 percent) felt that it would keep them relevant in their field. Nineteen respondents (12.7 percent) perceived that following work-life balance benefits would have a negative effect on their careers. Twenty respondents (13.3 percent) felt that it would have no consequence on their careers.
4.2.8 Information about respondents whose current form of employment is: working part-time, working for self/entrepreneur/own business, working informal or not working

Information gained from this section could assist in understanding why women exit from their careers and what organisations could do differently to prevent them from leaving. This section also examined what female professionals who decide to exit from their professions can do to remain relevant in their fields to return to their professions at an acceptable level.

4.2.8.1 When did you decide to exit from your career?

Forty two respondents (73.7 percent) indicated that they had returned to full-time employment and found it too difficult to balance work demands and family responsibilities and subsequently decided to exit from their professions. Thirty one respondents (53.4 percent) reported that prior to

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**Figure 4.31** What would the effect of following any of the work-life balance benefits be on your career?
having children, they had already decided to exit from their full-time professions once their children were born.

![Bar chart showing percentage of respondents who decided to exit their profession.]

**Figure 4.32 When did you decide to exit from your professional career?**

### 4.2.8.2 How long have you been out of your profession?

Twenty two respondents (44.9 percent) had only been out of their professions for 0-6 months. Twelve respondents (24.5 percent) and 10 respondents (20.4 percent) had been out of their professions for 6-24 months and 2-3 years respectively. Only two respondents (4.1 percent) had been out of their professions for 4-6 years and three respondents (6.1 percent) had been out of their professions for more than 6 years.
4.2.8.3 Would you like to be able to return to your profession in the future and if so, when?

Twenty four respondents (42.9 percent) indicated that they would like to be able to return to their professions in the future. Sixteen respondents (28.6 percent) were not sure if they would like to return, and 16 respondents (28.6 percent) indicated that they would not like to return to their professions in the future.
4.2.8.4 Do you believe that your current form of employment would adequately equip you to return to your profession?

Fifty seven respondents answered both questions, “What is your current form of employment?” and “Do you think your current form of employment will adequately equip you to return to your profession?”

Fifty respondents indicated that they were working part-time for themselves or informally. Of these respondents 26 (52 percent) indicated that their current form of employment would adequately equip them to return to their professions, 15 (30 percent) indicated that that their current form of employment would equip them only somewhat to return to their professions, and nine (18 percent) would not at all be equipped to return to their profession. Of the seven respondents who were not working, three (42.9 percent) indicated that they would be somewhat equipped, and four (57.1 percent) would not at all be equipped to return to their professions.
The Chi-Square test for independence was performed to determine the relationship between the respondents’ current employment status, and how equipped they were to return to their profession. The Pearson Chi-Square value was 8.086 with a significance of p=.018. A p value <.05 indicates that there is a statistical significance between respondents’ current form of employment and how equipped they are to return to their professions.

Figure 4.35 Current form of employment compared with how equipped you are to return to your profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chi-Square Tests</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>.018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
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<td>.006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
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<td>.005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>57</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.17 Chi-Square Test – Current form of employment compared with how equipped you are to return to your profession
4.2.8.5 What additional actions can you take to better equip yourself to return to your profession?

The most respondents, 39 (72.2 percent) indicated that continuous professional development courses and workshops would keep them adequately equipped to return to their professions. Attending workshops and reading were both mentioned by 26 respondents (48.1 percent). Twenty respondents (37 percent) indicated that further studies would equip them adequately.

Quantitative responses for this question were coded and the following replies were given:

- Keeping in touch with colleagues and staying updated with new developments at the office and the organisation would be beneficial.
- Attending seminars keeps one updated and informed.
- Reading relevant literature and remaining updated with developments in the industry are vital.
- Doing ad hoc, part-time or consulting work is advantageous.
- Owning a business develops skills.
4.2.8.6 Could your previous company assist in any way to better equip you to return to your profession?

Only nine respondents (15.5 percent) indicated that their previous companies could assist in some way to better equip them to remain relevant in their fields in order to be able to return to their professions in the future.

Their qualitative responses included the following:

- Organisations could allow flexible or reduced working hours as an option
- Organisations could provide financial assistance with studies
- Organisations could allow employees who have exited from their professions to continue to attend internal training and courses.
Figure 4.37 Could your previous company assist in any way to better equip you to return to your profession?

**4.2.8.7 Would you return to your previous company?**

Responses to the questions, “Would you return to your previous company?” and “What work-life balance benefits did your company offer?” were compared.

Of the 19 respondents (33.9 percent) who answered ‘yes’, the following work-life balance benefits were present at their previous companies: One respondent (1.8 percent) confirmed childcare assistance benefits, 10 respondents (17.9 percent) flexible place options, three respondents (5.4 percent) flexible work options and, five respondents (8.9 percent) parental leave benefits.

Nineteen respondents (33.9 percent) answered ‘no’. However, the following work-life balance benefits were also available at their companies. Thirteen respondents (23.2 percent) reported flexible place options, two
respondents (3.6 percent) flexible work options, and four respondents (7.1 percent) parental leave benefits.

The work-life balance benefits available to respondents who answered ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to the question if they would return were similar, but it is unknown whether the respondents who answered ‘no’ had the confidence to enquire about the possibility of utilising any of the available benefits.

Figure 4.38 Would you return to your previous company compared with work-life balance benefits offered by your previous company
4.3 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.3.1 Demographic information
The majority of the respondents who participated in this study were white, married females between the ages of 31-40 years, living in a dual-income household. Respondents' qualifications ranged from grade twelve to doctoral degrees, with most of the respondents having honours degrees, degrees and diplomas.

For this research, it was important to know what qualifications the respondents had and to compare it with their current form of employment. Respondents were grouped into grade twelve or certificate, diploma or degree and postgraduate qualification. Most of the respondents in all three groups are currently working full-time. However a large number of respondents with postgraduate qualifications work part-time/informal/self-employed.

4.3.2 Information about child-caring responsibilities
Most of the respondents who participated in this study have either one or two children, significantly fewer respondents have more than three children. Almost half of the respondents indicated that the concern of balancing family responsibilities and career demands was preventing them from having more children.

The majority of the respondents indicated that the mother carries most of the child-caring responsibilities. Furthermore, most of these mothers are also working full-time.

The mothers who are working full-time are forced to source additional assistance with their childcare responsibilities and primarily utilise kindergardens, nursery schools, grandparents and domestic help to assist. Respondents whose form of employment is not full-time, reported that
their utilisation of external assistance with child caring responsibilities is much lower, however, kindergardens, nursery schools, grandparents and domestic help are also being utilised extensively.

4.3.3 Information related to respondents’ careers

A part of the aim of the research was to establish what the effect of child-caring responsibilities was on the careers of female professionals.

The employment status of most of the respondents stayed the same subsequent to having children as it had been prior to their having children. Only about 30 percent of the respondents who were working full-time prior to having children reported their employment status had changed to working part-time, informal, being self-employed or not working subsequent to having children.

However, almost half of the respondents indicated that their current form of employment was not their preferred form of employment. Eighty six percent of the respondents, who would prefer a different form of employment, indicated that they would rather work part-time, informal or self.

The majority, 117 of the respondents (66.1 percent) have been working between five and fifteen years. Forty seven respondents (26.6 percent) have been working more than fifteen years. Most of the respondents who have been working for more than five years are working full-time. The respondents in the same group who are working part-time are about 50 percent less and only four are not working.

In line with the relevant literature, 94.3 percent of the respondents indicated that they would compromise their careers to accommodate their families and their spouse’s careers, but only 40 percent of respondents
indicated that their husbands or partners would compromise their careers to accommodate their families.

4.3.4 Comparison of respondents’ careers prior and subsequent to having children – only respondents who returned to full-time employment subsequent to having children

Respondents’ careers were compared prior and subsequent to their having children. It was generally found that female professionals who returned to full-time employment subsequent to having children predominantly returned to the same industries and occupations they had been working in prior to having children.

Respondents’ position in the company hierarchy has also been found to have stayed relatively similar prior and subsequent to having children. The only two groups that had significant changes were senior management level from where two respondents (50 percent) had moved to executive levels, and the operational management group that lost six respondents (43 percent) to non-management levels and three respondents (21 percent) to middle management.

However, it seems that there is a considerable number of female professionals whose aspirations to reach more senior positions have declined and who would subsequent to having children, rather opt for lower level managerial positions.

Respondents generally have the same number of people who reported to them, are working a similar number of hours and have the same levels of engagement with their work subsequent to having children as they had prior to having children. But women take work home less frequently subsequent to having children as they had prior to having children. However, a large portion of the respondents indicated that they
experience work/family conflict, with work demands interfering more often with family responsibilities than vice versa.

4.3.5 **Information about previous career breaks**
Information about previous career breaks can assist in identifying actions that female professionals can follow during a period of being out of their profession to assist them to return to their professions at an acceptable level.

Not many (31.9 percent) of the respondents had previous career breaks. Only 19 respondents indicated that they consciously took actions to equip themselves to remain relevant and to successfully return to their field. Some of the actions that they undertook were:

- Continued with further studies in their field
- Attended Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses
- Did ad hoc/consulting work
- Kept in touch with colleagues and remained updated with developments at the office
- Attended external courses
- Kept up to date by reading relevant literature

Most of these respondents were able to return to their professions completely successfully.

4.3.6 **Information about work-life balance benefits**
The primary objective of this study is to identify the most appropriate work-life balance benefits companies can offer female employees with young children to assist them to balance career demands and family responsibilities more successfully.
The work-life balance benefits that were mostly available were: flexible working, part-time work, mobile working, parental leave (maternity leave) and mobile working.

Respondents indicated that they would be interested in utilising the following benefits: Flexible working hours, on-site childcare facilities, parental leave, mobile working, childcare allowance, part-time work and virtual work.

Respondents further indicated the appropriateness of each work-life balance benefit. The six most appropriate work-life balance benefits were flexible working hours, on-site childcare facilities, parental leave, part-time work, mobile working and virtual / cyber working. These were also the six least inappropriate work-life balance benefits. The six most inappropriate work-life balance benefits, weekend work, shift work, overtime, temporary / casual work, term-only working and fixed term contract were also the six least appropriate work-life balance benefits.

Respondents who indicated that they did not have the courage to enquire about utilising any of the available work-life balance benefits offered the following reasons why they lacked the courage to make enquiries:

- It is not the norm and employees are discouraged from utilising them.
- Operational requirements will not allow the utilisation of work-life balance benefits.
- Organisations do not currently offer any work-life balance benefits.
- Many organisations are still male dominated and therefore the work-life balance problem working mothers are faced with is not adequately understood or catered for.
- Some respondents were afraid that they would be victimised for enquiring about such benefits.
- In some organisations it is just not an appropriate thing to ask.
• Managers are unapproachable for such a request or that it would not even be considered.
• No transparency in the process of allowing employees to utilise work-life balance benefits.

Respondents who enquired about utilising work-life balance benefits reported the following responses to their requests:

• Some requests had been accommodated.
• Some managers merely said “no”, without reasons being offered.
• The request could not be accommodated.
• Operational requirements made it unpractical to attempt to utilise work-life balance benefits.
• Some organisations did not have such benefits available and could therefore not accommodate the request.

Respondents generally indicated that utilising work-life balance benefits would have a positive effect on their career and assist to keep them relevant in their field.

4.3.7 Information about respondents’ careers who have exited from their professions
The majority of the respondents who exited from their professions had initially returned to their professions, but found it too difficult to balance career demands and family responsibilities and decided to rather exit from their professions.

Most of the respondents had been out of their professions for less than three years, but indicated that they would like to be able to return to their professions in the future.
The respondents whose current form of employment was working part-time, informal or being self-employed generally indicated that they would be adequately or at least somewhat adequately equipped to return to full-time employment in their profession.

Additional actions that can be taken to keep them relevant in their field include: continuous professional development courses and workshops, reading and further studies. Also, keeping in touch with colleagues and remaining updated with new developments at the office and the organisation and attending seminars and doing ad hoc, private, part-time or consulting work will be to their advantage.

Only 15.5 percent of the respondents indicated that their previous companies could assist in some way to better equip them to remain relevant in their fields in order to be able to return to their professions in the future.

Their qualitative responses included the following:

- Organisations could allow flexible or reduced working hours as an option
- Organisations could provide financial assistance with studies
- Organisations could allow employees who have exited from their professions to continue to attend internal training and courses.

No correlation could be found between respondents’ desire to return to their previous company and the available work-life balance benefits at the company.
4.4 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the research results were presented and discussed in terms of the three research objectives that were posed at the beginning of the project.

This study was successful in that it identified the most appropriate work-life balance benefits organisations can offer female employees to assist them in balancing career demands and family responsibilities.

It was further successful in identifying pro-active actions females who have opted-out can take to keep them relevant in their fields.

It was however only partially successful in identifying learning and development opportunities that organisations can make available to employees to assist them in keeping relevant in their field.
CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The employment landscape is rapidly changing and is calling for a transformation in how one of organisations’ most competitive advantages, its human resources, particularly their female employees, is managed.

Female employees contribute unique perspectives that are crucial in the modern business world. However, female employees often find it difficult to balance career demands and family responsibilities and frequently off-ramp from their professional or corporate careers for the period when their children are still young and dependent to follow an alternative career over which they have more control and that allows them to have a more balanced life.

Unfortunately, when these women’s children are older and more independent and they want to return to their profession, they often find that technological advances have left them lagging behind. This regularly leaves female professionals despondent about their career prospects and leads to their rather exiting from their professional or corporate careers.

Organisations should be concerned about this potential drain of female talent and the loss of investment they had made in the development of these female employees.

Consequently, the primary objective of this research project was to:

- Identify the most appropriate work-life balance arrangements that companies can offer to female employees who strive to balance
family responsibilities and career demands more successfully, which ideally would prevent them from off-ramping from their professions. However, some women may still, regardless of the presence or absence of work-life balance arrangements, decide to off-ramp from their professions to spend time with their children while they are young.

Therefore, the two secondary objectives of this research study were to:

- Identify appropriate learning and development opportunities organisations can make available to employees who have off-ramped, to keep them relevant in their field and therefore to re-enter at a more acceptable level.
- Identify pro-active actions that female professionals can follow during a period of being off-ramped to enhance their re-entering ability.

5.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND MAJOR FINDINGS

5.2.1 The primary objective of the research was to identify the most appropriate work-life balance benefits or arrangements organisations can offer to employees who strive to balance family responsibilities and career demands

The six most appropriate work-life balance benefits were:

- flexible working hours
- on-site childcare facilities
- parental leave
- part-time work
- mobile working
- virtual / cyber working.

These were also the six least inappropriate work-life balance benefits.
The six most inappropriate and least appropriate work-life balance benefits were:

- weekend work
- shift work
- overtime
- temporary / casual work
- term-only working
- fixed term contract

Respondents further indicated that they would be most interested in utilising:

- flexible working hours
- on-site childcare facilities
- parental leave
- mobile working
- childcare allowance
- part-time work
- virtual work

The work-life balance benefits respondents indicated they would be interested in utilising were consistent with the work-life balance benefits listed as being most appropriate.

However, several respondents indicated that they did not have the courage to enquire about utilising any of the available work-life balance benefits. Reasons offered included: Operational requirements would not allow alternative work arrangements, organisations did not have any work-life balance arrangements available, the need for work-life balance is not understood, it is not the appropriate thing to ask, and respondents felt that they might be victimised for enquiring about utilising them.
Some of the respondents’ requests to utilise the available work-life balance could be accommodated, while others were denied.

Respondents generally indicated that utilising work-life balance benefits would have a positive effect on their career and assist to keep them relevant in their field.

5.2.2 A secondary research objective was to identify appropriate learning and development opportunities that organisations can offer to keep employees who have off-ramped relevant in their field
Respondents who have off-ramped from their professions were asked if their previous companies could assist in any way to keep them relevant in their field and assist them to return to full-time employment in their professions. Not many responses were received and the responses received were largely suggestions for work-life balance arrangements and financial assistance with further studies, which would have prevented them from initially opting-out. Some respondents have however indicated that it would be useful if organisations would be willing to allow them to continue to attend internal training and courses.

5.2.3 Another secondary research objective was to identify proactive actions that female professionals can follow during a period of being off-ramped to enhance their re-entering ability
Most of the respondents who had off-ramped from their professions indicated that they would like to return to full-time employment in their professions in the future.

Respondents whose current form of employment was part-time, informal or self-employed indicated that they would be somewhat or completely successful at returning to their profession.
Additional to the above mentioned forms of employment, respondents indicated that the following actions would also assist them to remain relevant in their professions and assist them to return to full-time employment:

- Continuous professional development courses and workshops
- Reading and further studies
- Keeping in touch with colleagues and updated with new developments at the office and the organisation
- Attending seminars
- Doing ad hoc, private, part-time or consulting work.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations flowing from this research project are the following:

Organisations should primarily be concerned about retaining their valuable female talent. One of the most important steps organisations can take to accomplish this is by assisting female employees with young dependent children to achieve more balance between their work demands and family responsibilities. Organisations can do this by implementing appropriate work-life balance arrangements for female employees to utilise.

It is important to note that work-life balance arrangements should not only be available theoretically, and often, once a request has been made to utilise some of the arrangements, it is denied.

A further important aspect to consider in terms of work-life balance arrangements is the negative connotations often associated with utilising them. Employees who consider utilising work-life balance arrangements often feel that they will be discriminated against for utilising such arrangements and rather decide against utilising it. Other employees at organisations who do not utilise work-life balance arrangements, often
carry resentment towards those employees who make use of work-life balance arrangements. Therefore, a sound performance measuring system becomes vitally important to measure performance outcome and not subjective measures of performance based on how much face-time employees spend at the office.

Female employees who opt-out of full-time employment for the period when their children are still young and dependent, but who have intentions of returning to their professions, cannot rest on their laurels because technological advances will leave them lagging behind and often unable to find suitable positions in their professions.

These women should consciously engage in pro-active actions such as attending continuous professional development courses, workshops, engaging in further studies, reading literature applicable to their professions, attending seminars or doing ad hoc, private, part-time or consulting work to keep them relevant in their field and assist them to return to suitable positions in their professions.

Organisations which are serious about talent management should acknowledge that some female employees would want to off-ramp from their professions while their children are still small to spend quality time with them. They might however be interested in returning to their professions after a period of time. Organisations could make their internal learning and development opportunities available to these women, at their own cost, to keep them abreast of developments in their industries and relevant and equipped to return to their professions.

5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY
As with most research projects, it is acknowledged that this research study had several limitations. The first limitation is that this project was a
requirement for the partial fulfilment of a Master's degree in Business Management, therefore the scope of the research had to be extremely narrow and the timeframe allowed for the completions of this study was also particularly rigid.

It is also acknowledged that it is not only female professionals who find it difficult to balance family responsibilities and career demands, but for the purpose of this research project and the particular scope that had to be adhered to, only female professionals were included in this research project.

It is further acknowledged that this study is extremely one sided in that it only looks at the work-life balance concern from a female perspective and not from an organisational perspective as well.

5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The scope for further research on this topic is vast. It is suggested that further research should include both men and women in the studies, and also look at the work-life balance concern from an organisational perspective.

In South Africa particularly, cultural influences and the different gender roles assigned to men and women should also be investigated to understand the work-life balance concern in more detail.

Possible future research projects could also include female professionals in executive positions to gain some insight from them as to what actions they took to balance their family responsibilities and career demands successfully, or what sacrifices they had to make to reach high managerial positions.
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APPENDIX A – Invitation to participate

To whom it may concern

I am a Master’s in Business Management Student at the University of Johannesburg. My research paper investigates the careers of female professionals who often find it difficult to balance family responsibilities and career demands, especially when their children are still young.

The objective of my research is to identify:

1.) The most appropriate Work-Life Balance Benefits that companies can offer to employees who strive to balance family responsibilities and career demands.
2.) Pro-active actions that female professionals can follow during a period of being 'off-ramped' to enhance their re-entering ability.

Female professionals who strive to balance family responsibilities and work demands are kindly invited to take part in this survey.

Participants should ideally have young dependent children. However, female professionals who have older children but who can still relate to this problem can also participate. Employment status can be any of the following: Working full-time, working part-time, own business or entrepreneur, working informally or not working.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, but your truthful input would be greatly appreciated. The questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes of your time to complete.

Could I kindly ask that you also forward this e-mail to your friends and relatives who also fall in this category?

Please click on the link below to be directed to the online questionnaire. http://take-survey.com/statkon/Work-Life_Balance_Policies.htm

Kind regards

Henrike van Zyl
082 442 6322
APPENDIX B– Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

University of Johannesburg Work-Life Balance Policies Questionnaire for Female Professionals striving to balance family responsibilities and career demands

Female professionals frequently find it difficult to balance family responsibilities and career demands, especially when their children are still young and often decide to ‘opt-out’ or exit from full-time employment, thus leaving companies drained of female talent.

The objective of this questionnaire is to identify: 1.) The most appropriate Work-Life Balance Strategies that companies can offer to employees who strive to balance family responsibilities and career demands 2.) Pro-active actions that female professionals can follow during a period of being 'off-ramped' to enhance their re-entering ability. The questionnaire has been developed by Henrike van Zyl, a Magister Commercii student at the University of Johannesburg.

Female professionals who strive to balance family responsibilities and work demands are kindly invited to take part in this survey. Participants should ideally have young dependant children. However female professionals who have older children but who can still relate to this problem could also participate. Employment status can be any of the following: Working full-time, working part-time, own business or entrepreneur, working informally or not working.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, but your truthful input would be greatly appreciated by the researcher. The questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes of your time to complete.

The online nature of the questionnaire ensures that there is no way that any of the respondents could be identified. The researcher guarantees absolute confidentiality and anonymity.

Section A: QUALIFYING QUESTIONS

1. Do you have children?
   - Yes
   - No

If "No" Please do not complete the questionnaire. Thank you for your participation
If "Yes" Please continue with the questionnaire

2. How many children do you have?
   - 1
   - 2
   - 3
   - 4
   - More

3. What is the age of each child in completed years?
   - Child 1 ________ years
   - Child 2 ________ years
   - Child 3 ________ years
   - Child 4 ________ years
4. Is the concern of balancing your professional career and family life preventing you from having more children?
   o Yes
   o No

5. How are child-rearing responsibilities shared in your household?
   o Equally shared between both spouses
   o Majority of responsibility on mother
   o Majority of responsibility on father
   o Other, please specify:_________________________________________________________

6. What type of outside/additional assistance with child-rearing responsibilities do you have?
   Mark all applicable
   o None
   o Nanny
   o Domestic help
   o Au Pair
   o Grandparents
   o Daycare
   o Nursery school/Kindergarten
   o Other, please specify:_________________________________________________________

Section B DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION
All participants should answer this section

1. In which age category do you belong?
   o 20 years or younger
   o 21 - 30 years
   o 31 - 40 years
   o 41 - 50 years
   o 51 - 60 years
   o 61 years or older

2. What is your race?
   o Black
   o Coloured
   o Asian/Indian
   o White
   o Other, please specify:_________________________________________________________

3. How would you classify your household structure?
   o Married
   o Widowed / Divorced
   o Couple living together
   o Single

4. What is your household income structure?
   o Dual income
   o Single income
5. What is your highest qualification attained? Please specify:
   - Grade 12
   - Certificate: ________________________________
   - Diploma: ________________________________
   - Degree: ________________________________
   - Honours: ________________________________
   - Masters: ________________________________
   - PhD: ________________________________

6. How long have you been working for in completed years?
   - Less than one year
   - 1 - 2 years
   - 2 - 5 years
   - 5 - 10 years
   - 10 - 15 years
   - 15 - 20 years
   - More than 20 years

7. How long have/had you been working for your current/last company in completed years?
   - Less than one year
   - 1 - 2 years
   - 2 - 5 years
   - 5 - 10 years
   - 10 - 15 years
   - 15 - 20 years
   - More than 20 years

Section C INFORMATION RELATED TO YOUR CAREER PRIOR TO HAVING CHILDREN

All participants should answer this section

Please answer all the questions in this section in terms of your career prior to having children.

1. In what industry did you work?
   Mark all applicable
   - Education
   - Agriculture
   - Arts and Entertainment
   - Beauty
   - Botanical
   - Building and Construction
   - Business and Management
   - Design
   - Logistics
   - Education
   - Engineering
   - Retail and Wholesale
   - Financial
   - Government
   - Hospitality
   - Human Resources
   - Information Technology
   - Legal
   - Manufacturing
1. What sector is your experience in?
- Maritime
- Marketing
- Media
- Medical
- Mining
- Motor
- Petrochemical
- Property
- Safety, Security, Defense
- Sales
- Science, Technology
- Social & Community
- Sport & Fitness
- Telecommunications
- Transport & Aviation
- Travel & Tourism
- Other, please specify: __________________________________________________________

2. What was your occupation?
Mark all applicable
- Administrative or clerical work
- Staff-related services (e.g. HR, learning and development, internal relations)
- Support Services (maintenance, cleaning)
- Accounting/Finance
- Data processing
- Customer service/ Frontline work/Call centre
- Operations
- Sales
- Marketing/Public relations work
- Research and development
- Professional services (e.g. counsellor, health care worker, etc.)
- Technical/Specialist work, (e.g. IT)
- Other, please specify: __________________________________________________________

3. What was the nature of your employment?
- Permanent appointment
- Temporary or Part-time appointment
- Contract or Limited-duration appointment
- Non-management (e.g. professional, technical, administrative and clerical employees).
- Other, please specify: __________________________________________________________

4. Where in the company hierarchy did you fit in?
- Executive level (e.g. President, CEO, Executive Vice President, MD)
- Senior level management (e.g. Vice President, Divisional Heads)
- Middle-level management (e.g. Departmental, Unit Managers)
- Operational-management (Supervisors, Foremen)
- Non-management (e.g. professional, technical, administrative and clerical employees).
- Other, please specify: __________________________________________________________
5.1 Did you aspire to reach a more senior position?
   o Yes
   o No
5.2 If “Yes” Please specify level
   - Executive level (e.g. President, CEO, Executive Vice President, MD)
   - Senior level management (e.g. Vice President, Divisional Heads)
   - Middle-level management (e.g. Departmental, Unit Managers)
   - Operational-management (Supervisors, Foremen)
   - Non-management (e.g. professional, technical, administrative and clerical employees).
   - Other, please specify: ________________________________

6. How many people reported directly to you?
   o None
   o 1 to 3
   o 4 to 6
   o 7 to 10
   o 11 to 15
   o More than 15

7. How many hours did you work per week?
   o Less than 20
   o 20 to 40
   o 40 to 60
   o More than 60

8. How often did you take work home?
   o Never
   o Sometimes
   o Often
   o Always

9. When at work, how engaged were you with your work?
   o Totally distracted
   o Somewhat distracted
   o Somewhat engaged
   o Totally engaged

Section D INFORMATION RELATED TO YOUR CAREER SUBSEQUENT TO HAVING CHILDREN
All participants should answer Q1-Q14
Please answer all the questions in this section in terms of your career subsequent to having children.

1.1 How would you classify your current employment status?
   o Working – Full-time employment
   o Working – Part-time employment
   o Working – Entrepreneur/Own business
   o Working – Informal
   o Not working
1.2 If “working – Informal” please specify: ________________________________
2.1 Is this your preferred employment status?
  o Yes
  o No
2.2 If you answered “No” in Question 2. How would you prefer your employment status to be?
  o Working – Full-time employment
  o Working – Part-time employment
  o Working – Entrepreneur/Own business
  o Working – Informal
  o Not working
2.3 If “working – Informal” please specify: ____________________________________________

3. Would you compromise your career to accommodate your family?
  o Yes
  o No

4. Would your husband/partner compromise his career to accommodate your family?
  o N/A
  o Yes
  o No

5.1 Have you had any previous career breaks to accommodate family and child rearing responsibilities?
  o Yes
  o No If “No” go to Question 10
5.2 If “yes” How many __________

6. How long were your previous career breaks?
  o Break 1 ________ Years: ________ Months: ________
  o Break 2 ________ Years: ________ Months: ________
  o Break 3 ________ Years: ________ Months: ________
  o Break 4 ________ Years: ________ Months: ________

7.1 During any of your previous career breaks: Did you consciously take any actions to equip yourself to remain relevant and to successfully return to your field?
  o Yes
  o No
7.2 If “Yes” Please specify what you did to remain relevant: ___________________________

8. How successful were you at returning to your profession after a career break?
  o Completely successful – returned to exactly the same level and position as prior to having a career break
  o Somewhat successful – returned to different position at same level as prior to having career break
  o Completely unsuccessful – returned to a lower level as prior to having a career break

If your employment status changed subsequent to having children, please answer the following questions in terms of the previous company you were employed at.
9. Which of the following Work-Life Balance Benefits does/did your company offer? Please indicate all the relevant ones
- On-site childcare facilities
- Childcare allowance
- Flexible working hours / Flexi-time
- Part-time work
- Job sharing
- Compressed work week
- Annualised hours
- Weekend work
- Shift work
- Overtime
- Temporary / Casual work
- Averaging of hours work
- Fixed-term contract
- Telecommuting
- Satellite offices
- Neighbourhood work centres
- Mobile working
- Virtual / Cyber working
- Term-only working
- Parental leave
- Consulting
- Other
Please specify: _______________________________________________________

10. Please indicate the appropriateness of each of the following Work-Life Balance Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Absolutely inappropriate</th>
<th>Slightly inappropriate</th>
<th>Slightly appropriate</th>
<th>Absolutely appropriate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On-site childcare facilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childcare allowance</td>
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<td>Flexible working hours / Flexi-time</td>
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<td>Job sharing</td>
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<td>Compressed work week</td>
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<td>Fixed-term contract</td>
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<td>Averaging of hours work</td>
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<td>Telecommuting</td>
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<td>Satellite offices</td>
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<td>Neighbourhood work centres</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile working</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virtual / Cyber working</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term-only working</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parental leave</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consulting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please specify: _______________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________
11. Which of the Work-Life Balance Benefits would you consider following?
Mark all applicable
- On-site childcare facilities
- Childcare allowance
- Flexible working hours / Flexi-time
- Part-time work
- Job sharing
- Compressed work week
- Annualised hours
- Weekend work
- Shift work
- Overtime
- Temporary / Casual work
- Averaging of hours work
- Fixed-term contract
- Telecommuting
- Satellite offices
- Neighbourhood work centres
- Mobile working
- Virtual / Cyber working
- Term-only working
- Parental leave
- Consulting
- Other

Please specify: ________________________________________________________________

12.1 At your current/previous company do/did you have the confidence to enquire about the possibility of utilising any of the available Work-Life Balance Benefits?
- Yes
- No

12.2 If “No” Please specify why not ____________________________________________

13.1 Have you enquired about the possibility of utilising any of the available Work-Life Benefits?
- Yes
- No

13.2 If “No” Please specify why not ____________________________________________

13.3 If “Yes” in Question 14. What was the response to your request?
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________

14. What would the consequences be of following any of the Work-Life Balance Benefits on your career?
- Have a positive effect on my career
- Would have no consequence to my career
- Be detrimental to my career
- Would keep me relevant in my field

The following section should be completed by participants who answered “Working – Full-time employment” in Question 1 Section D
15. In what industry do you work?
   - Education
   - Agriculture
   - Arts and Entertainment
   - Beauty
   - Botanical
   - Building and Construction
   - Business and Management
   - Design
   - Logistics
   - Education
   - Engineering
   - Retail and Wholesale
   - Financial
   - Government
   - Hospitality
   - Human Resources
   - Information Technology
   - Legal
   - Manufacturing
   - Maritime
   - Marketing
   - Media
   - Medical
   - Mining
   - Motor
   - Petrochemical
   - Property
   - Safety, Security, Defense
   - Sales
   - Science, Technology
   - Social & Community
   - Sport & Fitness
   - Telecommunications
   - Transport & Aviation
   - Travel & Tourism
   - Other

16. What is your occupation?
   - Administrative or clerical work
   - Staff-related services (e.g. HR, learning and development, internal relations)
   - Support Services (maintenance, cleaning)
   - Accounting/Finance
   - Data processing
   - Customer service/ Frontline work/Call centre
   - Operations
   - Sales
   - Marketing/Public relations work
   - Research and development
   - Professional services (e.g. counsellor, health care worker, etc.)
   - Technical/Specialist work, (e.g. IT)
   - Other, please specify:________________________________________________________
17. Where in the company hierarchy do you fit in?
   - Executive level (e.g. President, CEO, Executive Vice President, MD)
   - Senior level management (e.g. Vice President, Divisional Heads)
   - Middle-level management (e.g. Departmental, Unit Managers)
   - Operational management (Supervisors, Foremen)
   - Non-management (e.g. professional, technical, administrative and clerical employees)
   - Other, please specify: __________________________________________________________

18.1 Do you aspire to reach a more senior position?
   - Yes
   - No

18.2 Please specify level
   - Executive level (e.g. President, CEO, Executive Vice President, MD)
   - Senior level management (e.g. Vice President, Divisional Heads)
   - Middle-level management (e.g. Departmental, Unit Managers)
   - Operational management (Supervisors, Foremen)
   - Non-management (e.g. professional, technical, administrative and clerical employees)
   - Other, please specify: _______________________________________________________

19. How many people report directly to you?
   - None
   - 1 to 3
   - 4 to 6
   - 7 to 10
   - 11 to 15
   - More than 15

20. When at work, how engaged are you with your work?
   - Totally distracted
   - Somewhat distracted
   - Somewhat engaged
   - Totally engaged

21. How many hours do you work per week?
   - Less than 20
   - 20 to 40
   - 40 to 60
   - More than 60

22. How often do you take work home?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Always

23. How often do you experience work/family conflict?
   - Never
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Always

24. How would you classify the work/family conflict you experience?
   - Work demands interfering with family
   - Family responsibilities interfering with work
   - I do not experience work/family conflict
The following section should be completed by participants who answered “Working Part-time employment”, Working – Entrepreneur/Own business “Working- Informal” or “Not working” in Question 1 Section D

25. Have you returned to full-time employment and found it difficult to balance work and family and therefore decided to take a part-time position or to exit from your career?
   o Yes
   o No

26. Did you prior to having children, decide to exit from your full-time career once you have children to tend to them?
   o Yes
   o No

27. How long have you been ‘off-ramped’ / out of your profession? (not on maternity leave)
   o 0-6 months
   o 6-24 months
   o 2-3 years
   o 4-6 years
   o 6-10 years

28. Would you want to be able to return to full-time employment in your profession in the future?
   o Yes
   o No
   o Not sure

29. When would you like to return to your profession?
   o 1-2 years
   o 2-5 years
   o 5-10 years
   o more

30. Do you believe that your current form of employment would adequately equip you to return to a full-time position in your profession?
   o Completely
   o Somewhat
   o Not at all

31.1 What additional actions can you take to better equip yourself to return to a full-time position in your profession?
   o Further studies
   o Continuous professional development
   o Attending workshops and seminars
   o Reading
   o Other
   31.2 If “Other” Please specify: __________________________________________

32.1 Are you currently taking any conscious actions to equip yourself to remain relevant and to successfully return to your field?
   o Yes
   o No

32.2 If “Yes” Please specify: __________________________________________
33.1 Could your previous company assist in any way to better equip yourself to return to a full-time position?
  o Yes
  o No
33.2 Please specify: ___________________________________________________
                        ___________________________________________________
                        ___________________________________________________

34. Would you return to your previous company if you could?
  o N/A
  o Yes
  o No
  o Not sure

35.1 If you previously occupied a permanent position, what happened to that position when you left it?
  o Position was filled by a new permanent employee
  o Position became a part-time position
  o Position became redundant
  o Position was filled by a temporary employee
  o Did not previously occupy a full-time position
  o Other
35.2 If “Other” Please specify: __________________________________________

Thank you for completing the questionnaire, your participation is sincerely appreciated.
APPENDIX C – Informed Consent

University of Johannesburg Work-Life Balance Policies Questionnaire for Female Professionals striving to balance family responsibilities and career demands

Female professionals frequently find it difficult to balance family responsibilities and career demands, especially when their children are still young and often decide to ‘opt-out’ or exit from full-time employment, thus leaving companies drained of female talent.

The objective of this questionnaire is to identify: 1.) The most appropriate Work-Life Balance Strategies that companies can offer to employees who strive to balance family responsibilities and career demands 2.) Pro-active actions that female professionals can follow during a period of being ‘off-ramped’ to enhance their re-entering ability. The questionnaire has been developed by Henrike van Zyl, a Magister Commercii student at the University of Johannesburg.

Female professionals who strive to balance family responsibilities and work demands are kindly invited to take part in this survey. Participants should ideally have young dependant children. However, female professionals who have older children but who can still relate to this problem can also participate. Employment status can be any of the following: Working full-time, working part-time, own business or entrepreneur, working informally or not working.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary, but your truthful input would be greatly appreciated by the researcher. The questionnaire should take no longer than 10 minutes of your time to complete.

The online nature of the questionnaire ensures that there is no way that any of the respondents can be identified. The researcher guarantees absolute confidentiality and anonymity.