



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORK-LIFE
BALANCE AND STRESS AMONGST EMPLOYEES AT A LARGE
MOTOR VEHICLE MANUFACTURING PLANT IN
KWAZULU-NATAL**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULLFILMENT OF THE
DEGREE OF**

MASTERS OF COMMERCE IN HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND
GOVERNANCE COLLEGE OF LAW AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES**

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AUGUST 2017

DECLARATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My gratitude extends to the following people:

The most important being God, for providing me with the strength, knowledge and understanding as well as the motivation to continue with my Master's Degree.

To my Parents Mr and Mrs Govender, for being such good role models and for having a positive influence on my life, for their constant support and guidance upon my life you are truly the best parents one could possibly ask for.

To my Sister, Samantha, for her words of inspiration and for continuously making sure that I am level headed and ensuring that I have my feet firmly on the ground, I really appreciate it.

To Uncle Moses, I thank you very much for all your assistance in helping me conduct my research and for your words of motivation.

To my Supervisor Prof S. Brijball Parumasur for her guidance, support, motivation, inspiration and dedication in helping me with my master's thesis. I can honestly say you are one of the best supervisors around.

To all others, thanks for their input, insight, advice and support.

ABSTRACT

This study aims to assess the possibility of reducing stress through work-life balance. It is anticipated that a greater degree of work-life balance will lead to reduced levels of stress. In this study work-life balance is assessed in terms of leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance.

The study is undertaken in a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal and the target population comprises of employees from six main departments, namely, Human Resources, Finance, Administration, Engineering, Parts and Manufacturing. A sample of 103 participants was drawn using the cluster sampling technique and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure was undertaken to confirm the adequacy of the sample. Data was collected using a self-developed questionnaire whose psychometric properties of validity and reliability were measured using Factor Analysis and Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha respectively. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

The results of the study reflect only a moderate level of overall work-life balance thereby reflecting tremendous room for improvement in terms of attaining work-life balance in the workplace. The results also reflect a moderate level of stress. Significant relationships were also noted between the dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance, general factors) and stress respectively. Some significant biographical correlates (gender, age, marital status, tenure) were noted with the dimensions of work-life balance but not race. Some significant biographical correlates (gender, race, tenure) were found with stress but not age and marital status. Evidently, the variance in stress is not due to leave and flexible work arrangements, but work-life balance (day-to-day practices), general factors and work provisions which account for nearly half of the variance in stress. Recommendations are presented and graphically depicted which when appropriately implemented has the potential to enhance work-life balance and reduce stress in the workplace.

Keywords: leave and flexible work arrangements, general factors, stress, work-life balance, work provisions

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Stress is an inevitable element in the fabric of modern life. Stress is typically defined by the behavioural concept with regards to stimulus and response linkages. Stress can be defined as the stimulus that, if strong enough, can trigger tension in the individual who undergoes it. Stress is likely to create problems within the organisation which has the potential to have an impact on the bottom line. Organisations throughout the world have identified their most valuable assets as being human resources and, therefore, organisations spend a significant amount of money in helping employees achieve a balance in their work life as well as personal life. Stress has become a global issue and as evolved over the years and plays a significant part in an institution's success or failure. Educating employees about stress will help in identifying the causes and, helps by providing employees with the relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs), which will in turn help both the individual as well as the organisation improve the balance between one's work and personal life. There is no such thing as an equal balance; however, one needs to distinguish between one's personal duties and work responsibilities. Individuals will be able to identify when they are experiencing work overload, and perform duties which are within their capabilities and not take on more than they can handle. Job involvement can cause stress because when individuals enjoy their jobs and become more dedicated and committed to fulfilling their duties they place emphasis on their job responsibilities. Individuals also need to develop good time management, as once time is lost it can never be recovered, so both the individual and organisation needs to ensure that one is educated and trained in using time efficiently. Stress plays a vital role within the organisation, and has become a global epidemic which affects employees tremendously. Some individuals thrive under pressure; however, the majority of individuals are affected negatively by stress as they do not have coping mechanisms in place to help deal with stress. Every organisation needs to provide assistance to employees experiencing stress as they are the driving force behind the organisation.

This study focuses predominantly on stress within the organisation where the potential for stress is very high due to the immense pressure for output in a motor vehicle manufacturing

plant. In this environment work-life balance plays a critical role in attempting to reduce stress and enhancing employees' performance and well-being. Specifically, the study focuses on variables that have the potential to alleviate stress, such as, work-life balance which is determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance. It is important to provide assistance to employees experiencing stress in order for the organisation to stay clear of this wide-spread epidemic which is stress.

1.2 Background of the study

Stress is “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed on them” (Michie, 2002). Research reflects that “this ‘adverse reaction’ can seriously undermine on the quality of people’s working lives and, in turn, the effectiveness of the workplace. Stress takes many forms” (The Royal College of Midwives, 2017). In addition to resulting in anxiousness and depressive states, it can have a major influence “on an employee’s physical health. Research links stress to heart disease, back pain, headaches, gastrointestinal disturbances and alcohol and drug dependency” (The Royal College of Midwives, 2017).

One needs to identify the source of stress, for example, ineffective communication and the absence of training, and managing the signs of stress such as uneasiness and illness. The focus on research on work-related stress, its effects on employee well-being and its management has escalated in the last 2 decades (Blonna, 2006). “There has been growing attention on the effects of psychosocial hazards and risks and work-related stress among researchers and policymakers. Occupational safety and health practice has expanded beyond its traditional scope to include behavioural medicine, occupational health psychology and social well-being, thereby acknowledging people’s need to conduct a socially and economically productive life” (International Labour Organization, 2016, p. 2).

“Today workers all over the world are facing significant changes in work organization and labour relations; they are under greater pressure to meet the demands of modern working life. With the pace of work dictated by instant communications and high levels of global competition, the lines separating work from life are becoming more and more difficult to identify” (International Labour Organization, 2016, p. 2). Psychosocial hazards including escalating competition, greater expectations and extended hours of work are leading to stressful work lives. Furthermore, economic uncertainty due to change and restructuring brings with it

fewer work prospects, the fear of job loss and reduced financial security thereby resulting in mental and physical health setbacks. “Work-related stress is now generally acknowledged as a global issue affecting all professions and all workers in both developed and developing countries” (International Labour Organization, 2016, p. 2).

One way to reduce work-related stress is to ensure work-life balance. Work-life balance has to do with appropriate prioritising amongst work (career directedness) and lifestyle (health, preference, rest, family). The hope is to help individuals within organisations achieve a better work-life balance; this means properly prioritising time between one’s career ambitions as well as their personal life expectations. Individuals need to achieve both their personal as well as work goals without neglecting the other. One needs to balance one’s commitments, responsibilities, and have control over work and personal lives (Kalliath & Brough, 2008).

1.3 Problem Statement

The effects of stress on employees within the organisation are of paramount importance, as stress has fast become a global epidemic. Employees are crucial components to an organisation’s success and hence, organisations are investing time and money to educate them about the effects of stress. Very often employees experience stress because of the numerous demands that are placed on them which includes their work and personal commitments. With time constraints and on-going demands, employees feel entangled in a web when trying to meet these demands. Work pressures (for example, meeting deadlines) and personal issues (for example, caring for a sick family member) add to the individual’s burdens and cause stress. Since employees are the organisation’s assets and signify the trump card for achieving a competitive advantage, organisations have come to realise the importance of taking care of employees and are turning to work-life balance as a way to reduce, if not solve, stress in the workplace. Issues of self-management (proficiently using the gaps in one’s time and realising that time and life are limited) (Carlson & Frone, 2003), time-management (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2009) and leisure-management (alter one’s activities and plan down-time, avoid harmful people, refrain from things that add no value) (De Bruin & Dupuis, 2009) are imperative in achieving work-life balance. Individuals need to understand that stress is a part of everyday life and one needs to manage this accordingly if not it will ruin their entire balance and either their personal or work-life will suffer as a result.

This study aims to assess the possibility of reducing stress through work-life balance. The problem statement that will be explored therefore is: What is relationship between work-life balance and stress amongst employees in a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal? It is anticipated that a greater degree of work-life balance will lead to reduced levels of stress. In this study, work-life balance is assessed in terms of leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study include:

- To determine the levels of work-life balance (determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance) and stress amongst employees at a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal.
- To assess the extent to which work-life balance (determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance) relates to stress amongst employees at a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal.
- To determine the extent to which stress and work-life balance (determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance) vary in terms of gender, age, marital status, race, tenure, level and departments in the organisation amongst employees at a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal.
- To evaluate the extent to which the variance in stress due to work-life balance (determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance) amongst employees at a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal.

1.5 Hypotheses of the study

A hypothesis is a tentative but testable statement; it guesses what one can expect to find in one's empirical data. It is a logically conjured relationship between two or more variables articulated in the form of testable statements.

In this study, seven hypotheses will be tested:

Hypothesis 1

There exist significant relationships between the dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance) respectively.

Hypothesis 2

There exist significant relationships between the general items of work-life balance (satisfaction with working hours, ability to balance work and family life, working for long hours and during home hours, thinking about work constantly) respectively.

Hypothesis 3

There exist significant relationships between the dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance relating to day-to-day practices, general) and overall work-life balance respectively.

Hypothesis 4

There exist significant relationships between the dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance relating to day-to-day practices, general) and stress respectively.

Hypothesis 5

There is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in biographical profiles (gender, age, marital status, race, tenure) regarding work-life balance and its sub-dimensions (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance, general) and stress respectively.

Hypothesis 6

There is a significant relationship between employees' biographical profiles (gender, age, marital status, race, tenure) and their level of stress respectively

Hypothesis 7

Work-life balance and its dimensions (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance day-to-day practices, general) significantly account for the variance in stress

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in this study focuses on the huge impact that stress has on an employee and how it is affected by one's work-life balance or the lack thereof. This is particularly important in this large motor vehicle manufacturing plant where employees continuously experience stress to ensure outputs, quality, innovation, service quality and service delivery, minimal defects and accidents. The high level of stress leads to increased absenteeism and lower production, the two greatest evils for output in this large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal. Undoubtedly, in this manufacturing plant, plagued by excessive demand and competition, employees are crucial components of this organisation and management has quickly identified that they need to assist employees in dealing with stress as it is a current and pertinent issue facing all employees not only in their large plant but also across the world. This framework will show the effect that work-life balance (determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance) has on the level of employee stress amongst employees at this large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal. This research study aims to provide knowledge to individuals and help identify ways of dealing with this issue which all people are affected by either directly or indirectly. This is imperative since stress is a dangerous health issue for employees and organisations and therefore it needs to be treated as such. The proposition to reducing the level of employee stress is to ensure work-life balance. It is anticipated that a greater degree of work-life balance will lead to reduced levels of stress. In this study work-life balance is assessed in terms of leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance and biographical and organisational influences are explored (Figure 1.1).

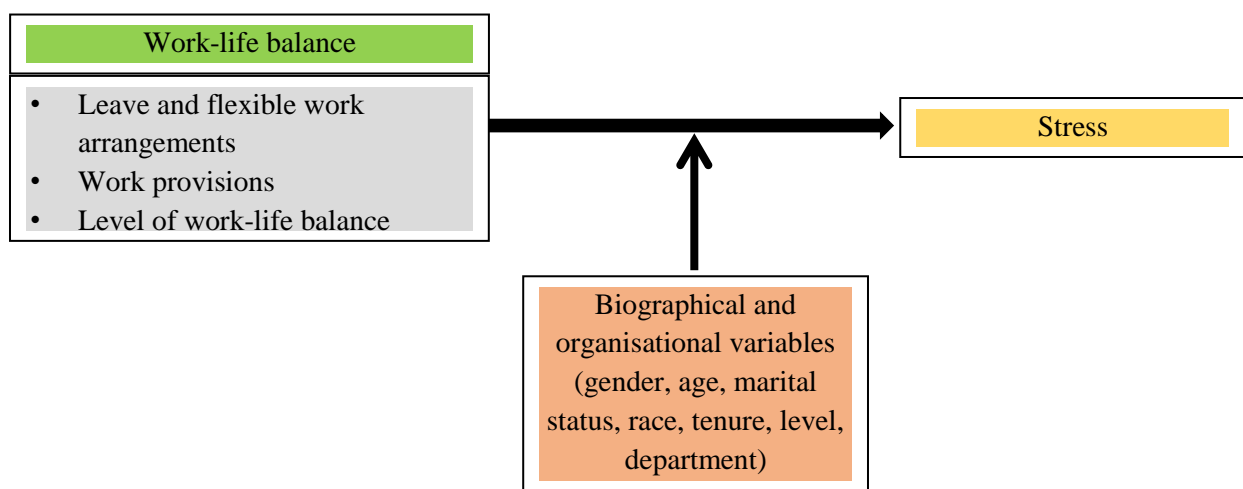


Figure 1.1
Conceptual Framework of the study

The pace of output at this large motor-vehicle manufacturing plant has not only resulted in increased pressure to produce but also increased absenteeism which hinders productivity in the plant. The *stress* caused by a multitude of factors (demand of motor vehicle in excess of supply, need to parts, quality service, service delivery, innovation, competition) has necessitated longer working hours which are experienced differently by employees varying in biographical profiles (*gender, age, marital status, race, tenure, level, department*). Management has recognised the need for *work-life balance* which in this study are characterised in terms of current offerings in this large motor vehicle manufacturing plant, namely, *leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and efforts to increase work-life balance*.

1.7 Significance of the study

The work environment has become increasingly stressful irrespective of industry or sector. Employees are encountering increased levels of stress “due to various factors such as high workload, tight deadlines, high targets, type of work, lack of job satisfaction, long working hours and, pressure to perform” and deliver (Kumar & Rooprai, 2009, p. 4). Another source of stress has been “interpersonal conflicts at the workplace such as boss-subordinate relationships and relationships with peers. Experts believe that the dysfunctional aspects of stress could directly impact an organization’s performance” and “also affect the well-being of its employees. Stress at the workplace was linked to absenteeism, higher attrition and decreased productivity. Stress led to fatigue, irritability, poor communication, and quality problems/errors” (Kumar & Rooprai, 2009, p. 4).

High levels of stress have also influenced the morale and enthusiasm of employees. Ongoing stress in the absence of effective coping strategies can result in numerous “physical and mental problems. For instance, stress could lead to stress-induced gastrointestinal problems, irritable bowel syndrome, acidity, acid reflux, insomnia, depression and heart disease” (Kumar & Rooprai, 2009, p. 4). Furthermore, stress can cause an employee to turn to high risk behaviour, for example, smoking, drinking and substance abuse. Kumar and Rooprai (2009, p. 4) maintain that stress-related illnesses lead to enhanced “absenteeism and attrition” thereby impacting on the success and future of the organisation.

Many employees have lost their jobs as a result of economic uncertainty faced by organisations, retrenchments and, merger and acquisitions. Many others have been forced to engage in new tasks within the organisation with the concern of pending unemployment. “Adding to the pressures that workers face are new bosses, computer surveillance of production, fewer health and retirement benefits, and the feeling that they have to work longer and harder just to maintain their current economic status. Workers at every level are experiencing increased tension and uncertainty, and are updating their resumes. Work is one of the leading sources of stress and anxiety. Dealing with strict supervisors, chances of a demotion,” meeting deadlines and ultimately, the fear of getting fired can really give every worker something to be anxious about (Kumar & Rooprai, 2009, p. 4).

In any work environment, irrespective of industry or sector, there exists a prevailing structure or system that one has to abide by, for example, policies, procedures and norms. This may result in anxiety due to conflict that occurs because the individual may be engaging in activities that the system demands but he/she does not believe to be right. Such a situation can be further complicated when individuals have to deal with customers with varying personalities or peers. It is a natural tendency to minimise one’s own anxiety, for example, by adapting or leaving the work environment.

Evidently, the workplace alone has a high level of stress inducing qualities. Add to this the pressures in one’s personal life and the ongoing personal commitments and the situation can become overwhelming to an employee.

Since this study focuses on variables that have the potential to alleviate stress, such as, work-life balance which is determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance, it has the potential to contribute to understanding stress in the workplace, designing mechanisms and strategies to reduce its prevalence in the workplace and presenting recommendations for enhancing work-life balance and thereby reducing stress in the workplace.

1.8 Limitations

- The sample of the study is relatively small but adequate. It is suggested that the study be replicated in a larger organisation as a larger sample size will produce more fruitful and meaningful results.
- The study focuses predominantly on employees within the organisation and not on management. Future studies carried out may compare and contrast the views of employees and management in an organisation.
- Closed-ended questions were used in this study and respondents had a limited number of alternatives from which they were asked to select the one that most closely matches their opinion or attitude. In future research studies open-ended questions should also be used so that respondents can be given the opportunity to express their views.

1.9 Summary outline per chapter

Chapter 1 focuses on an overview of the study including the problem statement, focus of the study, the objectives, the hypothesis as well as the limitations of our study.

Chapter 2 pertains to stress. It includes the nature of stress, the dual nature of stress, what causes job stress, is stress harmful?, work related stress, reasons for the effects/impact, and properties of work stress, reasons for stress at work, impact of work stress, indicators of stress, sources of stress, an epidemic of stress, the victims of stress, the extent of stress, the costs of stress, the consequences of stress, stress management, communication and stress management, how to approach work related stress systematically, coping strategies and interventions, actions taken to manage work-life stress. Stress is a major issue for organisations as all companies require accountable and skilful employees and these employees need to be focused and driven as well as possess the relevant know-how. Stress within organisations can be positive and negative, but in most cases it is negative because employees cannot handle stressful situations and this in turn affects performance and productivity in an organisation tremendously. Stress has a significant influence in the profitability or failure of an organisation and, therefore, it needs to be treated with respect and utmost importance.

Chapter 3 incorporates literature on work-life balance, work overload, job involvement, and time management. These are all important components affecting organisations as all businesses need and want capable and well qualified employees who can take their organisation

to new heights. Chapter 3 pertains to work-life balance and includes the nature of work-life balance, its components, importance, managing work-life balance, policies that can enable work-life balance, concerns and opportunities that work-life affects, workplace policy on work-life balance, consequences of employee work-life imbalance, work overload, defining work overload, downsizing and work overload, two types of work overload, how to deal with work overload, job involvement, what is job involvement, the importance of job involvement, job involvement and job insecurity, time management, benefits of time management, productivity management verses time management, effective time management, essential tips for time management, principles for effective time management, why managers encounter time management failure and strategies for managing time in the workplace.

Chapter 4 relates to the research methodology of the study. It includes a description of the sampling techniques and the sample, the data collection method and the process followed as well as an explanation of how data will be analysed.

Chapter 5 relates to the presentation of results of the study. It includes descriptive statistics, inferential statistics as well as the statistical analysis of the questionnaire relating to its validity and reliability of data.

Chapter 6 relates to the discussion of results of the study. It includes work-life balance and its sub-dimensions, namely, leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance (day-to-day practices), general factors, relationships between work-life balance, its dimensions and sub-dimensions, employee stress, the relationship between work-life balance and stress, impact of biographical variables on work-life balance and its dimensions and impact of biographical variables on stress.

Chapter 7 relates to the recommendations and conclusion of results of the study. It includes practical recommendations for work-life balance and its dimensions and sub-dimensions, namely, leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance (day-to-day practices), general factors, relationship between work-life balance, its dimensions and sub-dimensions, employee stress which are also graphically represented. It also includes recommendations for future research.

1.10 Conclusion

The distress resulting from mismanaged stress may be manifested by physiological, psychological and behavioural problems for the individuals. When health is taken as complete physical, mental and social well-being, reducing or managing stress aids in financing the benefits of dealing with the stress successfully. The study of stress is important for both the individuals and organisations because of its devastating effects. Enhanced on-the-job stress and off-the-job stresses adversely affect the entire growth of both the individual as well as the organisation. Hence, a satisfying work environment and a healthy personal life are very important. In laying the foundation for the empirical analysis a literature review will be undertaken on stress (Chapter 2) and the factors that have the potential to create/alleviate stress, for example, work-life imbalance/work-life balance (Chapter 3).

CHAPTER 2

STRESS

2.1 Introduction

Recent studies show that millions of people around the world are affected by stress. Stress related to one's career and the workplace is by far the most common form of stress which affects individuals. Work related stress is more noticeable due to the current economic instability which the country is experiencing since individuals have become more fearful of losing their jobs and this real possibility of losing one's job makes one more susceptible to stress (Cooper, Dewe & O' Driscoll, 2001).

Stress is normal and we tend to react physically to things that make us feel that we are at danger and in most cases it affects our balance. When one anticipates threat one's body's defences kick into gear and one responds to stress. The stress response is how the body protects the individual and helps him/her to deal with trials (Moore, Grunberg, Greenberg, 2004).

At some point in time everyone talks about stress, or situations which stress them out; this occurs when individuals have 'a lot on their plates' and when irrational demands are placed upon them. When stress occurs over a large time frame it may lead to depression and worry and in some cases to mental health problems. One can eliminate the effects of stress by being more cautious about what causes stress, and also be able to handle these issues more effectively (Neuman, 2004).

This chapter covers an explanation of stress and its nature, the causes of stress, work-related stress, the reasons for, effects and properties of work stress, indicators of stress, sources of stress, stress as an epidemic, stress management, and coping strategies and interventions.

2.2 Stress and the nature of stress

The main objectives of companies nowadays is to identify stressful situations, know that it is present in every company and be able to design mechanisms to deal with such situations as and when they may arise. If stress is not identified early and the correct steps are not in place, this

could cause tremendous problems for the organisation and can, in some cases, even lead to bankruptcy (Avey, Matheny, Robbins, Jacobson, 2003).

It is general knowledge that each and every person will experience stress at some point in his/her life. Stress causes panic in the brain and ensures that individuals respond through defensive action. Stress may be categorised into specific types, namely, physical, emotional, cognitive and behavioural. Stress characteristics involve various negative aspects such as poor judgement, unhappiness, feeling secluded or lonely and depressed. The physical signs, may involve light-headedness, chest pain and rapid heartbeat as well as changing eating habits which may include consuming a lot or too little, using liquor and cigarettes (Herman, 2012).

2.3 The dual nature of stress

Stress by its own nature may be both positive and negative and depends on the individuals and the way in which they deal with stress. While some people may be overcome and agitated by stress, others may thrive on stress and may produce their best work when they are under stress. Stress can be problematic; however, it may yield benefits. Stress can be identified in two forms, namely, eustress as good, and distress as bad. The perception of stress may affect the types of stress experienced (Kirkcaldy, Shephard, Furnham, 2002).

Stress has many positive benefits to individuals; it offers challenges but if embraced by an individual it allows him/her to learn about his/her strengths and helps build character. Stress produces pressure and it shows if an individual can handle demands when placed in difficult situations; it allows one to thrive under pressure and at the same time it stimulates an individual to do his/her best (Rick, Briner, Daniels, Perryman, Guppy, 2001).

2.4 What causes job stress

According to Lewig and Dollard (2001), work stress is most often caused by excessive work and personality clashes particularly with supervisors. When individuals take on too much of responsibility, they may complain about work overload, for example, people higher up the hierarchy such as managers and CEOs. However, through conflict, one has the authority to transform one's workplace stress. This choice does not always occur for other employees, such as assembly line workers or those in monotonous clerical positions (Gacad & Babiera, 2002).

Studies show that jobs which an individual may perceive as boring and monotonous can cause more strain on an individual than that of high-powered executive positions. An additional cause of stress is technological advancement. This generally affects older workers who become overwhelmed and are not open to change and changing the way they work; this keeps them “out of the loop” if they are unwilling to embrace change. In many cases, work stress may arise because employees sincerely cannot handle their job. Smith (2000) believes that a newly promoted employee merely need training for a new role, particularly if this is his/her first supervisory or management position. The most stressful situations are those which involve change as individuals have no control over what is happening (Cohen, Janicki-Deverts, Miller, 2007).

2.5 Is stress harmful?

Stress is not only negative but can also have an affirmative effect. A certain level of stress can be enjoyable and help affected individuals to prepare for something that they need to do. There are two hormones which help our body to respond to stress, namely, adrenaline and cortisol (Kassel, 2003). Adrenaline may cause alterations to the blood flow and increase both breathing and heart rate, in order to protect the individual. The person becomes light headed, sweats more and his/her mouth becomes dry and in general the body reacts in the same way to all stress as if the individual is in carnal danger. If one is simply having a disagreement with somebody, one’s body reacts as if one is in danger. When one is in physical danger, adrenaline helps him/her fight or run; also, when the danger passes one’s body recuperates. However, if the stress is emotional, the effects of adrenaline will go away more slowly, and this will make individuals feel tense for a long time (Hoel, 2002). Cortisol is another stress related hormone; it exists in one’s body at all times. However, levels rise in response to threat and stress. The effects of cortisol are positive in the short term as it helps individuals to deal with an immediate crisis, as it creates a rapid burst of energy, less feeling to pain and increase in protection. However, in the long term cortisol creates numerous stress related health problems, such as disparities of blood sugar, rise in fat storage, reduced mass, high blood pressure, lowered immunity and decreased ability to think and reason logically (Dinan, 2001).

The ability to tolerate stress may vary from person to person. What is intolerable to one person may be thought-provoking and motivating to someone else. What an individual feels occurs as a result of his/her encounter with certain events and what is happening around the world and

how well he/she recognises and reacts to these problems. The central idea is that one can learn to identify one's own reactions to pressure and improve skills to deal with it better (Marin *et al.*, 2011).

2.6 Work related stress

According to O'Donnell (2004), work-related stress is how people respond when they are confronted with workloads and pressure which do not correspond with their knowledge and skills and which challenges their capacity to manage. Pressure takes place under a wide variety of work situations; however, when subordinates feel that their supervisors and fellow colleagues are offering little or no support they feel that they may have no control over work and simply give into the demands, because of the pressure placed on them (Herman, 2012).

Stress results when there are too much of demands and pressures placed on the individual, and when there is a mismatch between the knowledge and abilities of a person and the work demands (Blumental, 2003). It also affects their capability to manage with work. This includes conditions where the burden of work exceeds the worker's ability to manage and also where the employee's knowledge and abilities are not adequately utilised and this becomes a problem for him/her (Kinsella, 2009). Hence, the way work is structured today causes tremendous challenges to workers' health and well-being and it is evident that job stress arises when one's capabilities are not in line with the requirements of the job (Wichert, 2002).

Many workers have stayed longer than the normal working hours, or think about work over the weekend or the work which they need to accomplish in spite of illness. Stress costs businesses billions in terms of sick-pay, missed deadlines, and poor performance. Stress does not always emerge from the work but many workers are in anguish over the cruel life in the organisation (Ellis, 2012). Strain is common to individuals who work in corporate as well as those who own businesses as they may misuse the allocated budget, time, finance and other assets. Due to financial calamities many individuals have to reduce their allocated resources and compromise their objectives and goals. The success of the organisation hinges on the ability of leaders to handle the responsibility of stress on themselves and their fellow workers (Marin, 2011).

According to Ellis (2012), the following affects stress tolerance levels:

- Social support system

Understanding friends and family members can be a huge safeguard against life's stressors. When a person is lonely and isolated he/she becomes more susceptible to stress. A strong social support network can be critical to help an individual get through tough times. Social support looks at the relief and encouragement that one receives through his/her social network; a good social network also has a positive effect on one's physical health and wellbeing (Bliese, 2001). Social support helps individuals in dealing with highly stressful situations and it helps in negating the negative impact of stressful situations (Henry, 2008).

- Hardiness

Hardiness is a personality trait that certain individuals display through commitment, challenges, and strong resistance to stress. Hardiness decreases the effects of stress, and helps one view a potentially stressful event as less threatening and destructive than others may view the situation (Kinman, 2005).

- Optimism

Individuals who are optimistic generally expect good outcomes. Optimists are more action-oriented and focus on coping with a problem. These individuals have a positive mind-set and are willing to seek social support, and generally look at the positive side of a stressful event. However, the opposite is true for pessimists. Pessimists tend to look only at the negatives; when faced with stress they simply give up or resort to denial (Tenant, 2001).

- Autonomic Reactivity

This is the physiological response of people to stress and it influences one's stress tolerance. Individuals who have a mild autonomic nervous system are less affected by stress than those with a higher reactive autonomic nervous system (Schwabe, 2009).

- Sense of control

If a person has self-confidence in themselves and his/her ability to effect events he/she will persist through trials. When one feels that one is not receiving feedback on one's situation and how challenging it may be, it tends to make one feel as if there is no way out (Bowin & Harvey, 2001).

- Attitude and outlook

People who are optimistic are less vulnerable to stress. Individuals tend to embrace challenges as they understand that change is a part of life. The kind of attitude one holds about something influences his/her behaviours and the way in which one experiences stress (Omolara, 2008).

- Capacity to deal with one's feelings

People who cannot calm themselves when feeling sad, angry, depressed and overwhelmed by a situation become more susceptible to stress. Being able to balance emotions and feelings will help the individual recover from hardship and these skills can be taught (Smith, 2000).

- Understanding and planning

When people learn about demanding situations, as well as the time frame, they will know what to expect and it becomes easier to handle stress (Harkness, 2005).

2.7 Reasons for, the effects/impact, and properties of work stress

Workplace stress is gaining huge concern especially with the present state the economy is in, where employees experience situations of overwork, job uncertainty, low levels of job gratification, as well as non-existence of self-sufficiency. The manner in which jobs are intended and work is structured may also cause work stress. Uncontrollable loads and burdens can be caused by unsatisfactory work policy, lack of administration and unacceptable working conditions (Glanz, 2008).

Workplace stress can be devastating on the health and safety of individuals; in addition, it may have an undesirable impression on workplace efficiency and turnover. Both the workers as well as the organisation can take action in order to decrease the harmful effects of stress. However, workers essentially have to recognise the signs that show that one is feeling strained. In addition, companies have to be more conscious of the effects of pressure on their workers' well-being as well as on business revenue. Employers need to monitor the levels of stress in the workplace and ensure that it is controlled at all times (Glaser, 2005).

2.7.1 Reasons for stress at work

Stress occurs through interface with the working environment which one is placed in. However, the approaches vary regarding the importance of the working environment against employees' own features as key causes for tension at work. At times, similar work conditions for one individual appears extremely devastating yet for another individual it is just another normal working day. Therefore, there are many aspects which contribute to stress at work and is not limited to working conditions (Moore, 2004).

The wheel scheme is extremely useful in recognising what causes stress and planning and devising ways in which to address them. All aspects offer different explanations and origins of stress (Ellis, 2012) (Figure 2.1).

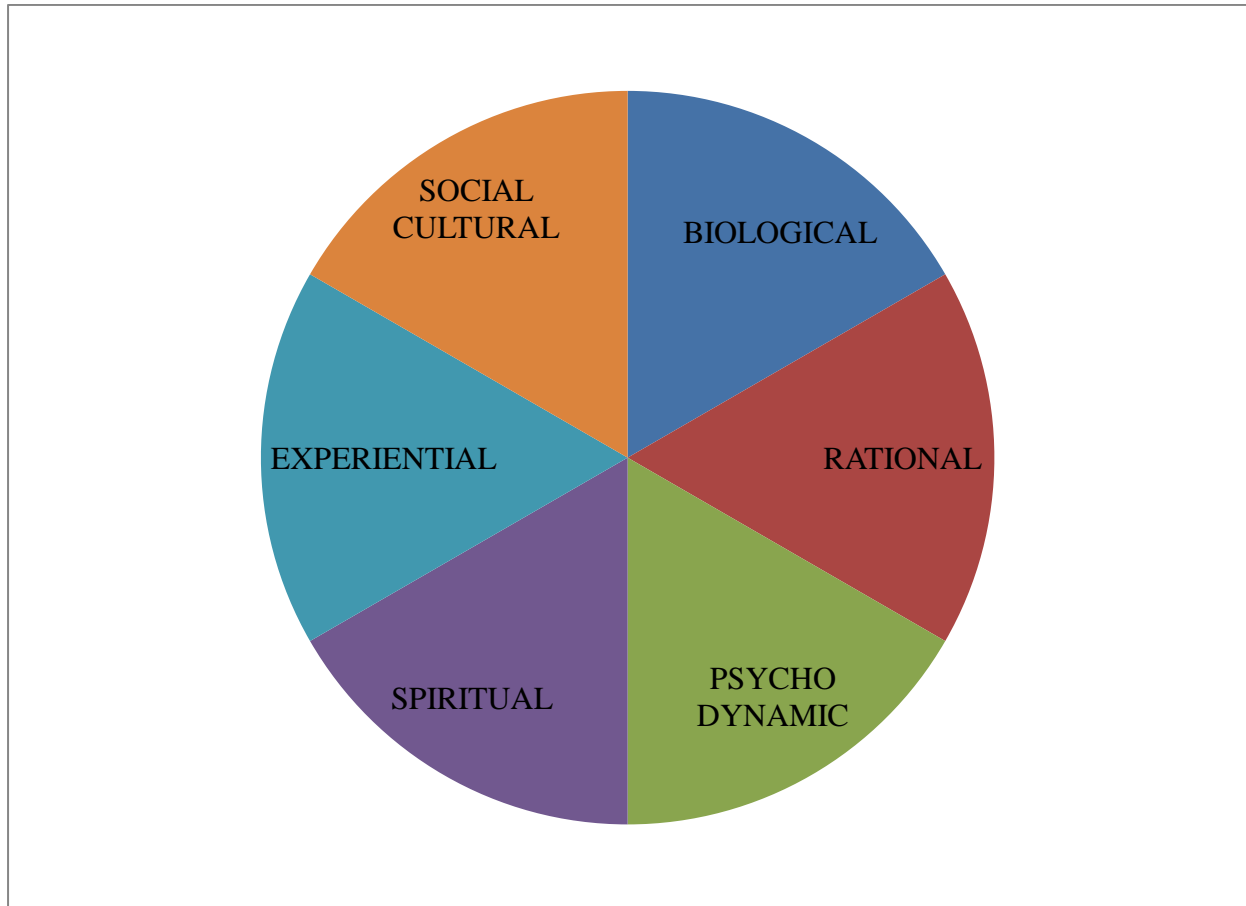


Figure 2.1
The Stress Model

Marin, M.F., Lord, C., Andrew, J., Juster, R.P., Sindi, S., Arsenault-Lapierre, G., Fiocco, A.J., & Lupien, S.J. (2011). Chronic stress, cognitive functioning, and mental health. *Neurobiology of Learning and Memory*, 96, p. 583.

Figure 2.1 is divided into the following segments:

- Biological

This make up of one's body depends on what one eats and the type of environment which one has to stay in. Biological stress is an organism's response to any stressor which may include environmental conditions; stress is simply the body's method of reacting to a challenge (Miller, 2009).

- Social/cultural

Social/cultural includes an entire variety of shared and traditional burdens. Social stress occurs through one's relationship with others and one's social environment. Individuals who experience stress often lack the ability, knowledge and resources needed to cope when confronted with a stressful situation (Cohen, 2007). Humans are social beings and by one's very nature, one feels the need to establish positive social relationships with others. These relationships offer one a sense of social inclusion, and lead to reproductive stress. When one feels a situation as having the potential to disrupt and cause harm to his/her relationships with others this can cause enormous social stress (Misra, 2000).

- Psychodynamic

This is when individuals have intuitive opinions and approaches which frequently arise since childhood involvements. Psychodynamic techniques are designed to help one become more conscious of unconscious habits and preferences laid down early in one's life that may not serve one as an adult (Herman, 2012). Psychodynamic causes of stress may include repressed feelings within an individual. This may also include situations that remind one of stressful feelings which may have been experienced as a child. Individuals tend to keep their guard up at all times; it is like a defence mechanism to protect one's self from a threatening situation which may affect one's self-esteem. This may in turn increase one's self-awareness and allow one to achieve personal growth (Neuman, 2004).

- Rational

The rational component is a process in one's observances which continually construe and assess the world around. Individuals may understand stress in numerous ways, and this can influence their level of stress. Rational individuals aim to obtain as much information as possible, applying what they learn to design long-term plans and the stages for realising them (Bitsika, 2009). Rational causes of stress include perceiving the outcomes of actions as being dangerous or threatening. These perceptions may or may not be realistic, creating an inaccurate view of oneself. Rational stress also includes the absence of skills or knowledge to cope with specific situations, such as not having a logical approach to solving problems or resolving conflict and hence, being unable to manage problems as they arise (Steel, 2007).

- Experiential

Each individual experiences each situation very differently. One individual may find a situation taxing while another may find it inspiring and motivating. Each person is unique and therefore, their responses will be different (Wilburn, 2005). Experiential stress is when there is immediate pressure and demands being placed on an individual simultaneously from various

different people which causes an individual to experience undue stress. Environmental stresses may include noise, difficult working conditions, chaotic and disorderly surroundings, and individuals may interpret these stressors as a threat to survival and it damages one's self-esteem significantly (Seaward, 2009).

- **Spiritual**

Individual and spiritual development is significantly affected by one's religion and has long been documented by one's religion. Cultivating one's spirituality will uncover what is most meaningful in one's life. By clarifying what is most important, one will be able to focus less on the unimportant things and eliminate stress (Graham, Glaser, Loving, Malarkey, Stowell & Kiecolt-Glaser, 2009). Some spiritual causes of stress include the violation of personal or religious moral code, contravention of accepted group practise, or violation of law (Maybery, 2001).

2.7.2 Impact of work stress

According to Miller (2009), stress may affect individuals in different ways. Stress not only causes dysfunctional behaviour in the workplace but it also contributes to poor physical and mental health. In extreme cases, long-term stress or traumatic experiences at work may lead to psychological problems as well as psychiatric disorders resulting in absenteeism and preventing the employee from ever returning to work (Burchell, 2002).

When under stress, individuals experience difficulty in maintaining a healthy balance between work and non-work life. Work stress leads employees to become increasingly distressed and irritable. Individuals find it difficult to relax and concentrate and find it challenging to think logically and make decisions. Employees also tend to enjoy their job less and tend to feel less committed to performing their duties (Kassel, 2003).

According to Dinan (2001), people may display the following characteristics when affected by stress:

- Individuals become progressively concerned and short-tempered.
- Individuals find it difficult to relax and focus on something else.
- Individuals lose the ability to think rationally and it affects their decision making process. Many individuals do not appreciate their jobs and become very despondent.
- Individuals tend to feel miserable and apprehensive (Cohen, 2007).

2.7.3 The properties of work stress in organisations

Once important employees are pretentious, work anxiety could test the well-being as well as performance of their company of employment (Seaward, 2009). Unfit businesses do not acquire the utmost from their employees and this could upset their performance in a progressively competitive marketplace and ultimately even one's survival (Seagerstrom, 2004).

According to Hoel (2002), work stress results in employees staying away more frequently, thereby leading to growing absenteeism. Other negative consequences of work stress include declining obligation to work, growing employee turnover, damaging performance and efficiency, growing insecure working practices and accident rates, as well as rising grievances from consumers and clients (Kato, 2002).

2.8 Indicators of stress

Stress may be indicated through behavioural, physical, emotional and personal indicators:

- Behavioural indicators of stress

Behaviour indicators of stress include stress difficulties, lack of punctuality, absenteeism and withdrawal:

- ✓ Stress difficulties

Individuals suffering from stress tend to find it challenging to switch off. If such individuals have no activities to distract them, negative thinking, and worries take over their mind. When one has problems sleeping and experience insomnia these are distinct signs that one is experiencing stress (Avey, 2003).

- ✓ Lack of punctuality

When an individual is under immense stress the first thing to suffer is timekeeping; individuals become overcome with the workload and are unable to allocate their time effectively. Individuals often take on too many tasks, he/she then leaves these tasks for the last minute and in many cases he/she tends to forget about these tasks due to the extremely heavy workload (Seaward, 2009).

✓ Absenteeism

Individuals encountering stress stay away from work often, perhaps in attempts to avoid a difficult situation, or he/she may be suffering from the consequences of one (Dinan, 2001).

✓ Withdrawal

This is one of the most common symptoms of stress. An individual's self-esteem and self-confidence may have taken a knock and as a result, one may feel incapable of handling social situations (Miller, 2009). One often turns to comfort foods when dealing with stressful situations. However, one should note that the consequences of food avoidance are just as bad as over indulgence (Moore, 2004).

- Physical indicators of stress

Physical indicators of stress include over-eating or loss of appetite, indigestion, sweating and lack of sleep:

✓ Over-eating or loss of appetite

A normal healthy individual generally over-eats or eats less when experiencing stress (Deckro, 2002).

✓ Indigestion

When an individual begins to feel stressed, tension builds up and inevitably produces more stress hormones (Hoel, 2002).

✓ Sweating

When an individual sweats a lot although he/she is not exercising or is relatively inactive this could be due to stress (Smith, 2000).

✓ Lack of sleep

When individuals experience fatigue and tiredness all of a sudden, it is usually a sign of stress. In addition when one feels tired, one may not get a proper and sufficient amount of sleep due to the high stress levels being experienced (Maybery, 2006).

- Emotional indicators of stress

The emotional effects of stress may range from over-eating to feelings of being pressured and overawed (Cooper, 2001). Other indicators of emotional stress may involve feelings of frustration, lack of purpose in life, or depression and anxiety. Individuals complain of poor concentration, absent-mindedness and also difficulty making decisions when under stress

(Blumental, 2003). One should never bottle up stress as this could lead to frustration and cause devastating problems (Bowin & Harvey, 2001).

- Personal indicators of stress

The manner in which a person responds to pressure can be determined by type of personality, coping mechanisms and the support structure he/she may have. Individuals need to be self-aware and identify where extra support and personal development is needed in managing the effects of pressure (Henry, 2008).

Any individual who is experiencing stress in either his/her professional or personal life may display specific signs/symptoms which include becoming over emotional, lethargic, restless and anxious.

A person experiencing stress find it difficult to control his/her emotions. This type of stress is extremely harmful to one's health because one's body reacts to it in the same way as one would when facing danger (Moore, 2004). When individuals are overcome with stress they may become overemotional and this may alter the way they behave and reason (Bliese, 2001).

In addition, the physiological impact of stress can cause fatigue or lethargy. This is a state of sluggishness, dullness and apathy. When one is experiencing weariness it may cause him/her to encounter physical or mental strain (Lewig, 2001).

Furthermore, stress can cause restlessness whereby an individual finds it difficult to focus, causing hyperactivity and impatience. Restlessness can bring one down when facing an anxiety-induced situation or any other generalised disorder. One can prevent experiencing restlessness by exercising regularly and by talking to people (Misra, 2000).

At its worst, prolonged stress can cause anxiety disorders. Anxiety is a feeling which can be mild or extreme. Normal anxiety is triggered by stressful or fear-inducing situations (Deckro, 2002). Anxiety is a strong desire or concern to do something or for something to happen; it generally makes an individual feel overcome with worry and a high sense of fear.

2.9 Sources of stress

We can experience stress from four basic sources, namely, the environment, social stressors, physiological factors and thoughts:

- The environment

The environment may place unrealistic demands on an individual. Environmental stressors may involve weather, pollution, traffic, noise, unsafe and substandard housing as well as crime (Tenant, 2001).

- Social stressors

Individuals may experience various stressors due the demands placed on one from the different social roles he/she occupies. These roles may include being parents, spouse, caregiver as well as an employee. Social stress includes financial difficulties, job interviews, deadlines, and disagreements which demands one's time and attention (WebMD, 2004).

- Physiological

Situations affecting one's body can be interpreted as physiological stressors. Physiological stressors may involve rapid growth during adolescence, illness, aging, accidents, lack of exercise and, sleep disturbances (Rick, 2001).

- Thoughts

An individual's brain interprets and perceives situations as stressful, difficult, painful, or pleasant. Some situations in life are stress provoking but is not a problem for everyone as it is managed by an individual's thoughts (Harkness, 2005).

According to Avey (2003), the following work conditions lead to stress:

- The planning of tasks: Heavy workloads, lack of breaks, extended working times and monotonous tasks have integral meaning in that they do not utilise employees' expertise and offer little sense of control.
- Organisational style: When employees do not contribute in decision-making, it causes poor communication within the organisation.
- Interpersonal relationships: Stress can be triggered by poor interpersonal relationships such as the lack of a proper societal environment and non-existence of support or assistance from co-workers and directors.
- Work roles: Work stress may occur as a result of incompatible or unreliable job expectations, too much accountability, numerous roles to fill (Avey *et al.*, 2003).

- Career anxieties: Employees become insecure with their careers, lack of growth opportunity, and workers feel that there is no room for job progression, as well as promotions (Avey *et al.*, 2003).
- Environmental situations: Unfriendly or hazardous physical situations such as crowding, sound, and air contamination can cause work stress (Avey *et al.*, 2003).

2.10 An epidemic of stress

Studies on the occurrence of work-related stress aim to assess the occurrence of stress related to an array of biographical dimensions such as age, gender and occupation and the main sources of stress at work.

2.10.1 The victims of stress

According to Kinman, (2005), stress is growing considerably and “statistics show that the majority of cases of work-related mental-ill-health occur in those aged 35-44 45-54 years. There is an noticeable difference in the distribution of cases amongst men and women, with more cases amongst women in the 25-34 years age group, and more cases amongst men in the 35-44 years age group” (Blaug, Kenyon & Lekhi, 2007, p. 7). Individuals who occupy a full-time job experience a greater level of stress than that of part-time employees. Blaug *et al.* (2007, p. 7) note that “public sector workers are 64% likely to report stress to be the leading hazard of concern at work compared to 48% of workers in the private sector” and “stress levels rise in line with the higher levels of educational attainment” and is “29.1% more prevalent amongst black and minority ethnic workers than white workers”. Some of the most stressful occupations include nursing, teaching and those in healthcare (Smith, 2000).

2.10.2 The extent of stress

Stress is an extremely important issue which needs to be addressed timelessly as studies show that more than 500 000 people believed that they were experiencing work-related stress at a level which was causing them significant ill health. Approximately “245 000 people first became aware of work-related stress, depression or anxiety in the previous 12 months” (Bendelow, 2009, p. 39). Roughly 15% of all working individuals believe that their job is extremely stressful as stress still remains the primary concern for workers, as stress places unnecessary demands and pressures on employees (Wichert, 2002).

2.10.3 The costs of stress

The cost of stress and stress related illness differ to a large extent. Some cases in Britain are “self-reported work-related stress, depression and anxiety which account for approximately 12.8 million lost working days per year” (Health and Safety Executive, 2017). Following musculoskeletal disorders, stress is the greatest contributor to the overall number of days lost due to work-related ill-health. Stress is therefore, on average, the most expensive of all work-related illnesses in terms of days lost per case (Bowin & Harvey, 2001).

2.10.4 Consequences of stress

Stress is not essentially a detrimental issue; it could be a high-class motivational agent for imminent working advances and development. Too much or too little encouragement can be demanding; therefore, certain level of strain could even be essential at work (Maybery, 2001). When stress is an on-going issue and workers find it difficult to manage and if no one assists them to overcome this difficult working situation, strain can turn into an undesirable issue, which may lead to serious consequences. Stress involves three categories, namely, the influence on health, effect on individual features, as well as the effect on operational competence. The biggest health problems associated with stress include high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, obesity, poor fitness and low resistance. In the event where a worker gets ill, he/she will be unable to focus on any tasks or even accomplishing them successfully. Therefore, it is better to avoid stress at work and form a stress management program rather than spending money on employees’ treatment or replacing them (Seagerstrom, 2004).

Stress has negative effects on one’s character; people differ significantly in their response to a problem or a stressor. Some individuals have a natural ability which allows one to handle a higher or lower level of stress. Human nature makes one feel nervous to some extent. Certain people may have a very high level of apprehension in the central nervous system, causing them to react more excitedly to events and adjust more slowly (Bowin & Harvey, 2001).

2.11 Stress management

According to Moore (2004), stress management is basically an intervention aimed at reducing the effect of stressors in the workplace. It is focused on individuals and helping them handle stress more effectively. Stress management is also focused on the organisation in order to

remove the stress in a certain role. Stress management is primarily aimed at individuals and attempts to ease the effects of stress encountered by an individual (Kassel, 2003).

Stress management is still in its developmental phase. Stress management programs have to be planned seriously and in depth in advance, and can only be implemented after that. Organisations should practise this program as well as identify with its applicants in order to choose the methods of stress management which are most appropriate for the person or specific organisations (Kato, 2002).

2.11.1 Communication and stress management

Kirkcaldy (2002) believes that the best way to relieve stress is through communication, speaking and interacting with various individuals as it helps one to overcome stress significantly. In many cases stress is caused by the lack of communication, simply because stressed individuals cannot express their thoughts and feelings and bottle it up until it causes them to experience stress and go into a state of depression. It is not important if communication is a working process or part of life (Wilburn, 2005).

In order to control stress one must determine the type of communication, how information is conveyed, and how effective communication is, the topics of communication, as well as the number of communicators. Individuals have gained a lot of experience when it comes to business communication; however, they cannot be certain when the human element comes into play. It is impossible to expect the stress management program to remove stress problems completely or guarantee its results as people change their opinions, attitudes and plans regularly (Seagerstrom, 2004).

The stress management program identifies and rectifies the problems encountered by small companies and in many cases it saves companies from collapse and ruin. The stress management program deserves a place in all companies, which cares about its future and the future of its employees (Steel, 2007).

According to Schwabe (2009), common reactions to stress experienced in the workplace are:

- To talk to someone about one's complaints and not to try to change the situation.
- To reduce the work load by working additional hours.

- Trying to engage in a more interesting activity so that one can return revitalised as well as learn to do more in a shorter period of time.
- Move away from the situation completely by resigning or looking for an alternative job or even spending less time at work.
- Check the situation and try to find ways in which to change things.

Hence, much depends on the actions and rules formed by other individuals that even our most fruitful efforts will not guarantee success. What can be guaranteed is the good feeling of taking charge of one's situation (Wainwright, 2000).

2.12 How to approach work related stress systematically

“There are three main types of stress management interventions used in organisations, primary, secondary and tertiary” (Bron, Biron & Ivers, 2008).

- **Primary Interventions (Prevention)**

According to the European Health and Safety Authority (undated, p. 14), “this approach looks at the issue of stress ‘at source’, in order to prevent it occurring”. This generally involves an “organisation-wide change in the system of work, be it the design of how things are done, what is done and/or by whom things are done” and an “assessment of individuals’ reactions to the environment itself measured against accepted or standard behaviours and systems” (Health and Safety Authority, undated, p. 14).

- **Secondary Interventions (Management)**

According to the European Health and Safety Authority (undated, p. 14), this approach “focuses on the employee throughout his or her period with the organisation. It includes training for the job, training in general aspects of health and safety and support offered through the provision of adequate management of the social and technical aspects of an employee’s working life”. This positive managerial effort plays a significant part in stress prevention as well as to help in the recovery of stressed employees (Bowin & Harvey, 2001).

- **Tertiary Intervention (Minimisation)**

Tertiary intervention “focuses on the provision of counselling and employee assistance programmes or outsourced support services in order to assist employees who feel a need for extra support other than that obtained in, for example, a human resource function” (Heath and

Safety Authority, undated). This form of intervention is not utilised by smaller firms due to resource and cost implications. Support can be sought from peers who can simply listen and offer support in addressing concerns and perhaps recognising the need for some changes in the quantity or system of work (Harkness, 2005). In addition, supervisors and line managers should have suitable managerial skills and support and motivate employees to develop and assist in harnessing team cohesiveness. Supervisors and managers play a pivotal role in nurturing the organisational culture in the organisation and must promote the respect of every employee in the organisation (Bitsika, 2009).

2.13 Coping strategies and interventions

According to Neuman (2004), workplace stress is an epidemic and there is no denying that it is a critical problem in one's modern working life. Stress in the workplace is intensive and certain coping mechanisms need to be in place in order for persistent stress to be avoided. When one is coping with stress two approaches can be used. The primary approach is to pinpoint the roots of work stress in the structure and organisation of the current workplace as well as to see the solution in terms of job redesign. Another is to locate work stress in the responses of the individual and see the solution in terms of a calming intervention (Burchell, 2002).

The most effective method for employees to use when handling stress is to include stress management at both the organisational and individual level. Organisational policies are highly effective in decreasing long term strain; though it is equally imperative for employees to have their own coping plans to deal with stress when they encounter it (Ellis, 2012).

There are several strategies for managing stress:

- Stress Management Strategy 1: Avoid unnecessary stress

It is unhealthy to avoid stress in a situation where it needs to be addressed. By simply addressing stress one can eliminate numerous stressors in their life. It is also important to learn how to say "no". One needs to know one's limits in both one's personal and professional life; one must not take on more than one can handle (Hoel, 2002). Also, it is important to stay away from individuals who cause stress in one's life. When somebody constantly brings stress in one's life, it is best to stay away from him/her or restrict the quantity of time which one devotes to the person (Steel, 2007). One should also take charge of one's situation. When something

makes one nervous or tense, it is best to stay away (Miller, 2009). It is sometimes necessary to avoid argumentative topics. One should avoid contentious topics such as religion and politics as people generally have different points of view. If one is always in conflict with someone about the same subject it is probably best not to bring it up or leave when it is the subject of conversation (Graham *et al.*, 2009). It is also important to cut down one's to-do list. One should check one's schedule, responsibilities, and daily tasks. People need to distinguish between what should and must be done. People need to do tasks which are necessary and drop things which are not important (Seagerstrom, 2004).

- Stress Management Strategy 2: Alter the situation

When a stressful situation cannot be avoided one must try to alter it. Understand what the problem is and make the changes so that the problem does not present itself in the future. In many cases this contains changing the way one interacts and lives one's daily life.

It is important to direct one's emotions rather than bottling them up. When an individual is upsetting, it is necessary to convey one's worries in an open and polite manner. Individuals need to vent their feelings, otherwise anger will build and the situation will stay as it was (Avey, 2003). In addition, one must be ready to co-operate. Individuals need to be willing and open to change if they ask someone else to change their behaviour. If they both are willing to compromise, then they will have a decent chance of finding a happy middle ground (Glaser, 2005). Furthermore, it is important to become self-assured. Individuals need to deal with their problems head on and anticipate and prevent them, and take a personal interest in their own life (Cooper, 2001). One needs to manage one's time more effectively. A lack of time management can bring about a lot of stress. Whenever people are busy and falling behind in their work, it is hard to stay composed and focused. People must strategise in advance and not over commit themselves; they must change the amount of stress they are experiencing (Herman, 2012).

- Stress Management Strategy 3: Adjust to the stressor

When people fail to change their stressor they must change themselves. People can become accustomed to stressful situations and re-establish their sense of control by adjusting expectations and attitude. This means that they need to reframe difficulties. People need to see stress more positively instead of getting upset over the negative effect it has on their lives (Neuman, 2004). They need to take account of the stressful situation and check if it is important

in the long run and, if not, people need to focus their time and energy elsewhere (Misra, 2000). People need to adjust their standards; they should not aim for perfection if it is causing stress as they will be setting themselves up for failure. They should rather set sensible standards for themselves and others and be satisfied with what is “good enough” (Gacad, 2002). It is also important to place emphasis on the positives. If stress is brining one down, one must take a minute to look back and appreciate the positive and good aspects in one’s life. This strategy will ensure that one maintains things in perspective (Deckro, 2002). Altering one’s attitude is imperative. The way in which one reasons could have a huge effect on one’s emotional and physical welfare. Every time one has a bad thought about oneself, one’s body responds if the individual is in a tense situation. If people see themselves positively and in a good light they are more likely to feel good about themselves. One should do away with specific words such as constantly, not ever, must, and duty, as these words are associated with self-defeating opinions (Dinan, 2001).

- Stress Management Strategy 4: Come to grips with the things that cannot be changed
- In some instances, stress is inevitable. One simply cannot avoid or change them, for example, death, illness, or a general recession. In these instances the most effective way to deal with pressure is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be challenging, and it is easier than trying to change a situation which cannot be changed (Kirkcaldy, 2002).

It is important not to try to control the irrepressible. In life many things are outside one’s control, mainly the behaviour of other individuals. Instead of stressing over them, one can focus on the things one can control such as the way one chooses to react to problems (Kato, 2002). Look for the positive aspect as the saying guides: “What does not kill us makes us stronger”. People need to view challenges as the opportunity for individual development. If one’s unfortunate decisions contribute to a stressful situation, one needs to reflect on them and learn from these errors (Seaward, 2009). It is important to share one’s thoughts. Individuals should share and express their feelings with a friend or family members because by expressing what one is going through allows some kind of release even if one cannot change the traumatic situation. Sharing feelings is not a sign of feebleness and it will not make one a burden to others. In many cases, this will strengthen the bond between friends as they will be pleased that one has faith in them so much as to confide in them (Kinsella, 2009). Furthermore, it is necessary to learn to forgive. We live in an imperfect world and, therefore, we must accept that people will make mistakes from time to time. People need to free themselves from

negativity and let go of their anger and resentment towards others and move on with their lives (Wilburn, 2005).

- Stress Management Strategy 5: Allocate time for relaxation

Besides a take-charge and optimistic attitude, individuals may reduce stress in their life by encouraging themselves. When people frequently make time for fun and relaxation, they will be in a better position to handle life's stressors (Rick, 2001). It is important not to let other activities influence this time as this time belongs to the individual to take a well-deserved break from his/her duties and revitalise his/her batteries (Glanz, 2008).

According to Bowin and Harvey (2001), there are several ways of relaxing which can improve one's health (Table 2.1)

Table 2.1
Ways of relaxing that can improve health

• Take long walks.	• Have a cup of coffee or tea.
• Devote time to the outdoors and experience mother nature.	• Spend time with your pet.
• Phone your best acquaintance.	• Clean the garden.
• Have a workout and release your tension.	• Have a massage.
• Write in your diary.	• Relax with an interesting book.

Bowin, R.B., & Harvey, D. (2001). *Human Resources Management: An Experiential Approach*. 2nd Ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Other ways to deal with stress may include the following:

- ✓ Associate with positive individuals who put others in a better frame of mind. A sturdy support system will safeguard one from the negative effects of stress (Moore, 2004).
- ✓ Do activities which individuals enjoy every day. People must allow time for leisure activities that bring them enjoyment, whether it is astronomy, playing the guitar, or working on one's bike (Hoel, 2002).

- ✓ Keep one's sense of humour. When one can truly laugh at themselves this shows that they have a positive and good sense of humour. The act of laughing helps one's body combat stress in numerous ways (Kassel, 2003).

- Stress Management Strategy 6: Embrace a healthy lifestyle

One can increase one's resistance to stress by strengthening one's physical health. It is important to exercise frequently since it plays an important part in decreasing and avoiding the impact of stress. One should exercise a minimum of three times per week in order to reduce strain and tension (Graham *et al.*, 2009). It is also necessary to have a well-balanced diet. People with well-nourished bodies may be more equipped to manage stress. One must be aware of eating healthily in order to keep one's energy up and one's mind clear (Wilburn, 2005). This means that one should reduce caffeine and sugar as caffeine provides temporary highs which do not last for a long period of time. By decreasing the quantity of coffee, soft drinks and sugar one will feel more relaxed and even sleep better (Miller, 2009). In addition, one should avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs. When people self-medicate it provides them with an easy and temporary escape from stress. People should rather deal with the issue at hand and clear their minds (Harkness, 2005). It is important to get enough sleep as it fuels and re-energises one's mind, as well as one's body. One of the side effects of stress is that it may cause one to think irrationally (Cooper, 2001).

2.14 Actions taken to manage work-life stress

According to Omolara (2008), individuals can reduce the amount of work-life stress they experience through practices such as segmentation, compensation, accommodation, postponing children and hiring help around the house. Segmentation involves separating work from family so that they do not affect one another (Herman, 2012). Compensation occurs when an individual is dissatisfied with the balance between work and family; they compensate by over investing in other areas. Accommodation occurs when individuals are less involved in one domain to satisfy the requirements of the other domain (Blumental, 2003). Strategy relates to couples and involves one partner taking on a more demanding job while the other takes a less demanding job to meet family demands. Many couples delay having children in order to focus and build their careers, while having less demand at home. Individuals reduce the amount of work around the house and look to family members and friends to provide them with support and help (Graham *et al.*, 2009).

The following can be done to help manage and deal with work-life stress:

- **Coping Style**

Individual coping style is the way in which individuals handle stressful events. External demands may help an individual manage work-life balance issues. The three coping styles include being problem-focused (engaging in actions directed at managing and solving problems), being emotion-focused (delving into the emotional consequences of a stressful event without attempting to solve it), being avoidance-focused (avoiding a problem completely).

Coping resources may come from many areas of one's life, such as personal/individual level, work level, couple and family level (Kinsella, 2009).

- **Strain Reduction**

The emotion-focused stress does not come about due to work stressors. The problem-focused stress tries to identify the causes of stress and attempts to relieve the stressors which in turn give rise to strain. Individuals need to admit that certain events are causing them stress, and if they do this it will reduce emotional problems such as strain and depression (Blumental, 2003).

- **Leisure**

In order to achieve an effective work-life balance one needs to relax more as it has a positive influence on one's life and quality of life. Leisure has a significant positive impact on well-being and in ensuring an array of health benefits, for example, decreasing tension and building stress coping mechanisms (Miller, 2011).

2.15 Conclusion

Work stress is an actual challenge for both the workers as well as the organisation. Just as the organisation and the work environment changes, so too does the kind of stress that individuals encounter. It is imperative to constantly scan and assess the workplace for stress related problems which may occur at any time (Bliese, 2000).

Stress is a contiguous issue and should not be dismissed as simply a part of the job, or the consequences of being successful in one's career and future ambitions. Stress can lead to heart attacks, high blood pressure and other stress associated illnesses. The employee's health deteriorates due to unhealthy working environments. In many organisations stress is perceived as a weakness and people keep quiet to avoid negative consequences (Tenant, 2001).

In many cases stress is dismissed by managers/supervisors who have the ability to do something about it. Employees as well as employers need to get together and discuss ways to reduce stress and stress-related illnesses within the organisation. Transformation needs to start from the top; senior directors as well as managers need to acknowledge that they have a legal and moral responsibility to protect both the physical and mental well-being of their employees (Burchell, 2002).

This chapter aimed to elucidate the harmful effects of workplace stress, as well as increase the awareness and nature of the problem at hand. This knowledge is given to organisations in the hope that it will discover the stressors that are present in their work environment, so that they can implement measures to reduce and prevent stress in the workplace in order to protect the well-being of employees.

CHAPTER 3

WORK-LIFE BALANCE, TIME MANAGEMENT, WORK OVERLOAD AND JOB INVOLVEMENT

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 assesses work-life balance, time management, work overload and job involvement and how they contribute to stress encountered by an individual. Areas of work-life balance include, amongst others, managing work-life balance, benefits to the individual as well as the organisation, work-life policy on work-life balance, and drivers of work-life balance. Areas of work overload include, amongst others, employee work overload and job satisfaction, downsizing and work overload, how to deal with work overload, and types of work overload. Job satisfaction includes, amongst others, the effects of work overload, areas of time management, benefits of time management, efficient time management, guidelines for time management, principles for successful time management, and why managers face time management failures.

3.2 Work-Life Balance

Balancing an individual's work-life simply means properly prioritizing between one's work, career and ambition as well as one's 'lifestyle'. Work-life balance does not simply mean an equal balance but prioritizing one's time between one's personal and professional lives. This means achieving one's personal as well as work goals without neglecting either one of them (Carlson, 2003).

3.2.1 The nature of work-Life Balance

According to Fitzpatrick, (2005, 22), work-life shows how well individuals can balance their commitments, responsibilities and goals regarding their paid work. People who have a decent balance between work and life attain a sense of security and one generally believes that he/she has control over his/her work and personal life. Managing both work and life is an extremely significant issue in human resources management and is vital in encouraging individual and organisational efficiency. Proper prioritising between 'work' on one hand and 'life' on the other is more significant now due to the increase in work which has come about from huge

changes in information technology, a more competitive market, the rapid rate of change, and high targets which are set for individuals (Rubinstein, 2001).

According to Lockwood (2003), over 70% of individuals experience an unequal balance between work and their personal lives. In addition to this, over 90% of individuals believe that they devote far too little time to their relatives (Lockwood, 2003). The balance between work and personal life also affects the well-being of many individuals. People's well-being rests on many things ranging from, for example, personality, their salary, job requirements, and religious faith. Work life balance can be manifested from the degree of struggle between the home and life boundary; hence, assessing the degree and direction of conflict and its influence is important (Frone *et al.*, 2003). Lastly, balance is influenced by the spiritual aspect of the individual and is a means to an end which is contentment with life and is sought to be measured through the constructs of spirituality and general well-being. General well-being takes into account individuals' emotional response, whether they are satisfied with their work and personal life and so on (Carr *et al.*, 2008). Balance is a wide-ranging and multifaceted incident, and often lacks universal meaning. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (2009), balance is the degree to which an individual is equivalently engaged in and satisfied with his/her work and family roles.

According to Boles (2001), balance consists of equal time being allocated to both work and family responsibilities. Involvement balance means that individuals need to be involved in both aspects, that is, their work and their personal lives. Satisfaction balance means that people should be equally happy with the way their work and personal lives are going. For one to attain proper work-life balance, individuals should spend time, be involved, and be satisfied with both their work and personal lives. Once these criteria are filled equally balance may be achieved if not imbalance is bound to occur (Hopkins, 2006).

Kalliath and Brough (2008) identify six different definitions of work-life balance that are commonly used within the literature. An individual's balance is reflected in the direction of one's life roles. It is the level to which an employee is happy and similarly pleased with both work and personal life. In order to be satisfied with both work and personal life and achieve work-life balance, an individual needs to spend time and be committed to both his/her work and personal life. The efficiency and satisfaction an individual gives to work and family roles

show where his/her priorities are at any given point in time. If individuals have meaningful work related conversations with fellow workers, it will reflect a high level of work-life balance. Balance ensures that individuals generally have a sense of control over their work environments and the way in which they work.

3.2.2 Components of work-Life Balance

Two main components of work-life balance are:

- Self-management: It is acceptance that proficiently using the gaps in our lives is crucial, as well as the fact that handy resources, time, and life are limited (Carlson, 2003). Time-management is amplified through suitable goals and perceiving not only that which is crucial but what is urgent, as opposed to important or fundamental (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2009).
- Leisure-management: Effective leisure management calls for altering one's activities. In order to realise a little better balance in life, workers need to plan down-time, refrain from things that add no value to their lives, avoid harmful people that suck energy, subcontract tasks where possible, and take some time for themselves (De Bruin, 2009).

3.2.3 The importance of Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is now an important determinant for more workers in attaining a thriving career. Achieving the correct balance has become a progressively persistent worry to both managers and personnel of most organisations. Work balance principally deals with the individual's ability to suitably prioritise amongst his/her work, personal life, health and family. Work-Life balance is largely associated with matters of worker's productivity, performance and job satisfaction (Lewis, 2008).

Work-life balance has to do with appropriate prioritising amongst work (career ambition) and lifestyle (health, preference, rest, family and development). The ability to balance one's work from their personal life is referred to as work life balance (Clark, 2009). Work-life balance is not necessarily equal division between the two. Individual interests, goals, obligations and commitments means that the balance is more fluid and shifts over time, but the evidence is clear that work-life balance positively impacts individuals as well as the organisations where they work (Hansen, 2002).

3.2.4 Managing Work-Life Balance

In order to manage work-life balance individuals need to make time for themselves, relax and exercise regularly, ensure that they enjoy a good personal life as well as a successful work-life. Individuals should engage in the following to help manage their work-life balance:

- Make time for yourself in your schedule. Whenever one plans his/her work, one must allocate time for exercise, for interests as well as for family and friends. The individual should put it on his/her programme as a professional commitment. Most importantly be proactive about scheduling. When individuals do not take care of themselves and identify the need for balance it negatively impacts the whole organisation (Allen, 2009).
- Clearly set boundaries. One needs to ensure that there are boundaries between one's personal and work life. Individuals also need to be clear about when they are available for work activities and the time they set aside for family and personal time (Sonnentag, 2006).
- Recognise a mentor, coach or friend with whom you can talk. People in leadership roles need someone who they can talk to, where they can share their problems. The person must be someone that the individual trusts and there is some evidence that a person outside of education, who does not share the same expectations, can be the best listener (Clark, 2009).
- Pay attention to sleep, exercise and diet. Many individuals often neglect sleep, exercise and may not eat regularly, or healthily. One must ensure that they allow time for adequate sleep, and build time for exercise (Fitzpatrick, 2005).
- Talk with your partner. Individuals need to make sure that they have a good quality relationship with their partners as it impacts everyone around them. One needs to talk openly with their partners about issues such as work-life balance, prioritising, preparing, as well as learning how to support one another (Lockwood, 2003).
- Stop doing some things. Scrutinise one's work programme and activities. Individuals need to identify what is important and focus the majority of their efforts on those activities, and allocate less time to those activities which are less vital, as well as give themselves the opportunity to drop them from their routine (Vloems, 2008).
- Delegate and divide work. Nowadays, leaders feel that they must do everything or respond to every request. They often worry about losing control. They need to become comfortable with delegating tasks or subdividing the work among several people (Frone, 2003).

According to Beehr (2000), there are several benefits of work-life balance for both the individual and the organisation (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2

Benefits of work-life balance to the individual and the organisation

Benefits for the Individual	Benefits for the Organisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work-life balance leads to a healthier life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Improved productivity and obligation to work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Balance reduces stress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better communication and cooperation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationships advance on the job and away from the job.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organisational stress is condensed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One's work and personal life is more fulfilling.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The shared morale improves.

Beehr, T.A. (2000). Perceived situational moderators of the relationship between subjective test. *Academy of Management Journal*, 32(4), p. 803.

3.2.5 Policies that can enable Work-Life Balance

Various policies may be introduced to support work-life balance which relate to:

- Job Sharing. This is when two individuals contribute equally to a job. These employees have the same job, but divide the hours, the payments, holidays and benefits; however, they are part-time employees (Howard, 2008).
- Time away from work. One should ensure that he/she takes regular breaks from work in order to achieve the correct balance between work and personal life. The breaks must not only include maternity and parental leave but also time off for sabbaticals (Kalliath, 2008).
- Compressed working hours. This is when employees work the total number of hours agreed over a shorter period, such as working the hours over four days, thereby gaining another day (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2009).
- Self-rostering. This is when employees get to choose which hours he/she wants to work. The manager checks the number of staff as well as the skills required and allows the employees to choose which hours he/she wants to work. This enables employees to plan themselves between work and non-work activities (Voydanoff, 2004).
- Tele-working. Tele-working is a flexible schedule option that employees value immensely and its popularity is increasing. Using modern communication technology, employees are able to carry out their jobs without essentially having to be at the office. It allows employees

to attend to family or non-work issues when production or excellence is not affected (Lassk, 2001).

- Flexi-time. These policies give full-time workers the opportunity to choose starting and ending times within the plans indicated by the organisation (Pillinger, 2001).

3.2.6 Concerns and opportunities that Work-Life affects

Concerns and opportunities that work-life affects include:

- Growth and profit impact. Enhanced on and off-the-job pressures affect top as well as bottom-line growth, and needlessly decreases production. A well-implemented work-life strategy will substantially reduce both real and perceived overwork and address factors that hinder productivity, thereby creating a positive return on investment (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2009).
- Full engagement and customer service. When the labour force is stressed for no apparent reason, or dissatisfied this implies an imbalance and it significantly decreases engagement with customers. Equally, commitment to the organisation's goals and customers' needs increases perceptions that the organisation is loyal to both the work and life achievement of every employee (Chughai, 2008).
- Competitive advantage for talent. Due to the baby boomers' generation and more significantly the, decrease in the number of baby boomers competitive advantage in the workplace has been significantly affected. Individuals expect employers to become more understanding to the fact that he/she values his/her job but at the same time he/she also has a life. This is the main reasons why employee's leave work because there is an unequal balance between one's work and personal life and one feels that the employer is not assisting with his/her problems (Cox, 2000).
- Healthcare cost solution. Managers need to take a more hands on approach when it comes to healthcare of its employees simply because the cost is extremely high and employees need to be well looked after. Managers require employees to better his/her own lifestyle, change behaviours, and develop a much healthier workplace in order to overcome the healthcare problems affecting the organisation today (Bozkurt, 2012).

Human resource managers who conduct effective work-life training platforms through his/her management positions achieve two key bottom-line goals. Managers may improve the retention, commitment, and efficiency of the organisation's most appreciated individuals

(Sabelis, 2001). Also, the managers and supervisors display new mechanisms, strategies and language that produce a much more optimistic view of the organisation at all levels. This more positive view has a surging impact on the employee attitude, morale, productivity, and customer-service levels (Carlson, 2003).

3.2.7 Workplace policy on Work-Life Balance

A formal workplace policy on work-life balance relates to:

- **Organisational practices**

Work-life balance strategies should be modified in order to meet the expectations of a diverse organisation's subject on culture, demographics as well as the needs of both the organisation and its employees. These practices should include establishing an agreement regarding flexible working hours such as flexi-time or may be even working on a part-time basis (Strongman, 2000). The organisation should introduce flexible leave schedules which will allow individuals to go on career breaks or sabbaticals should the need arise. Individuals should have the option of teleworking if it enables them to perform more effectively at the job on hand. So, in essence, organisational practices need to meet the expectations of both the employer and the employee (Hegtvædt, 2002).

- **Procedures**

The processes and policies will handle the concessions as well as decrease the number of queries, guarantee that all employees are treated fairly as well as assist line managers in applying the necessary work-life balance policies. These processes include conducting surveys in order to better understand worker's needs. Material on work-life balance policies should be issued to all employees and it is vital that work-life balance issues are covered in the induction course (Kossek, 2003).

- **Management**

In order to be triumphant, management must recognise the reasoning behind the overview of work-life balance platforms and buy into it. Therefore, it is extremely important for managers and those in higher ranks to be included in work-life balance training as it will assist them to better deal with stress when affected (Rau, 2004).

- **Culture**

Employees need to be made aware that in order for the work-life balance programs to be effective one needs to accept that he/she needs to be more flexible and innovative and improve communication with the rest of the workforce. The communication program requires that each

and every employee's potential must be highlighted and understood from the outset (Hopkins, 2006). The organisation must also accept the work-family balance between employees and employers (Boles, 2001).

3.2.8 Consequences of employee Work-Life imbalance

According to Howard (2008), work-life imbalance may have severe costs for both the individual as well as the organisation as a whole. Whenever there is a conflict in work balance it negatively affects an individual's quality of life and the career goals and aspirations of employees. When individuals experience an imbalance, it significantly affects his/her health, decreases satisfaction, and in many cases individuals vent their frustration on the family members or turn towards substance abuse (Vloems, 2008).

3.3 Work Overload

Work overload simply arises when an individual is given too much of work to perform, the work demands are greater than what he/she is able to accomplish and as a result one becomes overwhelmed with what is expected of him/her. Work overload may be seen as quantitative or qualitative. Quantitative overload is when an individual has too much work to accomplish within the time available, whereas qualitative overload means that individuals may lack the skills required to accomplish the work needed (Fong & Kleiner, 2004).

3.3.1 Definition of work overload

According to Karatepe (2006), work overload is an important predictor of work and family conflict. Work overload in general is a situation when an individual has too many tasks to accomplish. Employees who recognise their workload to be more than they can handle are likely to encounter exhaustion and fatigue, which may adversely affect their motivation to respond to the burdens of the other domains.

Work overload may be positively related to work interference with family and family interference with work. Work overload is a stressor which the majority of people experience across the world regardless of the occupations which one may be in (Rubinstein, 2001). Stress is associated with a number of behavioural, physical, and psychological strains; however, the response one has to work overload may be different from one's reaction to other types of stressors. Whilst other stressors may trigger enhanced degrees of emotional distress, overload

produces fatigue that can have harmful effects on an employee's health and well-being in the future (Frone *et al.*, 2003).

Work overload often results in employees performing inadequately and as a result he/she tends to dislike his/her job and therefore, performance level is not up to standard and is often below expectations. When organisations decide to implement actual incentive plans as well as provide good quality training and development to employees there will surely be an enhancement in performance and employees will become more satisfied with their job (Bozkurt, 2012). This stress can be reduced by giving training, orientation and equal employee opportunities. Stress is fast becoming a major issue for organisations which may occur due to tension and work overload. It is safe to say that work overload is one of the worst forms of stress which one can experience (Fong & Kleiner, 2004).

3.3.2 Downsizing and work overload

According to Beehr (2000, 803), one of the effects of downsizing is that the organisation still expects all the work to be performed. Simply put, the business expects to do more with less thereby leading to work overload, for example, longer hours, pressure to work overtime, doing tasks in addition to the regular work and, sometimes, at a quicker pace. Work overload conditions arise when tasks surpass the amount of time and resources available for completion. The argument is that while downsizing through workforce reduction reduces an organisation's workforce, the same amount of work may remain, which may result in survivors experiencing role overload (Carr, 2008). Moreover, the remaining employees will be expected to perform responsibilities and everyday work which they would not normally be required to do. In line with this assertion, "a firm's effective management of downsizing is intricately related to the possible strategies of alleviating work overload", among other issues (Fong & Kleiner, 2004, p. 10). This is particularly important both during and after the downsizing exercise (Hansen, 2002).

According to Nasuridin (2008), perceptions of work overload after a process of downsizing can jeopardize a process of revitalisation and change. Specifically, survivors can perceive that they are being treated unfairly by being given excess work which might lead to changes in work effort and an increase in intention to leave. Work overload, job insecurity and intention to

leave are all related reflections of discomfort after downsizing and can be high if the downsizing process is poorly handled (Leug, 2002).

3.3.3 Two types of work overload

According to Voydanoff (2004), work overload may take on two types, namely, individuals may be asked to perform too many tasks or individuals may be given work which is too demanding. Work overload may arise due to organisational restraints which may inhibit efficiency, and there may be too few employees to share the work load which will ultimately lead to unfair allocation of work. This is when some individuals have heavier workloads compared to others. When individuals are unwilling to manage what should be a realistic workload, they inevitably add more work to others, thereby causing other individuals to experience work overload. Many employees do not possess the required skills to fulfil the requirements of a job, or he/she may lack motivation thus making it difficult to perform tasks properly and efficiently. Whenever a job is inadequately designed, the tasks become too difficult and problematic for employees to perform (Hopkins, 2006).

3.3.4 How to deal with work overload

Simple tips for dealing with work overload include:

- Spend a few hours strategising before one starts working. One should take time to strategise and plan out work; this will decrease the amount of hours spent on mindless labour. Whenever individuals work with a plan in place it means they will work smarter (Sonnentag, 2006).
- Stop thinking negatively about work. One should be positive in his/her mind-set as the saying goes ‘we are what we think about’. One should not be concerned too much about work as this would create a situation where one is overwhelmed with work stress. When individuals view work as being ‘painful’ this will negatively affect their efforts towards performing better (Fong & Kleiner, 2004).
- Clear the mind. One should spend time relaxing with the purpose of calming one’s mind and taking the focus away from one’s work life. Work overload significantly affects an individual’s balance; therefore, one needs to be calm and not get overwhelmed with stress (Carlson, 2003).
- Delegate the routine work to less skilled members in the team. Individuals need to be given work which matches the skills and abilities which they possess. One will hate and resent

doing work if it does not inspire and motivate him/her. One should delegate routine work to people in the team who are less skilled and skilled workers should rather focus on more complex and demanding work (Davis, 2004).

- Use technology to improve productivity. Individuals need to use technology at their disposal to help improve and increase productivity in the workplace and make one's life more comfortable. Technology is meant to simplify one's life; however, people tend to make their life more complex by using technology incorrectly (Hopkins, 2006).
- Stop being a workaholic. People need to stop working too hard as this usually leads to work overload. People become more miserable by giving importance to hard work, when life is supposed to be easier. One should rather allocate more time on relaxing, and one must learn to appreciate things in life other than work (Bozkurt, 2012).

3.4 Job Involvement

According to Rotenberry (2007), job involvement is basically an individual's commitment and dedication to his/her job. Job involvement involves the internalisation of values and is about how seriously an individual actually takes his/her work. Individuals who enjoy and take their work seriously generally have a high self-worth and want to perform to their optimum regardless of the task at hand.

3.4.1 What is job involvement

According to Eerde (2003, 21), job involvement is the extent of which an individual is engaged with the work duties given to him/her, as well as how vital the job is to an individual's self-image and self-worth. High involvement may occur through when individuals who have high level of involvement in a specific role allocate more time to that related role. Alternatively, high involvement in one role will make one more mentally preoccupied when one is physically attempting to fulfil the demands of the other role. According to Greenhaus and Beutell (2009), individuals who experience high involvement enjoy their jobs more and are primarily concerned with achieving success in their careers; in many cases, they allocate more time to fulfilling their work role as opposed to the family role. As a result, these individuals will encounter more work related stress and this may lead to work-family conflict (Fong & Kleiner, 2004).

According to Lassk (2001), job involvement is frequently demarcated by the attachment to one's job that exceeds regular levels of commitment. One may become so involved with one's job that it affects performance in one's personal life. Managers fully understand that by promoting job involvement employees will become more engaged in their work and this will ultimately further the goals and objectives of the company. Job involvement is when employees identify and understand their job, perform to their optimum and when the performance positively affects their self-worth (Carlson, 2003).

3.4.2 Importance of job involvement

According to Diefendorff (2002), job involvement is related to the significance of work in one's life. When one gives prominence to one's work, it simply means that these individuals are loyal to their organisation and this also affects the performance of individuals. In addition, Lewis (2008) also sighted involvement as having an effect on an individual's self-esteem. The employees who experience high levels of job involvement generally have a positive self-image. In general, job involvement is relatively low among temporary employees as opposed to that of permanent employees who experience greater levels of job involvement (Abraham, 2005).

When individuals take part in job related issues, it generally indicates that they are involved in the job, views the job as being a significant part of their lives, and acknowledges performance as an important part of their self-worth. Job involvement has a huge influence on production and competence of employees which may affect one's overall performance (Howard, 2008). Job involvement is an important issue for producing, as well as improving motivation of personnel. Job involvement will significantly affect an employee's progress and contentment with one's work environment as well as individuals' approaches which are directed towards achieving their goals (Greenhaus & Beutell, 2009).

According to Voydanoff (2004), managers need to comprehend the significance of job involvement because it is a crucial component of work behaviour within the workforce. When individuals are given power over their work content, product quality and work related skills and resources can motivate the employees to enhance their job involvement. In other words, quality as well as the importance of work plays a vital role in the self-worth of an employee, and this will determine the involvement of the employee, that is, if he/she has a high level of

self-worth then he/she becomes more involved otherwise he/she will not be as dedicated and involved.

3.4.3 Job involvement and job insecurity

According to Fong and Kleiner (2004), job involvement may have the threat of job insecurity; in this case if highly involved individuals recognise the threat of job insecurity, individuals will react more negatively as compared to those with low levels of involvement. Many academics believe that job involvement is directly linked to turnover and absenteeism. Individuals with a high level of involvement and who display strong levels of commitment and dedication are more motivated than those with lower levels of involvement and therefore, these individuals have a more superior effect on the organisation through his/her performance (Bozkurt, 2012).

3.5 Time Management

According to Sabelis (2001), time management simply means using time as best as possible, as well as ensuring that one gets more done with the time allocated. Time management essentially means focusing on important tasks first and not wasting time on insignificant tasks. Ultimately this includes working calmly and efficiently, as well as avoiding the last-minute rush (Lewis, 2008). Nowadays, time is treated as a valuable resource which people no longer take for granted. The majority of managers feel that they do not have enough time and the blame falls on the organisation and colleagues for making too many requests. However, everyone has a certain level of control over how they spend their time and recognising this is a crucial step in achieving effective time management (Kelly, 2002).

3.5.1 Benefits of time management

According to Lewis (2008), being an effective time manager has several benefits:

- Reduces procrastination. Individuals need to allocate precise time periods for accomplishing activities, and individuals can ill afford to push tasks for a later date due to deadlines and timeframes. Procrastination affects the organisation significantly and effects productivity and efficiency with which the organisation operates (Strongman, 2000).
- Gain more control. One needs to become a good exponent of time management and not simply wait for the last minute to complete tasks and assignments. Individuals need to plan ahead and always feel in control of their projects and tasks as this will reduce anxiety and stress experienced by them (Rau, 2004).

- Complete more tasks. Individuals need to become excellent time managers in order to complete more tasks and be more efficient and effective in accomplishing their tasks. Individuals need to evaluate their priorities and review the progress to ensure that they allocate enough time towards achieving the activities (Fitzpatrick, 2005).
- Enjoy free time. Once individuals have concluded one's tasks and met deadlines he/she should allocate time for breaks. Individuals need to re-energise the batteries and prepare for work once the break is over. This will not only benefit the individual but also the organisation as employees will be more focused and fresh once they return to work (Pillinger, 2001).

3.5.2 Productivity management verses time management

Time is an essential resource and managers have to ensure that it is used effectively and efficiently in order to attain the aims and the goals of the organisation. Time is something which once lost cannot be regained so it needs to be used wisely and sparingly. Managers need to constantly seek ways of improving time management as time is the most valuable resource within an organisation (Lockwood, 2003).

Effective time management involves achieving certain actions in a specified time frame and focuses on competence and proficiency. Being able to distinguish between the vital and less important activities is a key element for success. For effective time management, individuals need to become innovative and present numerous ways of creating output within a specified time. The main way to achieving successful time management involves planning and utilising time competently (Abraham, 2005).

Time management is the most important element in enhancing production in the workplace. When employees receive time management drills, they are provided with exceptional scheduling and management systems which allows them to have better control over time and their performance within the organisation (Kelly, 2002).

Effective time management should not only be used when suitable but needs to be implemented constantly. Time management are skills as well as behaviours which become a persistent part of an individual's life. The aspects of time management include practice and purpose. The

practice component is what one does with the time in one's day. The purpose component is understanding resolve in life (Sabelis, 2001).

3.5.3 Effective time management

Time is a necessary resource; once used it is irretrievable, it is restricted and active. Time is irrecoverable because once time passes, it is gone forever; time is inadequate because there are only twenty four hours in a day, and time is lively because it is not static. Time management involves organising tasks and events by assessing how much time it will take to complete a task and when it must be completed (Allen, 2003).

Time management involves accomplishing the tasks which matter the most, as opposed to doing more things in a day. Time management is the capability to decide what is vital in both one's personal as well as professional life. Time management is a set of ideologies, skills, tools as well as systems which helps an individual realise what is important and what he/she wants (Diefendorff, 2002). Individuals learn time management simply because it is essential if he/she wishes to be effective in his/her duties. Individuals need to practice time management on a regular basis in order to perfect the art of managing time. Time management involves developing procedures that improve competence and production. In order to achieve high performance levels, time must be used effectively (Howard, 2008).

3.5.4 Essential tips for time management

Some tips for time management include:

- Prioritise. Individuals need to do tasks which are more important first and ensure that they allocate sufficient time towards accomplishing those tasks; thereafter they can complete other duties (De Bruin, 2009).
- Be realistic. One needs to be mindful of the amount of work which one has and not take an unrealistic amount of time which results in one not accomplishing one's tasks. One needs to identify when one is over-loaded with work. Individuals should be enthusiastic about work; however, proper planning needs to occur (Chughtai, 2008).
- Delegate. One needs to delegate and assign tasks to others if not one will become angry and frustrated as it is impossible for one person to do everything alone (Nasuridin, 2008).

- Work efficiently. Individuals need to become more in touch with the present times as using electronic devices available makes it easier to maintain information in a gadget and easily accessible to one (Lockwood, 2003).
- Organise meetings wisely. Individuals need to avoid too many meetings as it accounts for the most unproductive usage of time. When meetings are properly prepared, they can be very productive and help assist individuals in achieving their goals. The most important aspect when it comes to holding a meeting is preparation to avoid wasting time (Pillinger, 2001).
- Learn to say 'No'! Some people find it hard to say no and others simply cannot say no, and those who cannot say no, soon realise that they have no balance and are heading in the wrong direction (Kelly, 2002).
- Destroy the paper monster. Individuals need to ensure that paperwork is properly filed. One should write phone numbers on a long-lasting list instead of constantly rewriting it later on. Paperwork also needs to be organised to avoid confusion. One should also divide files using colours and so on in order to achieve greater efficiency (Allen, 2003).
- Manage mail. Individuals need to respond to emails immediately in order to avoid a pile up in their in-box. One should create a folder for important emails and also delete junk e-mails to avoid wastage of time (Abraham, 2005).
- Make lists. One should have a note pad available at all times to jot down projects as and when one might remember them. These may include important meetings and calls which need to be made. Once these tasks have been accomplished, it can be marked off as handled. Once these items are finished, a new list can be made every day or once a week. This process can certainly help one to remember important events as well as focus on the task at hand (Vloems, 2008).
- Permit time for fun and surprises. One needs to allocate time for having fun and simply relaxing in one's life. One should engage in spontaneous activities and once in a while do something good for someone else (Kalliath, 2008).

3.5.5 Principles for effective time management

Principles for effective time management include:

- Determine what is urgent and important. Everyone faces various different tasks which may compete for our attention and time every day. One must select what is most worthy of one's time. Individuals need to ensure that their priority is on the tasks which are most

crucial and requires serious attention, that is, tasks which need to be accomplished within a certain time frame, are highly time sensitive and require urgent attention. However, many tasks may not have time frames but are just as valuable if not more in the long run; it does not have strict time pressure but require much thought and effort (Rotenberry, 2007).

- Do not over commit. People who generally tend to say “yes” whenever his/her time is requested or needed by someone find that by helping people a lot of their time is consumed and this prevents them from making effective use of the time available. One needs to become more realistic in what one intends on accomplishing; it must be within the time frame that one has available and one must be committed to achieving these tasks. Employees need to be more realistic in what they plan on accomplishing and it must be in-line with the time available. One should ensure that by committing to something it will not prevent him/her from being able to do other tasks that are important to themselves (Eerde, 2003).
- Have a plan for one’s time. Every person is unique and not everyone works in the same way. It is extremely important to understand that all individuals are different and, therefore, some individuals may choose a detailed to-do list as it keeps one on track (Lewis, 2008) whereas others may feel overwhelmed by a list of things to check off each day. Irrespective of one’s approach or preferences, one should have an idea of how he/she plans to spend and allocate his/her time. One should have a plan as this will ensure that one makes efficient and effective use of one’s time and this will ensure that the most important tasks are given priority over the others. Individuals should develop a system of planning that they can use in their daily routine (Vloems, 2008).
- Allow time for the unexpected. In life in general the unexpected usually occurs when it is least expected; therefore, one should ensure that this is taken into account when planning one’s time. No matter how well one plans one’s time, things inevitably arise. Therefore, one should leave time available in one’s daily schedule (Hopkins, 2008). Whenever an individual is creating a to-do list, he/she needs to allocate tasks which he/she anticipates will take no longer than 75% of his/her time. This ensures another 25% for tasks which take longer than expected or for unforeseen crises and situations which need to be addressed. Individuals need not plan their time for an entire day, week, month or year as this will prevent them from dealing with important issues which may come up on the spare of the moment (Lassk, 2001). It is pivotal that one handles problems and obstacles at one-go and finishes the task at hand rather than dealing with the problem several times as this is time consuming and very problematic. An example could be an email - when one reads

one's mail, one should reply and address the issue at that time rather than putting it off for another time which may be the wrong time (Diefendorff, 2002).

- Create realistic deadlines. One generally has targets or goals which are set by managers and supervisors; however, one must set time limits to ensure that one is focused on the job at hand and that one will be able to accomplish the tasks on time. One should break up projects into smaller amounts, completing it one section at a time so that one does not feel that the work load is too much. This, in turn, will also ensure that one is on track (Rubinstein, 2001). In a case where one does not have any deadlines for one's work, it is important to set deadlines for oneself. It is good to have deadlines and time frames in place; however, these deadlines must be genuine and within good reason, and should allow one enough time to perform at one's best. If a manager or supervisor sets unrealistic deadlines one should enlighten him/her about why more time is needed and the costs which could occur due to the project being rushed and one should suggest a more reasonable deadline (Karatepe, 2006).
- Set goals for one's self taking cognisance of one's time. In order for one to achieve maximum efficiency one needs to set goals which will not only give one direction but also ensure that one stays on track. One's goals may involve things that one wants to achieve within a specific time frame. Goals can be used for major endeavours or lesser tasks that are important to an individual. Whenever individuals decide on setting goals, it is best to set a date or deadline for achieving these goals (Frone, 2003).
- Develop routines. Habits and routines can be rather influential. Routines can be very effective if used correctly; one will definitely get more done as well as make better use of one's time when following a structured routine. Individuals follow routines so that they can get small tasks off their daily list at the beginning of the day. Thereafter, one can spend the biggest chunk of the day on the most significant tasks which require most of the time and effort (Davis, 2004).
- Focus on one thing at a time. Multi-tasking is overrated; the problem with multi-tasking is that one will be unable or ineffective when doing many tasks at once. In theory, it sounds good and well; however, one will not be able to produce one's best work when multi-tasking as one will be focused on many tasks and be unable to concentrate on the task at hand. When individuals perform one task at a time they tend to move through it faster and the standard of their work will be enhanced. Multi-tasking may lead to various mistakes which will have to be corrected at a later point in time (Cox, 2000).

- Outsource tasks or delegate when possible. Being efficient with one's time involves deciding which tasks require one's urgent attention (Carr, 2008). Allocating tasks may be an option if one is in management or if one is part of a team. One can find qualified and competent workers with very reasonable rates, which allows one to commit one's own time to tasks that may be more imperative (Clark, 2009).
- Planning. Planning entails formulating goals and developing steps to attaining these objectives. If an individual wants to bridge the gap between an individual's potential and his/her performance, enhanced time management must become his/her life choice. There are three types of plans, namely, strategic plan, transitional plan, short term plans (Kelly, 2002). Guidelines for planning include: One needs to be assured and self-assured about one's goals and objectives. Individuals must develop goals which are achievable, and individuals must allow enough time for achieving these targets. Individuals must associate with positive people and stay away from negative entities. Individuals should be flexible and evaluate their results often (Hopkins, 2006).
- Organisation. Organisation includes making use of accessible resources in order to accomplish personal goals. There are ideologies for individual organisation at work (Lockwood, 2003). Individuals must make a note of priorities and time targets should be in place for attaining these tasks. Individuals must make allowances and prepare for the unexpected. One needs to perform one task at a time with the view of accomplishing these tasks effectively. Individuals must be productive and deal with responsibility correctly. Individuals should make time for relaxing when not busy and their main aim must be on the outcome and not the task (Eerde, 2003).
- Responsibility. Key fundamentals of management edges on duty and liability. Individuals need to take responsibility for their failures instead of passing the blame onto others. Individuals should be responsible for themselves as well as the tasks which they can accomplish on their own (Sabelis, 2001).
- Accountability and integrity. Individuals need to identify a goal and work towards achieving the goal in mind. After a certain period, individuals need to take a step back and evaluate the actual results of their actions as compared with their plans (De Bruin, 2010).

It is difficult for anyone to perform if one lacks the essential skills needed. The resolution for work overload is firstly to determine if the cause of the stress is due to the organisation or if it is on the part of the employee. On the organisation side, the reduction of overload might necessitate job redesign, minimising constraints, employing more staff, or decreasing the

quantity of work to be done. On the employee side, it might demand the selection of employees who are capable of managing the workload especially if the work is too demanding, or training incumbents to enhance their competencies and effectiveness (Fong & Kleiner, 2004).

3.5.6 Why managers encounter time management failure

Time management failures may be due to one or more factors which include:

- Reactive mode of working. Many managers remain primarily focused on the events occurring within the organisation at present; these individuals prefer to react to events and complain about the problems they are experiencing (Nasurdin, 2008).
- Failure to think correctly before acting. Individuals need to think properly in order to avoid time management failure. The 10/90 principle simply states that if one plans one's activities in advance, this should account for 10% of one's time, and individuals will not need to invest 90% of their effort in achieving their goals later (Kalliath, 2008).
- Inability to obtain new skills, knowledge and abilities. The majority of managers do not attend seminars and lectures which will broaden their knowledge; instead adopt a 'know-it-all' attitude and feel that they do not need to expand their skills and capabilities (Chughtai, 2008).
- Procrastination on hard challenging jobs. Individuals resort to procrastination when facing challenging tasks. Rather than allocating enough time to accomplishing these tasks, individuals refuse to work on these tasks which simply require time and energy to achieve the objectives of the job (Lassk, 2001).
- Others. Managers tend to exhibit a lack of team work, poor creativity, lack of self-confidence, and in many cases managers cannot create a favourable working environment (Voydanoff, 2004).

3.5.7 Strategies for managing time in the workplace

Strategies for managing time in the workplace include:

- Prioritise your tasks. Managers and supervisors will experience interruptions and some problems throughout the workday; however, it is imperative to stay focused on the tasks at hand without overlooking any other task regardless of how big or small it may be. The best ways to prioritise is to create a 'to-do list'; creating the list can be very important because there are a few do's and don'ts to remember (Rotenberry, 2007). First, list all the tasks that need to be accomplished, and to be most efficient, rank them in order of importance.

Remember to keep the list realistic. If the list is too long it will be discouraging and overwhelming. Some tasks may need to be carried to the next day's list if it is not completed by the end of the day. If the high priority tasks are large, break it down into smaller jobs, which will be less overwhelming (Howard, 2009).

- “Get the job done right the first time. Thirty percent of a manager's time” is allocated to ‘fire fighting’, in other words, solving problems where there should be none (Walker, Wysocki, Kepner, Farnsworth & Clark, 2015, p. 1). These problems occur due to negligence on the part of associates as well as employees. These mistakes can be avoided as one should acknowledge the problems at hand and solve them at once so that it does not occur in the future, as it will simply lead to a lot of wasted time and additional costs to the company (Bozkurt, 2012). Managers should develop a strong relationship with their employees, and check if he/she as a manager is making the tasks more complex and difficult to accomplish. It should be an open and honest conversation without holding anything against the employees when they criticise one's methods. If the associates suggest a solution, it is imperative that the manager follows through with the request. The benefit of this approach is gaining respect and trust from associates as well as solving problems in day-to-day tasks (Kalliath, 2008).
- “Do not waste time. When associates do not fully understand the purpose of their jobs, a lot of time is spent questioning the significance of specific tasks” (Walker *et al.*, 2015, p. 2). This can result in tasks being done incorrectly, which wastes time. This is why it is important to spend the initial time explaining the procedure of the task, its purpose, and its significance (Vloems, 2008). The associates will work more efficiently if they understand the task. Another way to eliminate wasting time is to reduce the time spent in meetings. Meetings should be organised so that associates can review and process the information and prepare ideas or questions before the meetings. This would ensure more productive meetings (Beehr, 2000).
- “Delegate tasks. Because the overall goal is effective time management, delegating can be a valuable tool in” one's “time management tool kit” (Walker *et al.*, 2015, p. 2). Delegating tasks simply makes the manager's job much easier as tasks are given to the appropriate people and managers can then focus on more pressing issues which may require his/her immediate attention (Lewis, 2008). If the manager allocates a substantial amount of time supervising employees, it becomes necessary to have an assistant to manage messages, mail and attend to the phone. This demands trust and confidence, and one must allow the assistant to achieve the tasks in an autonomous way (Pillinger, 2001).

- “Avoid procrastination. Time management is at its worst when people procrastinate” (Walker *et al.*, 2015). Many individuals procrastinate because they do not find the job stimulating and feels that the work is redundant. The job may involve anything from filing away work to more complex tasks which one may be afraid to fail at, or the fact that one is being provided with inadequate information (Kelly, 2002). Many individuals are afraid to fail at tasks so they put it off for as long as possible. If fear is the problem for one procrastinating then one needs to focus on the consequences of one taking action and of not taking action. If procrastination is the result of insufficient information, employees should check with the manager or supervisor and come up with ways to attain the required information; rather than wasting time thinking and mulling over the problem one should come up with a solution to the problem (Abraham, 2005).

Allen (2003) suggested that in order to ensure effective time management in an organisation, the following should be done:

- Leaders or individuals in authority need to make time for important activities in order to increase productivity and save time.
- Managers should make a list of the jobs which they need to accomplish in advance. Making out a list makes one’s mind active and allows one to plan in advance.
- Individuals need to properly prioritise their tasks and determine what they are most efficient at. Individuals need to work hardest on the most complex tasks.
- Managers need to ensure that the working environment is relatively comfortable, eye-catching and conducive to working for long periods of time.
- Individuals need to develop more intensity and make sure that they make their time count; individuals must be hands-on and self-motivated, focusing on teamwork, as well as ensuring effective allocation of duties.
- Stop stalling.
- Avoid management by crisis. Every organisation should have a contingency plan in place in order to allow for the unexpected. Individuals must learn from their mistakes to ensure that there is no repetition in the future.
- Effective delegation. Individuals need to be given tasks according to their skills. Tasks must be given to the correct individuals and the right materials must be given. Identify challenging people.

3.6 Conclusion

Work-life balance, work overload, job involvement and time management are vital components moving organisations in the 21st century. All enterprises desire to ensure that individuals can deal with the stress presented to them, and take their trade to new pinnacles, and at the same time the primary focus is on, ensuring work-life balance; this is where work overload, job involvement and time management comes in. In essence, the organisations' most valuable assets are their employees and as a result, employers need to ensure that employees can deal with the levels of stress presented, as these individuals contribute significantly to the success of the organisation.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Organisations throughout the world have identified that human resources are their most valuable assets and, therefore, organisations spend a substantial amount of finances in helping employees achieve a balance in their work-life as well as personal life. Despite such attempts, stress has become a global issue, and has advanced rapidly over recent years and determines the success or failure of an organisation.

This study therefore, aims to assess the possibility of reducing stress through work-life balance. Whilst the literature review has been undertaken in preceding chapters, this chapter aims to document and justify the methodology that was followed in undertaking this study.

4.2 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study include:

- To determine the levels of work-life balance (determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance) and stress amongst employees at a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal.
- To assess the extent to which work-life balance (determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance) relates to stress amongst employees at a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal.
- To determine the extent to which stress and work-life balance (determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance) vary in terms of gender, age, marital status, race, tenure, level and departments in the organisation amongst employees at a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal.
- To evaluate the extent to which the variance in stress due to work-life balance (determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance) amongst employees at a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal.

4.3 Hypotheses of the study

In this study, the following hypothesis were tested:

Hypothesis 1

There exist significant relationships between the dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance) respectively.

Hypothesis 2

There exist significant relationships between the general items of work-life balance (satisfaction with working hours, ability to balance work and family life, working for long hours and during home hours, thinking about work constantly) respectively.

Hypothesis 3

There exist significant relationships between the dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance relating to day-to-day practices, general) and overall work-life balance respectively.

Hypothesis 4

There exist significant relationships between the dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance relating to day-to-day practices, general) and stress respectively.

Hypothesis 5

There is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in biographical profiles (gender, age, marital status, race, tenure) regarding work-life balance and its sub-dimensions (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance, general) and stress respectively.

Hypothesis 6

There is a significant relationship between employees' biographical profiles (gender, age, marital status, race, tenure) and their level of stress respectively.

Hypothesis 7

Work-life balance and its dimensions (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance day-to-day practices, general) significantly account for the variance in stress

4.4 Sampling techniques and description of the sample

The target population is often described as the units for which findings can be generalised (Lavrakas, 2008). The research study is carried out in a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The plant is one of the largest factories in KZN. It comprises of six main departments (HR, administration, finance, engineering, parts, manufacturing) and managers, supervisors and employees in each of these departments were invited to participate in the study. Hence, the population in this study consists of just under 1 300 employees from the Human Resources, Finance, Administration, Engineering, Parts and Manufacturing departments. All employees were included in the study and there was no need to investigate individual departments as the current work-life balance strategies apply to all employees. Furthermore, all employees, irrespective of department are exposed to work pressures and stress due to the momentum of work and degree of competitiveness within the industry. A sample is “a subset of the population selected by either probability or non-probability methods, so a population refers to the full set of cases from which a sample is determined” (Welman *et al.*, 2005, p. 53). The research study consists of a sample of participants from a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal. Sampling involves selecting the correct individuals as representatives of the whole population. The researcher used cluster sampling simply because the population was available in a cluster in this large motor vehicle manufacturing plant. The entire workforce was perceived as one cluster and no attempts were made to assess individual departments differently or to assess sub-clusters. Whilst six main departments exist, it was not the aim of this study to separately assess any one department as employees in every department are exposed to on-going stress and to the work-life balance strategies adopted. Therefore, the entire workforce was treated as one cluster as no attempt was made to assess different clusters in different ways and for different objectives.

The advantages of using the cluster sampling technique is that when errors are detected they can be easily corrected, and all it needs is a reasonable sampling frame that is within the clusters which have been selected; it remains relatively low-cost in contrast to stratified or simple random sampling (Van der Zee, Gray, Holzmann, Pisa, Brodschneider, Chlebo & Wilkins,

2013, p. 12). However, the disadvantages of cluster sampling include the following: it requires the existence of a sampling frame for the clusters, and the clusters which have been selected. The clusters must be representative if not it will lead to a high level of bias within the research. Clusters also have a higher level of error rate when compared to stratified sampling and simple random sampling (Van der Zee *et al.*, 2013). The researcher ensured that the participants were extracted from the selected clusters to ensure representivity. According to Sekaran and Bougie's (2010, 294) population-to-sample size table, the minimum sample size for a population of 1 300 individuals is 297 (Sekaran and Bougie, 2010, p. 294). The adequacy of the sample was also be assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity.

Although a sample of 297 was expected, during the time of data collection, the workforce was under tremendous pressure to perform and hence, the researcher had to contend with a sample of 103. Due to the shortfall, follow-ups were conducted but the pressure on the workforce did not enable a higher sample size. To overcome this, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy (0.768) and Bartlett's Test of Sphercity (Chi-square = 1724.945; $p = 0.000$) was conducted and the results reflected suitability and significance and that normality and homoscedasticity preconditions were satisfied.

The composition of the sample is reflected in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1
Composition of sample

Biographical Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	72	69.9
	Female	31	30.1
Age	20-29 years	30	29.1
	30-39 years	30	29.1
	40-49 years	22	21.4
	50-59 years	9	8.7
	60 years and over	12	11.7
Marital status	Single	47	45.6
	Married	50	48.5
	Divorced	6	5.8
Race	Black	38	36.9
	Indian	40	38.8
	Coloured	9	8.7
	White	16	15.5
Tenure	0-5 years	32	31.1
	6-10 years	26	25.2
	11-15 years	18	17.5
	16-20 years	3	2.9
	Over 20 years	24	23.3

From Table 4.1 it is evident that there were more male (69.9%) than female (30.1%) respondents and this may be a reflection of the staffing in the manufacturing motor industry. This is reflected in Figure 4.1.

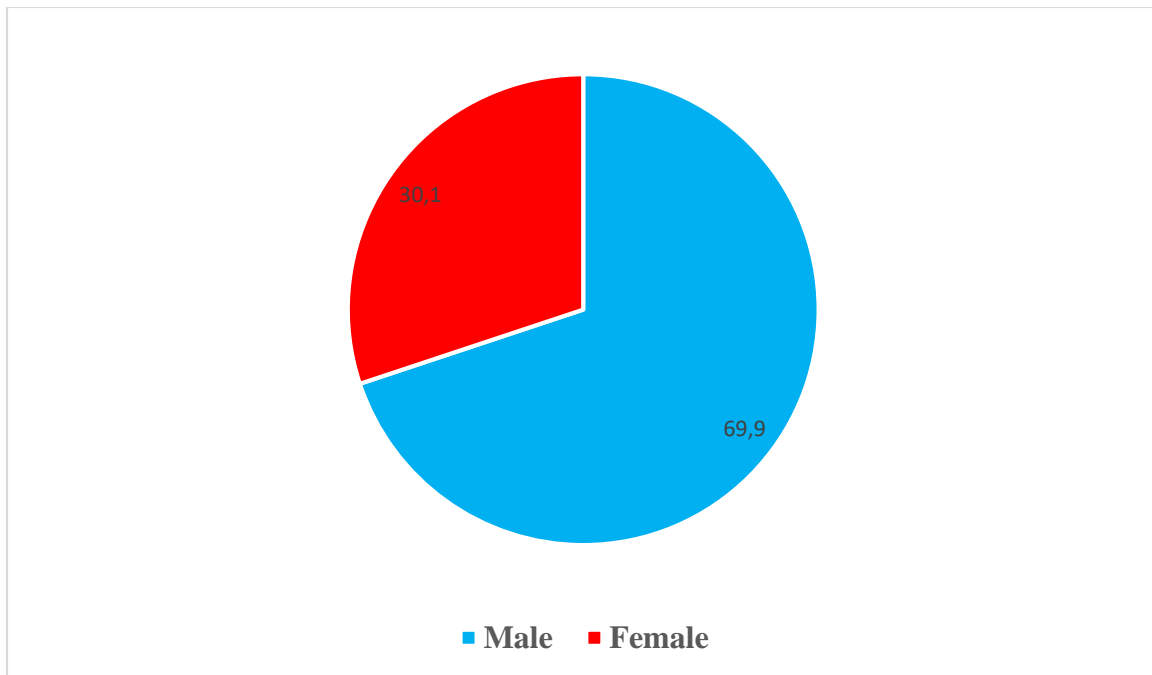


Figure 4.1
Composition of sample: Gender

From Table 4.1 it is evident that the majority of respondents are between 20 to 40 years of age (58.2%), followed by those between 40-49 years (21.4%). Evidently, 11.7% are 60 years and over. The age composition is vividly reflected in Figure 4.2.

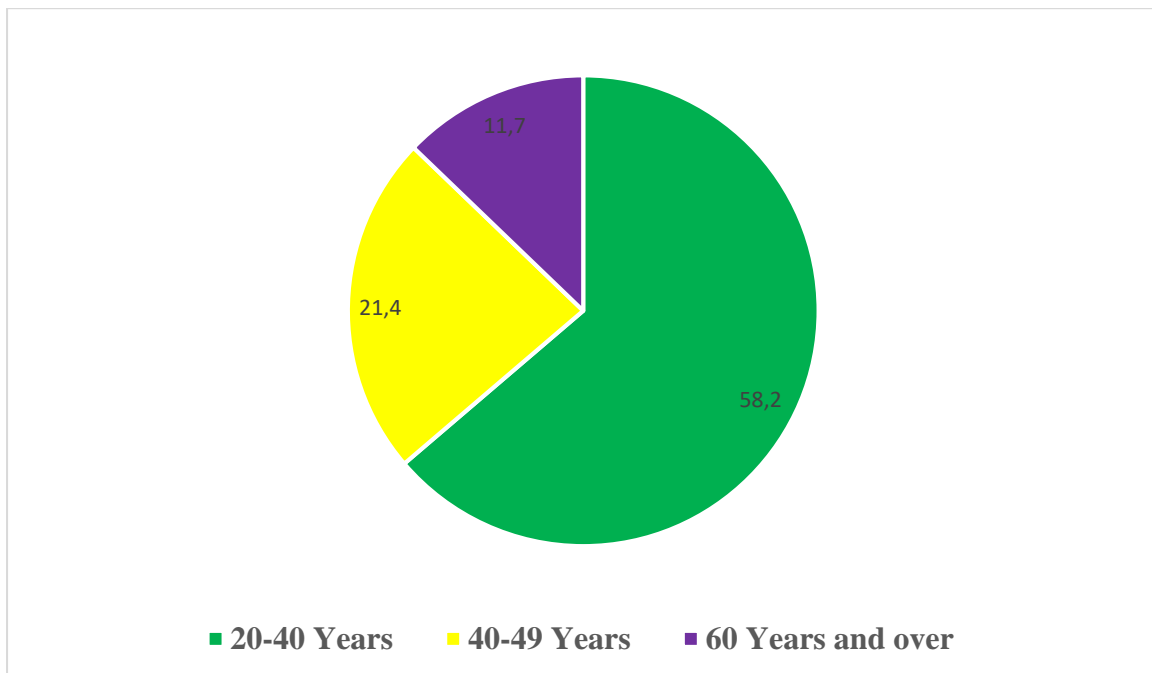


Figure 4.2
Composition of sample: Age

From Table 4.1 it is evident that the majority of respondents are married (45.6%), closely followed by those who are single (45.6%). Also, 5.8% of the respondents are divorced. The composition of the sample by marital status is reflected in Figure 4.3.

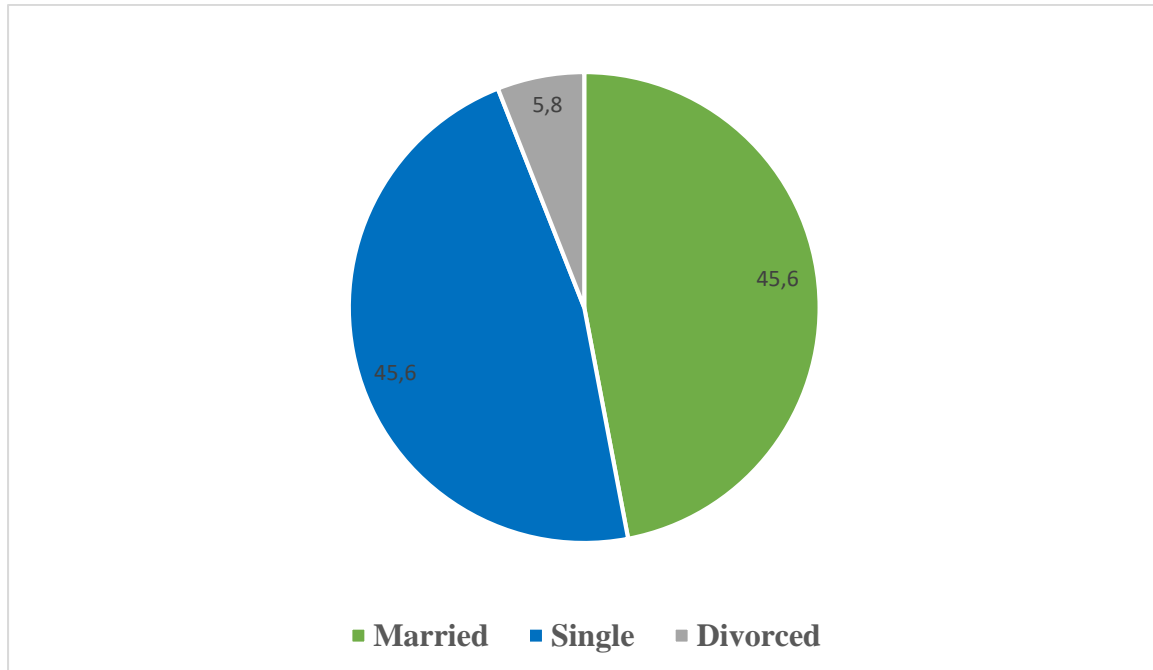


Figure 4.3
Composition of sample: Marital status

From Table 4.1 it is evident that the majority of respondents are Indian (38.8%), negligibly followed by Black (36.9%), then White (15.5%) and lastly, Coloured (8.7%) employees. The composition of the sample by race is reflected in Figure 4.4.

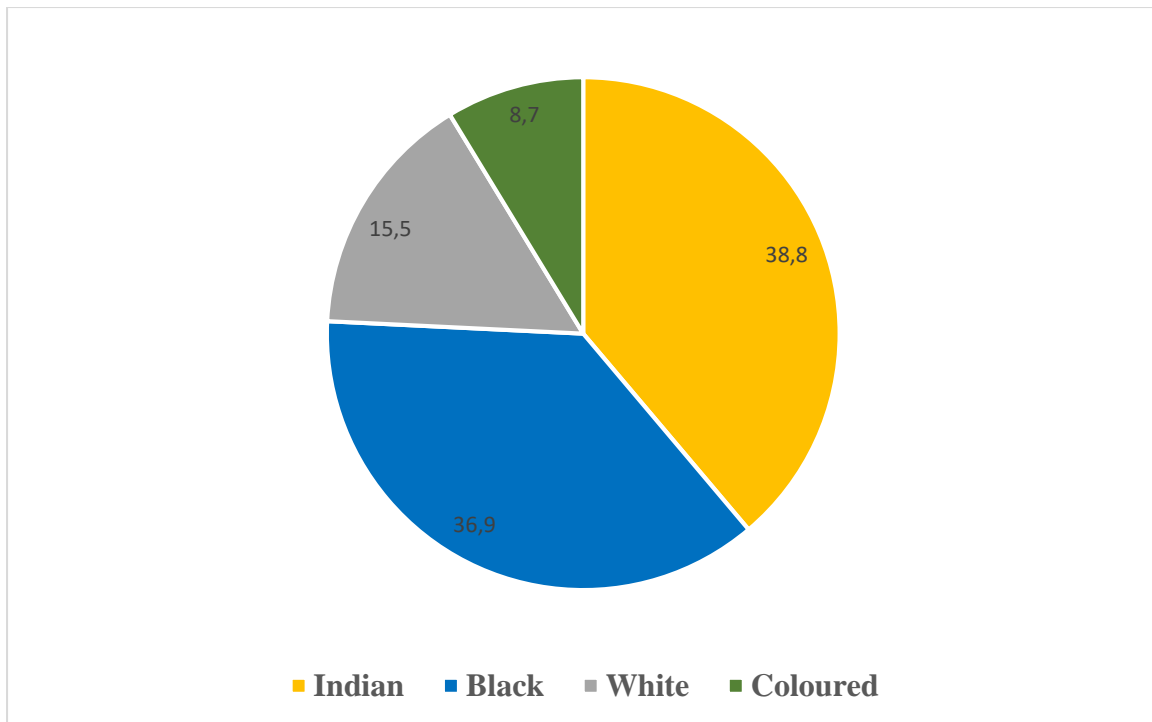


Figure 4.4
Composition of sample: Race

From Table 4.1 it is evident that the majority of respondents are working in the organisation for 0 to 5 years (31.1%), followed by those with a tenure of 6-10 years (25.2%), thereby reflecting that 56.3% of the respondents are working in the organisation for 0 to 10 years. Whilst the organisation is characterised by staff who are fairly new in the organisation, it also has a complement of staff with long tenure and experience of over 20 years (23.3%). The composition of the sample based on tenure is reflected in Figure 4.5.

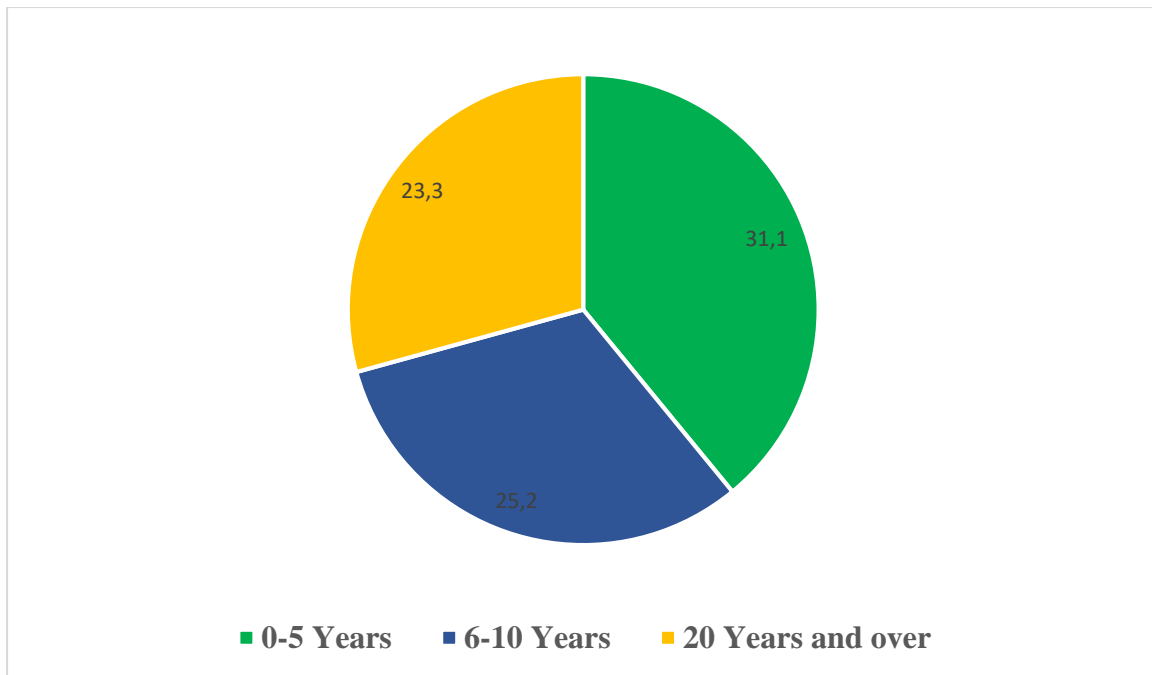


Figure 4.5
Composition of sample: Tenure

4.5 Data Collection Method

In terms of the study data was collected by means of questionnaires; this is a primary source of attaining data and information. Questionnaires are the most commonly used technique for the gathering of data. Obtaining data through the use of questionnaires is relatively popular and it is convenient especially when gathering data from a large number of individuals (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Data can be attained from many people and responses can be easily obtained. The data-collection techniques enable researchers to methodically collect data in order to answer questions in an irrefutable and decisive way (Saunders, Wilcox, & Gadlin, 2009).

In this study, the questionnaire (Appendix A) was used to collect data from managers, supervisors and employees from the six main departments of this large scale motor vehicle manufacturing plant. It took respondents approximately 10-15 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions, where participants were required to choose from the options provided by the researcher (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). Furthermore, the questionnaire was separated into three sections, namely, Section A, Section B and Section C. Section A related to biographical and organisational data and included gender, age, marital status, race, tenure, level and department. Section A was measured using a nominal scale with pre-coded options categories. Section B related to work-life balance

(determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance). Items 1-4 in Section B assessed leave and flexible work arrangements, items 5-10 tapped into work provisions, items 11-22 assessed work-life balance and there are 4 general items included (24-27). Hence, Section B included 27 items. Section C assesses the level of stress using 22 items. Section B and C included closed-ended items and are measured using a 1-5 point Likert scale.

Questionnaires were distributed manually (by hand). When questionnaires are handed out manually it is referred to as self-administered questionnaires (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The advantage of questionnaires is that it permits the researcher to collect data in a relatively short space of time (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). In this way the researcher can develop a good understanding of the participants and encourage respondents to be honest with their responses. This method is also relatively in-expensive and takes up less time as opposed to conducting interviews (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). It also gives the researcher the opportunity to clarify any concerns that participants may have immediately.

Before administering the questionnaire to participants a pilot study was conducted. The pilot test tends to be a relatively “small scale version or trial run in preparation for a major study” (Van der Zee, 2013). The aim of the pilot study is to identify if there were any flaws in the questions and to correct them before implementing the research study. The pilot study helps to identify possible errors and check the adequacy of the data (Van der Zee, 2013). In order to make sure that the questionnaires are suitable a pilot study was conducted. This was administered to 12 employees (2 employees from each department only for the purpose of representation), and the very same protocols were used as that in the final administration.

4.6 Data analysis

In this study, quantitative data was utilised as this data allowed meaningful discussions based on numerical data; data was collected in a uniformed manner and was standardized and the numerical data was easy to interpret as the results are presented via graphical representations. In this study data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

4.6.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics are those that describe the phenomena of interest. Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries about the sample and the measures. Descriptive statistics are used to present qualitative descriptions in a manageable form (Dalgaard, 2008).

Frequencies refer to the number of times various sub-categories of a certain phenomenon occurs, from which the percentage and the cumulative percentage may be derived. This information can also be presented in the form of a graphical representation such as a histogram or a line, pie or bar chart. Frequencies are usually derived for nominal or categorical variables such as gender, the departmental or unit in which one works and the type of organisation (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), there are three measures of central tendency, namely, the mean, the median, and the mode.

- The mean, or the average, is a measure of central tendency that offers a general picture of the data without unnecessarily inundating one with each of the observations in a data set.
- The median is the central item in a group of observations when they are arrayed in either an ascending or a descending order.
- The mode: Sometimes a set of observations may not lend itself to a meaningful representation through either the mean or the median; however, it can be signified by the most frequently occurring phenomenon.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), the three measurements of dispersion connected with the mean are the range, the variance, and the standard deviation.

- Range refers to the extreme values in a set of observations and is calculated as the difference in these values.
- Variance is calculated by subtracting the mean from each of the observations in the data set, taking the square of this difference, and dividing the total of these by the number of observations.
- Standard deviation, which is another measure of dispersion for interval and ratio scaled data, offers an index of the spread of a distribution or the variability in the data. It is a very commonly used measure of dispersion, and is simply the square root of the variance.

4.6.2 Inferential statistics

Inferential statistics generate statistical results that enable the researcher to draw inferences from a sample. Inferential statistics are concerned with making predictions or inferences about a population from observations and analyses of a sample. Inferential statistics are procedures used that allow researchers to infer or generalise observations made with samples to the larger population from which they were selected (Dalgaard, 2008). To achieve the objectives of this study, the following inferential statistics were adopted:

➤ Correlation

A Pearson correlation matrix indicates the direction, strength, and significance of the bivariate relationships (one pair of variables at a time) among all the variables that were measured at an interval or ratio level. The correlation is derived by assessing the variations in one variable as another variable also varies. In this study, Pearson correlation was used to assess whether a significant relationship exists between work-life balance and stress.

➤ Mann-Whitney U Test

Mann Whitney U test is a non-parametric test of statistical significance that is developed to determine whether the results gathered through data analysis are statistically significant, or whether they make sense and not taking chances or happening by mistake (Bryman & Bell, 2015). The Mann Whitney U test was used to assess whether male and female employees differ significantly in their level of stress and perceptions of work-life balance.

➤ Kruskal-Wallis Test

Kruskal Wallis test is equivalent to Analysis of variance and was used in this study when there are more than two independent groups which have to be compared on one quantitative measure or score (Sarantakos, 2012). Kruskal Wallis tests are used to determine whether samples are originating from one distribution or more. In this study, Kruskal Wallis was used to assess whether employees varying in biographical profiles (age, marital status, race, tenure, level, departments) differ significantly in their level of stress and perceptions of work-life balance respectively (Dalgaard, 2008).

➤ **Multiple Regression**

Multiple regression is a statistical tool used to derive the value of a criterion from several other independent, or predictor, variables. It is the simultaneous combination of multiple factors to assess how and to what extent they affect a certain outcome. The regressed effect of each is called the multiple r or multiple correlation. More than one predictor, are jointly regressed against the criterion variable to give us the multiple regression analysis (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). In this study, multiple regression was used to assess how much of the variance in stress is due to work-life balance (determined by leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions and the level of work-life balance).

4.7 Statistical analysis of the questionnaire

The psychometric properties (validity and reliability) was statistically assessed using Factor Analysis and Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha respectively.

4.7.1 Validity

Validity is a test of how well an instrument that is designed measures the particular concept it is intended to measure. Validity is concerned with whether the right concept is being measured. The advantage of validity is that if the respondent knows what information we are looking for, they can use that "context" to help interpret the questions and provide more useful and accurate answers (Tronchim, 2006).

In this study, validity was assessed using factor analysis. A factor is a combination of variables that are intercorrelated and therefore, measure the same characteristic. Factor analysis is a statistical technique used to analyse patterns of correlations among different measures. The principle goal of factor analysis is to reduce the number of dimensions needed to describe data derived from a large number of data. It is accomplished by a series of mathematical calculations, designed to extract patterns of intercorrelations among a set of variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

Factorial validity can be established by submitting the data for factor analysis. The results of factor analysis (a multivariate technique) will confirm whether or not the theorised dimensions emerge. The advantages of factor analysis may include simplified interpretation and it will create a better understanding about the composition of variables (Tronchim, 2006).

4.7.2 Reliability

The reliability of a measure indicates the degree to which it is free from bias or error and hence, ensures inter-item consistency and consistent measurement across time (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The reliability of a measure is an indication of the stability and consistency with which the instrument measures the concept and helps to assess the “goodness” of a measure (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010).

In this study, reliability was assessed using Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha. Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha is a function of the average intercorrelations of items and the number of items in the scale. It is used for summated scales such as quality-of-life instruments and activities of daily living scales (Yang, 2011).

Cronbach’s Alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. Cronbach’s Alpha provides an estimate of the internal consistency of the test; thus alpha does not indicate the stability or consistency of the test over time, which would be better estimated using the test-retest reliability strategy, and alpha does not indicate the stability or consistency of the test across test forms, which would be better estimated using the equivalent forms reliability strategy. Cronbach’s Alpha is a reliability coefficient that indicates how well the items in a set are positively correlated to one another. Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha was utilised in this study to measure consistency. The closer the reliability coefficient is to 1, the more reliable the measure (Yang, 2011).

4.8 Ethical Considerations

It is extremely important that researchers consider ethical matters when conducting research. Welman *et al.* (2005) points out that behavioural ethics is a crucial matter that every scholar should consider, specifically in relation to humans. For this research study, ethical clearance was granted by the University of KwaZulu-Natal’s Ethical Clearance Committee before the initiation of the research study. The University’s Ethics Committee requires that research being conducted must be done anonymously and with no identifying information to any individuals. Individuals participating in the study were assured anonymity with regards to their name, race, position and department in order to extract responses from them. The informed consent form played an important part as it was annexed to the questionnaire before it was completed.

Confidentiality with regards to responses was ensured in terms of the undertaking given and all results were aggregated.

4.9 Conclusion

The distress resulting from mismanaged stress may be manifested by physiological, and behavioural problems for the individuals. When health is viewed as complete physical, mental and social well-being, then reducing or managing stress aids in financing the benefits of dealing with the stress successfully. The study of stress is important for both the individuals and organisations because of its detrimental effects. Accelerated on-and off-the-job stresses and expectations adversely affect the entire growth of both the individual as well as the organisation. Hence, a satisfying work environment and healthy personal life are very important. Implementing the aforementioned research techniques enabled the researcher to undertake the study in a logical manner and obtain the results which are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 focuses on the presentation of results. This chapter will present the results based on descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and the testing of hypothesis. It also assesses the psychometric properties, that is, validity and reliability, of the measuring instrument. The result are presented using tabular representations and, interpretations are undertaken after each table.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

The perceptions of employees regarding work-life balance, its dimensions and their level of stress was assessed by asking respondents to respond to various aspects of items using a 1 to 5 point Likert scale. The results were processed using descriptive statistics (Table 5.1).

TABLE 5.1
DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS: KEY DIMENSIONS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE
AND STRESS

Dimension		Mean	95 % Confidence Interval		Std. Dev.	Min.	Max.
			Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
Leave and flexible work arrangements		2.791	2.634	2.948	0.803	1	5
Work provisions		2.306	2.139	2.473	0.854	1.17	4.83
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)		3.060	2.978	3.142	0.420	2.08	4.17
General		3.202	3.077	3.326	0.639	1.25	4.50
√	Satisfaction with working hours.	4.15	3.93	4.36	1.097	1	5
√	Ability to balance work and family life.	3.66	3.44	3.88	1.142	1	5
√	Working for long hours and during home hours.	3.13	2.91	3.34	1.091	1	5
√	Thinking about work constantly.	1.87	1.68	2.07	1.007	1	5
Overall work-life balance		2.866	2.792	2.941	0.383	2.15	4.12
Stress		2.572	2.482	2.662	0.459	1.36	3.86

From Table 5.1 it is evident that employees are most satisfied (Mean = 3.202) with general aspects relating to working hours (Mean = 4.15), followed by the ability to balance work and family life (Mean = 3.66). However, it must be noted that these aspects are being balanced off by those employees who believe they work for long hours and during home hours (Mean = 3.13) and those who constantly think about work (Mean = 1.87). Apart from the general aspects, employees are only moderately satisfied with work-life balance (day-to-day practices) (Mean = 3.060), followed by leave and flexible work arrangements (Mean = 2.791) and lastly, work provisions (Mean = 2.306). The results generate a moderate level of overall work-life balance (Mean = 2.866) thereby reflecting tremendous room for improvement in terms of attaining work-life balance in the workplace. The results also reflect a moderate level of stress (Mean = 2.572). In order to gain deeper insight into employees' perceptions of work-life balance and the factors that stimulate their current level of stress, frequency analyses were undertaken.

In terms of the general factors, it was found that 70.5% of the respondents agreed (32%) or strongly agreed (48.5%) that they were satisfied with their working hours. Furthermore, 38.8% agreed and further 25.2% strongly agreed that they were able to balance work and family life. However, 45.6% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they work for long hours and during home hours. Whilst 84.4% of the employees do not think about work constantly, the remaining employees were unsure (6.8%) or admitted that they think about work constantly (8.8%).

In terms of work-life balance (day-to-day practices), more employees believe that it is frowned upon by management to take leave for family related matters (34%) than those who do not believe so (28.1%) whilst the remaining were unsure (37.9%). Furthermore, the majority of employees felt that the organisation does not encourage the involvement of employees' family members in work celebrations (82.5%), does not hold social functions that are suitable for families (73.8%) and does not consider it acceptable to talk about one's family or personal life at work (62.1%). Furthermore, 75.7% of the employees felt that many employees at work resent people who take time off for family reasons, for example, childcare. In addition, more than half of the employees believe that employees are often expected to take work home at night or on weekends (55.3%), employees are expected to put their jobs before their family or personal life (53.4%), and to get ahead, employees are expected to work more than 50 hours a week (57.3%). Despite these however, 70.9% of the employees do not believe that when trying to balance work and family responsibilities, it is easier to work things out among colleagues than to get management involved.

In terms of leave and flexible work arrangements, more employees believe that the organisation allows employees to take time off for study or training (30.1%) than those who do not believe so (14.6%) whilst 46.6% remain unsure. Furthermore, the majority of employees are not convinced that the organisation allows:

- employees to take time off to care for and support a sick family or household member or children, if day-care arrangements for children suddenly break down (43.7% disagreed and 26.2% were unsure).
- employees to take time off for cultural/religious reasons (excluding religious public holidays) (29.1% disagreed and 45.6% were unsure).
- flexible work arrangements (70.9% disagreed and 17.5% were unsure).

In terms of work provisions, almost half of the employees believed that the organisation allows employees to contact family members telephonically, if needed (49.5%). However, the majority of employees disagreed that the organisation:

- pays for counselling services for employees experiencing, among other things, work-family stress (75.7%).
- provides a referral service – a telephone service that you can use for assistance with personal matters (74.8%).
- provides health programmes, for example, quit smoking programmes, flu vaccinations on site, dietary advice (77.7%).
- provides onsite exercise facilities or subsidises gym membership (69%).
- provides a parenting or family support programme, for example, Formal educational programme on parenting (78.6%).

In terms of stress, the results reflect that the majority of employees:

- do not have a greater dependency on alcohol, caffeine, nicotine or drugs (98%).
- do not deny or ignore problems with the hope that they will go away (95.1%).
- do not experience an increase in muscular aches and pains even in the neck, head, lower back, shoulders (92.5%).
- do not believe that their judgement is clouded or is not as good as it was (90.3%).
- feel self-confident (89.4%).
- do not experience mood swings, difficulty making decisions or believe that their concentration and memory is impaired (84.5%).
- do not believe that their appetite has changed; they do not have a desire to binge or have a loss of appetite or skip meals (82.8%).
- do not find themselves preoccupied with their own thoughts (82.5%).
- do not bottle up their feelings if something or someone really annoys them (81.5%).
- do not feel fatigued or too tired when they wake up after an amount of adequate sleep (74.8%).
- are able to perform their tasks as well as they used to (72.8%),
- do not have a tendency to eat, walk and drive quickly (72.8%),
- do not nod or finish other people's sentences for them when they speak slowly (71.9%).

However, there are also negative elements that exist that have the potential to enhance the level of stress of employees, which in descending level of experience are:

- I do the jobs myself to ensure they are done properly (88.4%).
- When I play sport or games, I really try to win whoever I play (85.4%).
- I frequently have guilty feelings if I relax and do nothing (72.9%).
- I find myself thinking about problems even when I am supposed to be relaxing (77.7%).
- There is not enough hours in the day to do all the things that I must do (66%).
- I feel that there are too many deadlines in my work/life that are difficult to meet (60.2%).

5.3 Inferential Statistics

5.3.1 Relationship between the dimensions of Work-Life Balance

Inferential statistics were computed on the dimensions of work-life balance to enable the researcher to draw conclusions regarding the hypotheses of the study.

Hypothesis 1

There exist significant relationships between the dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance) respectively (Table 5.2).

TABLE 5.2
SPEARMAN RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE DIMENSIONS OF
WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Dimension	rho/ p	Leave and flexible work arrangements	Work provisions	Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)
Leave and flexible work arrangements	rho	1.000 -		
Work provisions	rho p	0.474 0.000*	1.000 -	
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)	rho p	0.137 0.166	0.206 0.037**	1.000 -

* $p < 0.01$

** $p < 0.05$

Table 5.2 indicates that there is a significant relationship between leave and flexible work arrangements and work provisions at the 1% level of significance. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between work provisions and work-life balance (day-to-day practices) at the 5% level of significance. However, there is no significant relationship between leave and flexible work arrangements and work-life balance (day-to-day practices). Hence, hypothesis 1 may only be partially accepted.

Hypothesis 2

There exist significant relationships between the general items of work-life balance (satisfaction with working hours, ability to balance work and family life, working for long hours and during home hours, thinking about work constantly) respectively.

TABLE 5.3
SPEARMAN RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE GENERAL ITEMS
OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Dimension	rho/ p	Satisfaction with working hours	Ability to balance work and family life	Working for long hours and during home hours	Thinking about work constantly
Satisfaction with working hours	rho p	1.000 -			
Ability to balance work and family life	rho p	0.462 0.000*	1.000 -		
Working for long hours and during home hours.	rho p	0.100 0.313	0.157 0.113	1.000 -	
Thinking about work constantly.	rho p	-0.225 0.022**	-0.263 0.007*	0.345 0.000*	1.000 -

*** p < 0.01**

**** p < 0.05**

Table 5.3 indicates that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction with working hours and ability to balance work and family life at the 1% level of significance. Furthermore,

there is a significant but inverse relationship between satisfaction with working hours and thinking about work constantly at the 5% level of significance. There is also a significant but inverse relationship between ability to balance work and family life and thinking about work constantly at the 1% level of significance. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between working for long hours and during home hours and thinking about work constantly at the 1% level of significance. Table 5.3 indicates that there is no significant relationship between satisfaction with working hours and working for long hours and during home hours as well as between the ability to balance work and family life and working for long hours and during home hours. Hence, hypothesis 2 may be partially accepted.

Hypothesis 3

There exist significant relationships between the dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance relating to day-to-day practices, general) and overall work-life balance respectively (Table 5.4).

TABLE 5.4
SPEARMAN RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE DIMENSIONS OF
WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND OVERAL WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Dimension	rho/p	Overall work-life balance
Leave and flexible work arrangements	rho p	0.552 0.000*
Work provisions	rho p	0.599 0.000*
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)	rho p	0.799 0.000*
General	rho p	-0.014 0.888

*** p < 0.01**

Table 5.4 indicates that there is a significant relationship between leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance (day-to-day practices) and overall work-life balance respectively at the 1% level of significance. There is no significant relationship

between the general factors and overall work-life balance. Hence, hypothesis 3 may be partially accepted.

Hypothesis 4

There exist significant relationships between the dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance relating to day-to-day practices, general) and stress respectively (Table 5.5).

TABLE 5.5
SPEARMAN RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE DIMENSIONS OF
WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND STRESS

Dimension	rho/p	Stress
Leave and flexible work arrangements	rho p	0.252 0.010*
Work provisions	rho p	0.420 0.000*
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)	rho p	-0.395 0.000*
General	rho p	-0.526 0.000*

*** $p \leq 0.01$**

Table 5.5 indicates that there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance relating to day-to-day practices, general factors) and stress respectively at the 1% level of significance. Hence, hypothesis 4 may be accepted.

5.3.2 Impact of Biographical variables

The influence of the biographical variables of gender, age, marital status, race and tenure on work-life balance and its dimensions (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance, general) were evaluated using tests of differences (Mann-Witney, Kruskal Wallis) respectively.

Hypothesis 5

There is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in biographical profiles (gender, age, marital status, race, tenure) regarding work-life balance and its sub-dimensions (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance, general) and stress respectively (Table 5.6 to Table 5.15).

TABLE 5.6
MANN-WHITNEY TEST: WORK-LIFE BALANCE, ITS DIMENSIONS AND
GENDER

Dimension		Mann-Whitney U	Z	P
Leave and flexible work arrangements		927.000	-1.369	0.171
Work provisions		972.000	-1.043	0.297
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)		1 015.000	-0.728	0.466
General		950.000	-1.202	0.229
√	Satisfaction with working hours.	801.000	-2.454	0.014**
√	Ability to balance work and family life.	783.000	-2.500	0.012**
√	Working for long hours and during home hours.	1 000.000	-0.873	0.383
√	Thinking about work constantly.	802.500	-2.447	0.014**
Overall work-life balance		1 084.000	-0.230	0.818

**** p < 0.05**

Table 5.6 reflects that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female employees regarding three ‘general’ sub-dimensions (satisfaction with working hours, ability to balance work and family life, thinking about work constantly) respectively at the 5% level of significance. No other significant differences were noted between males and females regarding work-life balance and its sub-dimensions (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance, general in terms of working for long hours and during home hours) respectively. Hence, hypothesis 5 may be partially accepted in terms of gender.

In order to assess exactly where the significant differences lie, comparison of mean ranks were undertaken (Table 5.7).

TABLE 5.7
MANN-WHITNEY TEST: MEAN COMPARISONS OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE,
ITS DIMENSIONS AND GENDER

Work-life balance and its dimensions		Gender						
		Male			Female			Total
		N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	
Leave and flexible work arrangements		72	49.38	3555.00	31	58.10	1801.00	103
Work provisions		72	50.00	3600.00	31	56.65	1756.00	103
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)		72	53.40	3845.00	31	48.74	1511.00	103
General		72	54.30	3909.50	31	46.66	1446.50	103
√	Satisfaction with working hours	72	56.38	4059.00	31	41.84	1297.00	103
√	Ability to balance work and family life	72	56.63	4077.00	31	41.26	1279.00	103
√	Working for long hours and during home hours.	72	50.39	3628.00	31	55.74	1728.00	103
√	Thinking about work constantly.	72	47.65	3430.50	31	62.11	1925.50	103
Overall work-life balance		72	51.56	3712.00	31	53.03	1644.00	103

From Table 5.7 it is evident that male employees are significantly more satisfied with their working hours and their ability to balance work and family life than female employees. Female employees think significantly more about work than male employees. Although not significantly different, female employees are more satisfied with leave and flexible work arrangements and work provisions than their male counterparts. Furthermore, although not significantly different, male employees are more satisfied with work-life balance (day-to-day practices) and do not believe they work as long hours and during home hours as female employees believe they do. In addition, although not significantly different, the overall work-life balance is higher among females than males.

TABLE 5.8
KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST: WORK-LIFE BALANCE, ITS DIMENSIONS, STRESS
AND AGE

Work-life balance, its dimensions and sub-dimensions and stress		Chi-Square	Df	P
Leave and flexible work arrangements		15.128	4	0.004*
Work provisions		8.277	4	0.082
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)		19.248	4	0.001*
General		0.895	4	0.925
√	Satisfaction with working hours.	4.693	4	0.320
√	Ability to balance work and family life.	4.507	4	0.342
√	Working for long hours and during home hours.	1.095	4	0.895
√	Thinking about work constantly.	6.839	4	0.145
Overall work-life balance		19.746	4	0.001*
Stress		2.434	4	0.657

* $p < 0.01$

From Table 5.8 it is evident that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in age regarding leave and flexible work arrangements, work-life balance (day-to-day practices) and overall work-life balance respectively at the 1% level of significance. No other significant differences were noted amongst the employees varying in age. Hence, hypothesis 5 may be partially accepted based on age.

In order to assess exactly where the significant differences lie, comparison of mean ranks were undertaken (Table 5.9).

TABLE 5.9

**KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST: COMPARISON OF MEAN RANKS REGARDING WORK-LIFE BALANCE, ITS DIMENSIONS,
STRESS AND AGE**

Work-life balance, its dimensions and stress		Age										
		20-29 years		30-39 years		40-49 years		50-59 years		60 years +		Total
		N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean Rank	
Leave and flexible work arrangements		30	49.53	30	39.33	22	69.27	9	45.83	12	62.79	103
Work provisions		30	45.03	30	52.27	22	66.86	9	49.67	12	43.25	103
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)		30	53.25	30	37.73	22	73.86	9	46.39	12	48.67	103
General		30	48.62	30	54.28	22	50.8	9	54.00	12	56.04	103
√	Satisfaction with working hours	30	49.35	30	50.18	22	50.64	9	48.72	12	68.13	103
√	Ability to balance work and family life	30	49.95	30	45.90	22	55.61	9	52.44	12	65.42	103
√	Working for long hours and during home	30	51.20	30	53.98	22	48.55	9	59.06	12	50.08	103
√	Thinking about work constantly.	30	53.88	30	58.93	22	44.02	9	58.61	12	39.63	103
Overall work-life balance		30	48.63	30	39.28	22	75.61	9	48.50	12	51.54	103
Stress		30	50.83	30	58.77	22	47.59	9	46.28	12	50.38	103

Table 5.9 reflects that employees between the ages of 40-49 years were most satisfied with leave and flexible work arrangements and work-life balance (day-to-day practices) whilst those between 30-39 years were least satisfied. Furthermore, employees between the ages of 40-49 years experienced the highest level of overall work-life balance whilst employees between 30-39 years reported the lowest levels of overall work-life balance.

TABLE 5.10
KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST: WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ITS DIMENSIONS,
STRESS AND MARITAL STATUS

Work-life balance, its dimensions and sub-dimensions and stress		Chi-Square	Df	P
Leave and flexible work arrangements		0.822	2	0.663
Work provisions		2.778	2	0.249
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)		1.226	2	0.542
General		0.263	2	0.877
√	Satisfaction with working hours.	1.801	2	0.406
√	Ability to balance work and family life.	6.239	2	0.044**
√	Working for long hours and during home hours.	0.108	2	0.948
√	Thinking about work constantly.	8.651	2	0.013**
Overall work-life balance		0.090	2	0.956
Stress		1.148	2	0.563

**** p < 0.05**

From Table 5.10 it is evident there is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in marital status regarding ability to balance work and family life, and thinking about work constantly respectively at the 5% level of significance. No other significant differences were noted amongst the employees varying in marital status. Hence, hypothesis 5 may only be partially accepted based on marital status.

In order to assess exactly where the significant differences lie, comparison of mean ranks were undertaken (Table 5.11).

TABLE 5.11**KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST: COMPARISON OF MEAN RANKS REGARDING
WORK-LIFE BALANCE, ITS DIMENSIONS, STRESS AND MARITAL STATUS**

Work-life balance, its dimensions and Stress		Marital Status						
		Single		Married		Divorced		Total
		N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	
Leave and flexible work arrangements		47	49.16	50	54.15	6	56.33	103
Work provisions		47	55.69	50	50.55	6	35.17	103
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)		47	52.73	50	49.89	6	63.83	103
General		47	50.65	50	52.74	6	56.42	103
√	Satisfaction with working hours	47	49.27	50	53.05	6	64.67	103
√	Ability to balance work and family life	47	45.93	50	55.07	6	74.00	103
√	Working for long hours and during home hours.	47	52.96	50	51.33	6	50.08	103
√	Thinking about work constantly.	47	59.28	50	47.95	6	28.75	103
Overall work-life balance		47	52.69	50	51.13	6	53.83	103
Stress		47	55.43	50	49.26	6	48.00	103

Table 5.11 reflects that divorced employees were most satisfied with ability to balance work and family life while single employees were least satisfied. Furthermore, employees who are single experienced the highest level when thinking about work constantly while employees who were divorced reported the lowest levels of thinking about work constantly. It must however, be noted that there are few divorced employees which can skew the results.

TABLE 5.12
KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST: WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ITS DIMENSIONS,
STRESS AND RACE

Work-life balance, its dimensions and sub-dimensions and stress		Chi-Square	Df	P
Leave and flexible work arrangements		5.570	3	0.134
Work provisions		6.507	3	0.089
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)		1.470	3	0.689
General		6.515	3	0.089
√	Satisfaction with working hours.	5.123	3	0.163
√	Ability to balance work and family life.	6.681	3	0.083
√	Working for long hours and during home hours.	2.883	3	0.410
√	Thinking about work constantly.	7.599	3	0.055
Overall work-life balance		3.816	3	0.282
Stress		5.914	3	0.116

From Table 5.12 it is evident that there are no significant differences in the perceptions of employees varying in race regarding work-life balance, its dimensions and sub-dimensions of stress at the 1% and 5% level of significance respectively. Hence, hypothesis 5 may be rejected in terms of race as no significant differences exist amongst the race groups. However, comparison of mean ranks were still undertaken but must be viewed with caution as they are based on face value and are not significant differences (Table 5.13).

TABLE 5.13
KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST: COMPARISON OF MEAN RANKS REGARDING
WORK-LIFE BALANCE, ITS DIMENSIONS, STRESS AND RACE

Work-life balance, its dimensions and Stress		Race								
		Black		Indian		Coloured		White		Total
		N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	
Leave and flexible work arrangements		38	54.96	40	48.00	9	37.39	16	63.19	103
Work provisions		38	51.34	40	46.64	9	74.28	16	54.44	103
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)		38	54.58	40	48.71	9	46.94	16	56.94	103
General		38	56.54	40	55.23	9	32.11	16	44.34	103
√	Satisfaction with working hours	38	56.62	40	50.21	9	34.44	16	55.38	103
√	Ability to balance work and family life	38	48.24	40	58.74	9	33.67	16	54.41	103
√	Working for long hours and during home hours.	38	54.74	40	54.55	9	46.50	16	42.22	103
√	Thinking about work constantly.	38	59.82	40	49.85	9	53.78	16	37.81	103
Overall work-life balance		38	54.89	40	46.20	9	47.89	16	61.94	103
Stress		38	47.68	40	48.76	9	70.78	16	59.78	103

Table 5.13 reflects that while White employees were most satisfied with leave and flexible work arrangements, Coloured employees were least satisfied. However, Coloured employees were most satisfied with work provisions while Indians were least satisfied. Table 5.13 reflects that White employees were most satisfied with work-life balance (day-to-day practices), while Coloured employees were least satisfied. Table 5.13 reflects that Black employees were most satisfied with working hours, while Coloured employees were least satisfied with working hours. Table 5.13 reflects that Indian employees were most satisfied with ability to balance

work and family life, while Coloured employees were least satisfied. Table 5.13 reflects that Black employees were most satisfied with working for long hours and during home hours, while White employees were least satisfied. Table 5.13 reflects that White employees were most satisfied with overall work-life balance, while Indian employees were least satisfied. Furthermore, Table 5.13 reflects that Coloured employees report the highest level of stress while Black employees report the lowest level of stress.

TABLE 5.14
KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST: WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ITS DIMENSIONS,
STRESS AND TENURE

Work-life balance, its dimensions and sub-dimensions and stress		Chi-Square	df	p
Leave and flexible work arrangements		14.040	4	0.007*
Work provisions		13.781	4	0.008*
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)		19.236	4	0.001*
General		5.305	4	0.257
√	Satisfaction with working hours.	3.126	4	0.537
√	Ability to balance work and family life.	5.593	4	0.232
√	Working for long hours and during home hours.	3.507	4	0.477
√	Thinking about work constantly.	7.108	4	0.130
Overall work-life balance		22.804	4	0.000*
Stress		3.867	4	0.424

* $p < 0.01$

From Table 5.14 it is evident that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in tenure regarding leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, and work-life balance (day-to-day practices) and overall work-life balance respectively at the 1% level of significance. No other significant differences were noted amongst the employees varying in tenure. Hence, hypothesis 5 may only be partially accepted in terms of tenure. In order to assess exactly where the significant differences lie, comparison of mean ranks were undertaken (Table 5.15).

TABLE 5.15

**KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST: COMPARISON OF MEAN RANKS REGARDING WORK-LIFE BALANCE, ITS DIMENSIONS,
STRESS AND TENURE**

Work-life balance, its dimensions and stress		Tenure										
		0-5 years		6-10 years		11-15 years		16-20 years		Over 20 years		Total
		N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	N	Mean rank	
Leave and flexible work arrangements		32	50.31	26	36.04	18	66.47	3	51.17	24	60.79	103
Work provisions		32	50.56	26	37.29	18	70.39	3	55.33	24	55.65	103
Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)		32	58.11	26	36.02	18	71.67	3	25.17	24	49.77	103
General		32	55.52	26	55.67	18	46.83	3	77.17	24	44.06	103
√	Satisfaction with working hours	32	50.55	26	53.62	18	50.11	3	78.50	24	50.29	103
√	Ability to balance work and family life	32	45.64	26	56.83	18	48.28	3	79.50	24	54.60	103
√	Working for long hours and during home	32	57.81	26	53.21	18	49.44	3	58.17	24	44.08	103
√	Thinking about work constantly.	32	61.66	26	51.73	18	47.92	3	50.50	24	42.67	103
Overall work-life balance		32	55.80	26	30.35	18	71.94	3	46.83	24	56.08	103
Stress		32	47.14	26	51.19	18	55.14	3	32.33	24	59.46	103

Table 5.15 reflects that employees with tenure of 11-15 years were most satisfied with leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, overall work-life balance while those with 6-10 years were least satisfied with these aspects. Furthermore, employees with tenure of 11-15 years experienced the highest level of work-life balance (day-to-day practices) while employees with 16-20 years reported the lowest levels of work-life balance (day-to-day practices).

Hypothesis 6

There is a significant relationship between employees' biographical profiles (gender, age, marital status, race, tenure) and their level of stress respectively (Table 5.16).

TABLE 5.16
SPEARMAN RANK ORDER CORRELATIONS BETWEEN BIOGRAPHICAL
PROFILES AND LEVEL OF STRESS

Biographical Variable	r/p	Stress
Gender	r p	0.269 0.006*
Age	r p	0.131 0.186
Marital Status	r p	-0.033 0.738
Race	r p	0.259 0.008*
Tenure	r p	0.214 0.030**

*** p < 0.01**

**** p < 0.05**

Table 5.16 indicates that there is a significant relationship between two biographical profiles (gender, race) and stress respectively at the 1% level of significance. Furthermore, Table 5.16 indicates that there is a significant relationship between the tenure of employees and stress respectively at the 5% level of significance. No other significant relationships were noted. Hence, hypothesis 6 may only be partially accepted.

5.4 Factors influencing stress

The extent to which work-life balance and its dimensions impact on stress were statistically assessed.

Hypothesis 7

Work-life balance and its dimensions (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance day-to-day practices, general) significantly account for the variance in stress (Table 5.17).

TABLE 5.17
MULTIPLE REGRESSION: STRESS AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND ITS
DIMENSIONS

Model Summary						
Model		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
3		0.692	0.479	0.463	0.33617	
ANOVA						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P
3	Regression	10.281	3	3.427	30.326	0.000
	Residual	11.188	99	0.113		
	Total	21.469	102			
Model		Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	P
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
3	(Constant)	4.451	0.316		14.101	0.000
	General	-0.277	0.076	-0.386	-3.624	0.000
	Work-life balance					
	(day-to-day practices)	-0.441	0.099	-0.403	-4.468	0.000
	Work provisions	0.154	0.061	0.287	2.512	0.014

Table 5.17 indicates that work-life balance and its dimensions (work provisions, work-life balance day-to-day practices, general) significantly account for 46.3% of the variance in stress.

Based on Beta values, it is evident that that these dimensions impact on stress in varying degrees which in descending level of impact are:

- Work-life balance (day-to-day practices) (Beta = -0.403)
- General factors (Beta = -0.386)
- Work provisions (Beta = 0.287)

Evidently, the variance in stress is not due to leave and flexible work arrangements, one of the dimensions of work-life balance. Furthermore, work-life balance (day-to-day practices), general factors and work provisions only account for 46.3% of the variance in stress. The remaining 53.7% may be due to factors that lie outside the jurisdiction of this study.

5.5 Statistical analysis of the Questionnaire

The psychometric properties of the questionnaire (validity and reliability) were evaluated statistically.

5.5.1 Validity

The validity of the self-developed questionnaire was evaluated using Factor Analysis (Table 5.18).

TABLE 5.18
FACTOR ANALYSIS: ROTATED COMPONENT MATRIX

Item	Component			
	1	2	3	4
B1	0.607	-0.134	0.044	0.316
B2	0.767	-0.276	-0.079	0.277
B3	0.524	0.151	-0.331	0.328
B4	0.602	0.172	-0.273	-0.185
B5	0.667	-0.166	-0.194	-0.013
B6	0.838	0.017	0.340	-0.120
B7	0.758	-0.034	0.480	-0.085
B8	0.776	-0.114	0.307	-0.233
B9	0.227	-0.141	0.673	0.246
B10	0.109	-0.077	0.704	0.189
B11	0.258	0.137	0.280	0.603
B12	-0.004	0.604	0.403	0.120
B13	0.783	0.175	0.125	0.037
B14	0.595	-0.202	0.243	-0.248
B15	0.806	-0.217	0.121	0.023
B16	-0.284	-0.039	0.001	0.814
B17	-0.119	0.749	0.073	0.223
B18	-0.033	0.834	-0.155	-0.165
B19	0.056	0.812	-0.077	-0.141
B20	-0.003	0.792	-0.127	0.057
B21	-0.082	0.343	0.401	-0.508
B22	0.265	-0.307	-0.589	0.096
B23	-0.241	0.179	-0.735	0.250
B24	-0.301	0.131	-0.507	0.365
B25	-0.391	0.676	-0.093	-0.073
B26	-0.064	0.328	0.438	0.011
Eigenvalue	6.145	4.086	3.435	2.164
% of Variance	23.63	15.72	13.21	8.32

Table 5.18 indicates that 11 items load significantly on Factor 1 and account for 23.63% of the total variance. Four items relate to leave and flexible work arrangements, 4 items relate to work provisions and 3 items relate to work-life balance (day-to-day practices). Since the highest average loading relates to *work provisions*, Factor 1 may be labelled such.

Table 5.18 reflects that 6 items load significantly on Factor 2 and account for 15.72% of the total variance. Five items relate to work-life balance (day-to-day practices) and 1 item relates to the general factor of working for long hours and during home hours. Since the majority of items relate to *work-life balance (day-to-day practices)*, Factor 2 may be labelled likewise.

Table 5.8 indicates that 7 items load significantly on Factor 3 and account for 13.21% of the total variance. Two items relate to work provisions, 2 items relate to work-life balance (day-to-day practices) and 3 items relate to general factors. Since the majority of the items relate to *general factors*, Factor 3 may be labelled such.

Table 5.8 reflects that 2 items load significantly on Factor 4 and account for 8.32% of the total variance. Both items relate to *work-life balance (day-to-day practices)* and hence, Factor 4 may be labelled likewise.

Evidently, two factors are labelled as work-life balance (day-to-day practices) and none relate to leave and flexible work arrangements. It is evident that the latter may not have surfaced as an individual factor as employees perceive leave and flexible work arrangements as being integral and very much a part of work-life balance (day-to-day practices).

5.5.2 Reliability

The reliability of the measuring instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha (Table 5.19).

TABLE 5.19
RELIABILITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENT: CRONBACH'S
COEFFICIENT ALPHA

Dimension	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Overall work-life balance	26	0.718
Stress	22	0.802

From the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha reflected in Table 5.19, it is evident that work-life balance and stress have high levels of inter-item consistency and hence, reliability. This confirms that the items in the measuring instrument reliably and consistently measure the constructs that they were intended to measure.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter presents the results obtained from the data collected through the use of questionnaires. Results generated from the data using descriptive and inferential statistics are presented in tabular form and are interpreted after each table. The results presented in this chapter will be discussed in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

The research methodology that was planned for undertaking data collection was executed through the distribution of questionnaires to the identified respondents. The data collected was edited, captured on Excel Version and processed using SPSS version 22.0 (SPSS Inc., Chicago, Illinois, USA). The descriptive and inferential statistics undertaken generated results that will be discussed in this chapter.

6.2 Discussion of Results

The results of the study will be discussed by comparing and contrasting the findings with that of other researchers in the field.

6.2.1 Work-life balance and its dimensions and sub-dimensions

Work-life balance may take on many aspects such as leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance (day-to-day practices) as well as general factors. Work-life balance is a pertinent issue in today's world as an imbalance for prolonged periods of time has the potential to cause stress in either a personal or professional capacity or both. Assisting employees in getting the correct balance is, therefore, extremely important (Fisher, 2002).

6.2.1.1 Leave and flexible work arrangements

The results of the study reflects that in terms of leave and flexible work arrangements, more employees believe that the organisation allows employees to take time off for study or training than those who do not believe so. According to Mark (2005), employees working flexibly are more productive because they are in an environment that best suits their personal working styles. In a study undertaken, it was found that approximately 66% of managers and colleagues believed that flexibility improved efficiency and productivity (Kumari, 2011).

Furthermore, in the current study it was found that the majority of employees are not convinced that the organisation allows:

- Employees to take time off to care for and support a sick family or household member or children, if day-care arrangements for children suddenly break down.
- Employees to take time off for cultural/religious reasons (excluding religious public holidays).
- Flexible work arrangements.

According to Luis (2004), flexible arrangements makes employees more loyal to the organisation, as they feel that the organisation is truly concerned about their personal life with regards to sick leave and caring for the children. Furthermore, employees feel that their culture and beliefs are valued and respected by the organisation and fellow colleagues.

6.2.1.2 Work Provisions

In terms of work provisions, the results of the study indicate that almost half of the employees believed that the organisation allows employees to contact family members telephonically, if needed. According to Simpson (2003), the majority of employees are allowed telephonic calls to family members in case of emergencies. However, he also believes that a lot of employees use telephonic calls for socialising and non-emergency related problems (Simpson, 2013).

The results of the current study also reflected that a significant majority of employees disagreed that the organisation:

- Pays for counselling services for employees experiencing, among other things, work family stress.
- Provides a referral service – a telephone service that you can use for assistance with personal matters.
- Provides health programmes, for example, quit smoking programmes, flu vaccinations on site, dietary advice.
- Provides onsite exercise facilities or subsidises gym membership.
- Provides a parenting or family support programme, for example, formal educational programme on parenting.

Gray (2002) also shares the same belief that organisations tend to worry about the bottom line and neglect employees. Employees want to feel respected and valued by the organisation, and if the organisation shows interest in the employees' well-being, this will make sure that

employees are more loyal and dedicated to the organisation; however, Gray (2002) believes that this is not the case and that organisations do not demonstrate interest in employee well-being.

6.2.1.3 Work-life balance (day-to-day practices)

The results of the study indicate that employees are only moderately satisfied with work-life balance (day-to-day practices). In terms of work-life balance (day-to-day practices), a significant percentage of employees believe that it is frowned upon by management to take leave for family related matters. According to Bourke (2001), management does not openly welcome employees' time off for personal reasons as they have deadlines. Management is also profit driven and their main objective is to ensure that the organisation is running smoothly. Furthermore, the findings of the current study indicate that the majority of employees felt that the organisation does not encourage the involvement of employees' family members in work celebrations, does not hold social functions that are suitable for families and does not consider it acceptable to talk about one's family or personal life at work. In addition, the majority of employees felt that many employees at work resent people who take time off for family reason, for example, childcare. According to Souza (2006), the workplace is a hostile environment where employees look to protect themselves and their jobs. Many individuals become jealous when fellow colleagues take personal time for family related matters and they are expected to take on additional work, as this inflicts more strain and pressure on them. Souza (2006) also feels that organisations need to ensure a more family friendly approach to work as many employees are married and have family commitments. In addition, the results of the current study also reflects that more than half of the employees believe that employees are often expected to take work home at night or on weekends, to put their jobs before their family or personal life, and to get ahead, employees are expected to work more than 50 hours a week. Concerns about work-life balance have become salient for a number of reasons. The main reason being employees are required to work additional hours, during their personal time in order to cope. Kossek (2011) feels that organisations exploit employees, especially new employees because they need employment. This additional work then affects employees' balance causing them to have work-life imbalance which may affect them psychologically. The boundaries between work and home life is an increasingly difficult aspect to maintain as these two domains need to be equally monitored with the perfect balance (Kossek, 2006). According to Hayman (2005), employees often feel that they are expected to do more at work

and work longer hours to get ahead, but this comes with the territory and it does requires some sacrifice (Hayman, 2005). The findings of the current study also indicate that the majority of the employees do not believe that when trying to balance work and family responsibilities, it is easier to work things out among colleagues than to get management involved. Major (2002) believes that if employees have any disagreements one should get management involved before things get out of hand.

6.2.1.4 General Factors

In this study it was found that employees are most satisfied with general aspects relating to working hours, followed by the ability to balance work and family life. However, these aspects are offset by those employees who believe they work for long hours and during home hours and those who constantly think about work. Elsa (2013) states that employees perform their duties effectively. However, many employees struggle with work overload and they tend to hate certain aspects of their work because they do not possess the necessary coping techniques required to handle stress. They are satisfied with their general work but stress affects their performance to a huge extent.

6.2.1.5 Relationships between work-life balance, its dimensions and sub-dimensions

The results of the study indicate that there is a significant relationship between leave and flexible work arrangements and work provisions. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between work provisions and work-life balance (day-to-day practices). However, there is no significant relationship between leave and flexible work arrangements and work-life balance (day-to-day practices). Hence, the results reflect that hypothesis 1 may only be partially accepted. According to Greenhaus (2003), employees feel that they have a better balance with their work-life if they are able to provide adequately for their family. Furthermore, Greenhaus (2003) shares the opinion that having a flexible work schedule will not ensure a better balance in terms of work-life, as the majority of employees regularly mismanage their time. The relationship between the perceived usability of flexible work schedules and work-life balance was explored, and direct linkages were found between perceived usability of flexible work schedules and the dimensions of work provisions, and work-life balance. According to Luk (2005), employees operating under flexitime work schedules displayed significantly higher levels of work-life balance than their counterparts

utilising traditional fixed-hours schedules. However, non-significant differences in the levels of work-life balance were found between two other flexible work schedules (flexiplace and job share) and fixed-hour work schedules (Luk, 2005). Consequently, while individual flexible work schedules may have a marginal overall positive impact on employee work-life balance, the perceived usability and availability of these work schedules appear to be a key element in achieving work-life balance for many office-based employees (Luk, 2005).

The sub-dimensions of the general factors were also assessed and it was found that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction with working hours and ability to balance work and family life. Furthermore, there is a significant but inverse relationship between satisfaction with working hours and thinking about work constantly. There is also a significant but inverse relationship between ability to balance work and family life and thinking about work constantly. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between working for long hours and during home hours and thinking about work constantly. However, there is no significant relationship between satisfaction with working hours and working for long hours and during home hours as well as between the ability to balance work and family life and working for long hours and during home hours. Hence, hypothesis 2 may be partially accepted.

According to Gropel (2009), employees who work long hours and during home hours are generally least satisfied with overall work-life balance; they find it extremely difficult to manage time due to work overload and constantly thinking about work duties. According to Martins (2002), it is extremely unhealthy to take work home as this directly impacts one's personal life. Work overload generally has a damaging effect on individuals, and they tend to resent the organisation and fellow colleagues. He further explains that dissatisfaction with working hours, taking work home, and balancing work comes about due to work overload. Organisations give employees more work than they can handle due to working demands and this puts unnecessary pressure on employees causing stress and total dissatisfaction.

The dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance relating to day-to-day practices, general) and overall work-life balance respectively were also assessed. The results indicate that there is a significant relationship between leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance (day-to-day practices) and overall work-life balance respectively. According to Jamal (2012), work-life balance is a state of mind that people have, when it comes to one's personal/professional lives.

If employees are satisfied with working hours and flexible work arrangements and work provisions, they generally have a good overall balance. These employees experience higher job involvement and satisfaction with their work duties (Jamal, 2012).

The results of the current study also reflect that there is no significant relationship between the general factors and overall work-life balance. Hence, hypothesis 3 may be partially accepted. According to McMunn (2006), if employees cannot put in the extra effort to perform work obligations they will not be able to perform to their full potential. Work-life balance is imperative for a healthy professional/personal life; however, one needs to go about it in the right manner.

6.2.2 Employee Stress

The results of the study reflects that employees are experiencing a moderate level of stress potentially caused by several factors which are listed below in descending level of experience:

- I do the jobs myself to ensure they are done properly.
- When I play sport or games, I really try to win whoever I play.
- I frequently have guilty feelings if I relax and do nothing.
- I find myself thinking about problems even when I am supposed to be relaxing.
- There is not enough hours in the day to do all the things that I must do.
- I feel that there are too many deadlines in my work/life that are difficult to meet.

According to Theiler (2012), one generally thinks that ‘work’ and ‘stress’ go hand in hand; employees experience stress because of their feelings of acceptance. One generally wants to be successful at all work related tasks and ensure that they perform to the best of their abilities. Due to such a competitive nature, in these instances, employees may become overwhelmed by expectations and pressure that is placed on them.

6.2.3 The relationship between Work-Life Balance and Stress

The findings indicate that there is a significant relationship between the dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance relating to day-to-day practices, general factors) and stress. Hence, hypothesis 4 may be accepted. According to Yang (2000), work-life balance and stress are directly related and approximately 48.6% of the workforce is influenced by stress; when employees have a poor balance they

become most vulnerable to the deadly effects of stress, and this directly affects performance and job satisfaction.

In the current study, the extent to which work-life balance and its dimensions impact on stress were also assessed. It was found that work-life balance and its dimensions (work provisions, work-life balance day-to-day practices, and general) significantly account for 46.3% of the variance in stress. It was concluded that these dimensions impact on stress in varying degrees which, based on Beta values, in descending level of impact are work-life balance (day-to-day practices), general factors and work provisions. Evidently, the variance in stress is not due to leave and flexible work arrangements. Similarly, according to Latif (2011), the constant changes in one's stress experienced is not due to flexible work hours but rather to factors such as, work provision and work-life balance simply because flexible work arrangements helps improve one's stressful experience. According to Netemeyer (2005), employees who have a balanced work-life tend to become more satisfied with their working hours, think about their working hours, and work during home hours because they enjoy their working commitments. When individuals have a positive view of their work provisions and their general satisfaction with work they tend to have a balanced work-life and an overall positive work attitude. Furthermore, work-life imbalance brings about stress as individuals do not know how to deal with the stress of everyday life.

6.2.4 Impact of biographical variables

The impact of biographical variables (gender, age, marital status, race, tenure) on work-life balance and its dimensions as well as on employee stress were assessed.

6.2.4.1 Impact of biographical variables on work-life balance and its dimensions

The impact of the biographical variables (gender, age, marital status, race, tenure) on work-life balance and its dimensions were assessed.

In terms of gender, the results of the study reflect that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of male and female employees regarding three 'general' sub-dimensions (satisfaction with working hours, ability to balance work and family life, thinking about work constantly) respectively. It is evident that male employees are significantly more satisfied with

their working hours and their ability to balance work and family life than female employees. According to Macintyre (2004), males are more satisfied because men are generally more inclined to balancing and compromising between work and family responsibilities whereas female employees pay more attention to work - due to the fact that they are constantly under pressure between balancing work and family life.

The results of the current study also reflect that female employees think significantly more about work than male employees. Similarly, Kacmar (2000) believes that female employees think much more about their work responsibilities than men due to the fact that female employees have to focus on many aspects such as home duties, children and work respectively. He also suggests that females believe in multitasking and this increases their attention to work (Kacmar, 2000). No other significant differences were noted between males and females regarding work-life balance and its sub-dimensions (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance, general in terms of working for long hours and during home hours) respectively. Hence, hypothesis 5 may be partially accepted in terms of gender.

In terms of age, the results of the study indicate that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in age regarding leave and flexible work arrangements, work-life balance (day-to-day practices) and overall work-life balance respectively. It was found that employees between the ages of 40-49 years were most satisfied with leave and flexible work arrangements and work-life balance (day-to-day practices) and experienced the highest level of overall work-life balance while those between 30-39 years were least satisfied with these and reported the lowest levels of overall work-life balance. No other significant differences were noted amongst the employees varying in age. Hence, hypothesis 5 may be partially accepted based on age. According to Sumer (2001), employees progress through different career stages denoted by age. Research has failed to adequately explore how work-life balance issues develop over the course of an employee's working life. He also believes that older employees between the age of 40-59 are most satisfied with work-life balance as they are familiar with the organisation and what is expected of them, whereas younger employees need to adjust and familiarise themselves with the objectives and missions of the organisation (Sumer, 2001).

In terms of marital status, the findings of the study reflect that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in marital status regarding ability to balance work and family life, and thinking about work constantly respectively. It is evident that divorced employees were most satisfied with the ability to balance work and family life while single employees were least satisfied. Furthermore, employees who are single experienced the highest level when thinking about work constantly while employees who were divorced reported the lowest levels of thinking about work constantly. It must however, be noted that there are few divorced employees which can skew the results. Similarly, Clark (2000) maintains that marital status significantly affects work-life balance, as single employees generally have less on their mind and therefore allocate a significantly higher amount of time to thinking about work duties whereas divorced employees have more on their minds and are less focused on work after hours. No other significant differences were noted amongst the employees varying in marital status. Hence, hypothesis 5 may only be partially accepted based on marital status. When it comes to marital status and work-life balance, married individuals and divorced partners are worst affected by stress and work-life imbalance. These individuals tend to have more responsibilities and family commitments. However, single individuals do have a greater need for social life and interaction and they find it difficult to establish a balanced work-life (Voydanoff, 2002). Single individuals wish to have and explore their single lives; they generally over-compensate their personal lives. These individuals have difficulty balancing their lives because they focus mostly on their personal life and to a certain extent they neglect their work-life, professionally they tend to suffer (Thompson, 2006).

Millennial's are born between 1979 and 1994 and are called the "look at me" generation showing that they are generally very self-confident. In terms of work values these individuals are lacking in loyalty and work ethic. People are concerned with the behaviour of millennial's and how they will communicate with other organisational members. These individuals need to create functional work relationships with older employees in order to enhance organisational performance. It's not all negative as millennials are generally more accepting of diversity than past generations, however they do have a lot of arrogance and self-confidence (McMunn, 2006).

In terms of race, the results of the study indicate that the various race groups reflect no significant differences relating to work-life balance and its dimensions. Hence, hypothesis 5 may be rejected in terms of race. Likewise, Brough (2008) also reflects in his research that

there is no significant difference between the races relating to stress; however, he does believe that Whites are least affected by stress as opposed to other race groups.

In terms of tenure, the findings of the study reflect that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of employees varying in tenure regarding leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, and work-life balance (day-to-day practices) and overall work-life balance respectively. From the results it is evident that employees with a tenure of 11-15 years were most satisfied with leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, overall work-life balance while those with 6-10 years were least satisfied with these aspects. Furthermore, employees with a tenure of 11-15 years experienced the highest level of work-life balance (day-to-day practices) while employees with 16-20 years reported the lowest levels of work-life balance (day-to-day practices). According to Fisher (2001), tenure is directly related to the level of stress which one experiences. Fisher (2001) also believes that older employees are least affected by stress due to their knowledge of the working environment and that newer employees find it difficult to adjust in time and are therefore, overwhelmed by stress. No other significant differences were noted amongst the employees varying in tenure. Hence, hypothesis 5 may only be partially accepted in terms of tenure.

6.2.4.2 Impact of Biographical variables on stress

The relationship between employees' biographical profiles (gender, age, marital status, race, tenure) and their level of stress were assessed. The results of the study indicate that there is a significant relationship between specific biographical profiles (gender, race, tenure) and stress respectively. No other significant relationships were noted. Hence, hypothesis 6 may only be partially accepted. Similarly, Weitzman (2001) noted that stress is directly linked to gender, race, and tenure; he also believes that Black employees and individuals who are relatively new to the organisation are most affected by stress variables.

The aforementioned results of the study that were discussed are graphically reflected in Figure 6.1.

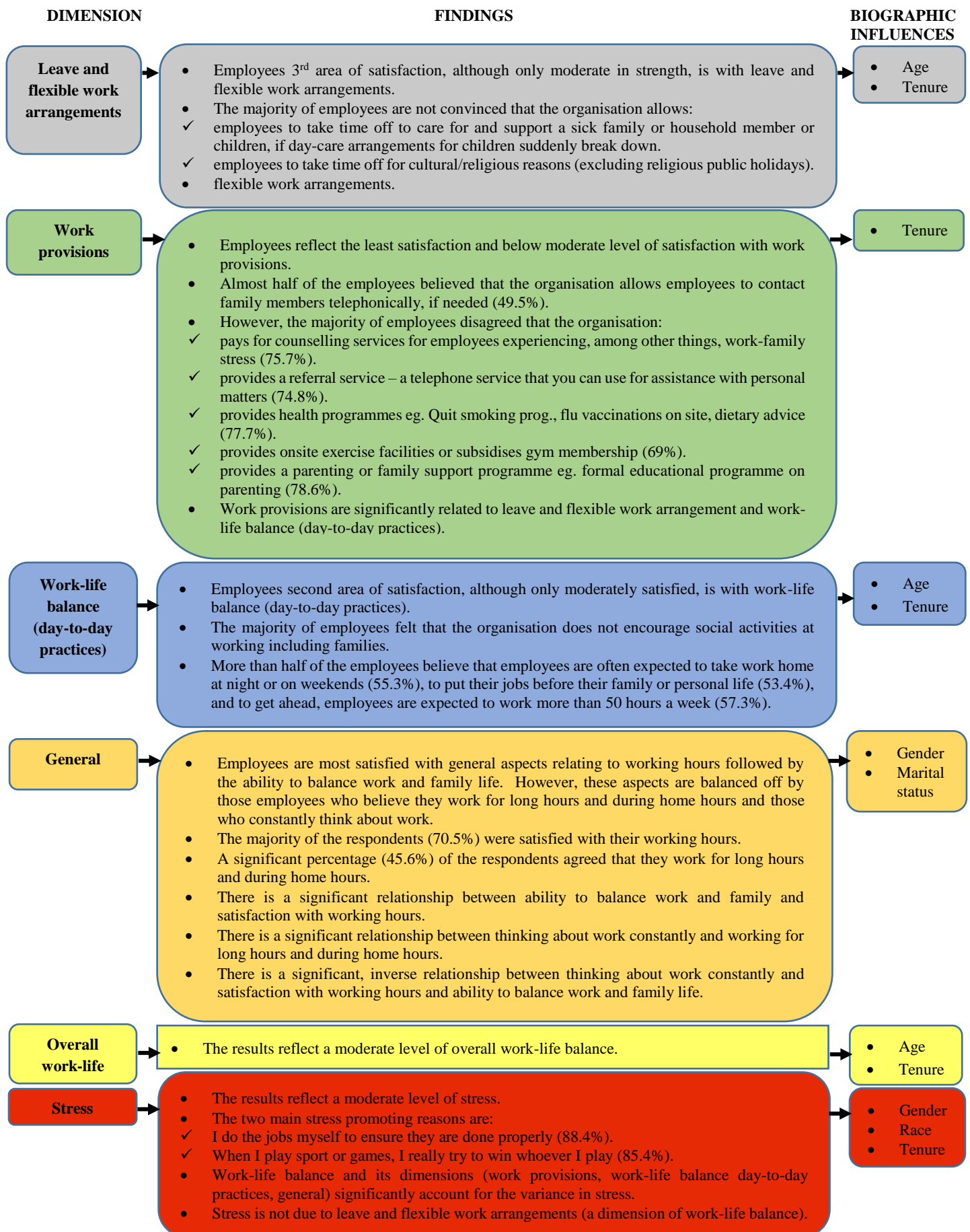


FIGURE 6.1: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

6.3 Conclusion

The results of the study were given greater meaning in this chapter by comparing and contrasting them with the findings of other researchers in the field. Valuable findings were generated which have the potential to contribute to practice and efforts aimed at enhancing work-life balance and reducing stress by providing suitable recommendations, which will be presented in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesises the key findings of the study with regard to the research questions and conclusions based on the results of the study are logically derived. This chapter includes recommendations presented based on the results of the study as well as recommendations for future research.

7.2 Recommendations based on the results of the study

The main outcome of this thesis can be succinctly summarised as follows:

If people are content with the balance between their work-life and non-work life their performance improves and they are more satisfied in general. They continuously think about their work activities and often engage in work related thoughts. They have a tendency of contentment in their lives as work-life balance is perceived as being indicative of general life satisfaction and well-being. Hence, there is no need for them to disengage and completely forget about their daily lives. Employees who have a suitable work-life balance experience more positive outcomes and feel less stressed when they encounter continuous pressure and have to perform. In order to attain a workforce of such individuals, it is imperative to implement the recommendations that stem from the results of this study:

7.2.1 Work-life balance and its dimensions and sub-dimensions

Work-life balance may take on many aspects such as leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance (day-to-day practices) as well as general factors. Work-life balance is a pertinent issue in today's world as an imbalance for prolonged periods of time has the potential to cause stress in either a personal or professional capacity or both. Assisting employees in getting the correct balance is, therefore, extremely important (Fisher, 2002). In order to enhance work-life balance, recommendations are proposed in terms of leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance (day-to-day practices) as well as general factors.

7.2.1.1 Leave and flexible work arrangements

In order to enhance work-life balance flexi-time should be an option as it is known to improve productivity. Flexi-time enables employees to work at a convenient time and better balance their work and personal life. Work is not that structured and it is not boring and monotonous at the same time. Employees will also be able to care for children and family members. Flexi-time also makes employees more loyal to the organisation and they feel that the organisation values and respects them. It is also suggested that employees should be allowed time off for cultural/religious reasons. Staff should be encouraged to use up their leave as this is leave which is due to them. Some employees work tirelessly to meet due dates or to achieve a huge project; these employees must be given time off when work demands lessen to enable them time to reenergise themselves. Staff members who fill in for other colleagues when they are on training or sick leave because of their loyalty to the organisation, need to be shown gratitude and respect for their effort, for example, by allowing time off. In France, employees have the “right to disconnect”; this law offers citizens as employees the right not to respond to work electronic mails during non-work hours. Employee wellness is an extremely pertinent issue in France as employees are the driving force behind the economy and hence, employee health and well-being are crucial to the organisation as this determines their performance and value to an organisation. Likewise, mechanisms should be in place in organisations, if not in legislation in South Africa, to force employees to truly relax during their leave and time away from the workplace.

7.2.1.2 Work Provisions

The recommendations for this study is that the organisation should allow employees to contact their family in cases of an emergency. The organisation needs to ensure that employees are happy and needs to ensure that they pay for counselling services if employees experience work-family stress as they are essential components to the organisation. The organisation should also provide employees with assistance with regards to personal matters. It is in the best interest of the organisation that employees stay active and healthy, so they must provide health programs to ensure that employees are looking after themselves. The organisation should also provide exercise facilities such as the gym and also family support programs. Organisations across the world worry about the bottom line and they neglect employees. Therefore, it is highly recommended that the organisation ensures employees feel valued and respected at all times. Organisations should provide child-care facilities to relieve parents of the worry of their

children; this makes the employees more dedicated to the organisation as they feel that the organisation is also interested in their personal life and is not only focussing on performance at the expense of their welfare. The organisation should provide healthcare programmes for holistic living including the correct nutrition, managing financial problems, managing drug and alcohol abuse by self and family member, as well as managing issues with growing children which is becoming very demanding.

7.2.1.3 Work-Life Balance (day-to-day practices)

In terms of work-life balance it is recommended that individuals evaluate both their work and personal lives, and make decisions that do not affect either in a negative way. The organisation needs to encourage social activities at work and get family members involved. Employees need to avoid taking work home and working late nights or on weekends. Employees must not put their work before their family and personal life. Employees must not over work to get ahead and not work for more than 50 hours a week as this will cause an extremely imbalanced work and personal life situation. The organisation needs to ensure that employees are given realistic work deadlines and not over-worked as this will surely lead to burnout. Employees should also have a mentor or coach to advise and assist them on issues beyond their abilities or provide guidance on things that are thought-provoking. Employees must be encouraged and have a commitment to personal growth and change.

7.2.1.4 General Factors

In terms of this area, employees are satisfied with general factors, as employees need to be satisfied with working hours in order to perform at their best. Employees should rather not work for longer hours or during home hours as this causes unnecessary strain. If employees balance their work and personal life then they will be more satisfied with their working hours. Employees think about work constantly, they should rather clear their minds as this only brings about dissatisfaction and also imbalance to one's work and family life. Employees need to break their patterns of work by trying a variety of new activities (unrelated to the work environment) and make time for periods of reflection to gain perspective on the direction that their lives are taking. They need to reassess their goals in terms of whether they are really worth the sacrifices that are being made. Individuals need to get involved with outside interests too, organise time effectively whilst building better relationships and making time for relaxation or obtain the services of a life coach.

7.2.1.5 Relationships between work-life balance, its dimensions and sub-dimensions

The recommendations of the study is that there is a significant relationship between leave and flexible work arrangements and work provisions. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between work provisions and work-life balance (day-to-day practices). However, there is no significant relationship between leave and flexible work arrangements and work-life balance (day-to-day practices). When employees are able to provide for their families they generally have a better balance. Furthermore, having a flexible work schedule will not necessarily ensure a better balance in terms of work-life, as the majority of employees regularly mismanage their time. It is therefore, recommended that wellness programmes should include a session on effective time management and every employee should be encouraged to attend it. Employees adopting flexitime work schedules experience significantly higher levels of work-life balance than their counterparts working under traditional fixed-hours schedules; hence, it is advisable to introduce and manage flexi-time where work operations enable it.

The sub-dimensions of the general factors were also assessed and it was found that there is a significant relationship between satisfaction with working hours and ability to balance work and family life. Furthermore, there is a significant relationship between working for long hours and during home hours and thinking about work constantly. However, there is no significant relationship between satisfaction with working hours and working for long hours and during home hours as well as between the ability to balance work and family life and working for long hours and during home hours. Employees who work long hours and during home hours are generally less satisfied with overall work-life balance, they find it extremely difficult to manage time due to work overload and constantly think about work duties. Organisations give employees more work than they can handle due to work demands and this puts unnecessary pressure on employees causing stress and total dissatisfaction. For the benefit of employee welfare and work-life balance it is imperative to ensure that employees are given realistic deadlines, are allocated tasks for which they have the skills, knowledge and abilities and are provided with coaches/mentors that they can consult or brainstorm ideas with.

The dimensions of work-life balance (leave and flexible work arrangements, work provisions, work-life balance relating to day-to-day practices, general) and overall work-life balance respectively were also assessed. If employees are satisfied with working hours and flexible

work arrangements and work provisions, they generally have a good overall balance; hence, it is imperative to prioritise the former in order to have a happier and more productive workforce.

7.2.1.6 Employee Stress

Individuals need to delegate tasks and not do everything themselves. Individuals need to be very competitive as this will benefit the organisation as they will be more focused and it will improve performance throughout the organisation. Stress comes about through an unequal balance in one's personal as well as work life. Stress by its own nature may be both positive and negative and depends on the individuals and the way in which they deal with stress. While some people may be overcome and agitated by stress, others may thrive on stress and may produce their best work when they are under stress. Stress can be problematic; however, it may yield benefits. Stress can be identified in two forms, namely, eustress as good, and distress as bad. The perception of stress may affect the types of stress experienced.

Stress has many positive benefits to individuals; it offers challenges but if embraced by an individual it allows him/her to learn about his/her strengths and helps build character. Stress produces pressure and it shows if an individual can handle demands when placed in difficult situations; it allows one to thrive under pressure and at the same time it stimulates an individual to do his/her best. Irrespective of whether employees can thrive or not, stress management programmes should be available to them. Stress management is basically an intervention aimed at reducing the effect of stressors in the workplace. It is focused on individuals and helping them handle stress more effectively. Stress management is also focused on the organisation in order to remove the stress in a certain role. Stress management is primarily aimed at individuals and attempts to ease the effects of stress encountered by an individual. Individuals need to properly prioritise their time and ensure that both their work as well as personal duties are being fulfilled without either suffering. Stress needs to be identified and serious interventions need to be implemented to ensure that the organisation and its employees are not devastated by the impact of stress.

The aforementioned recommendations are graphically presented in Figure 7.1.

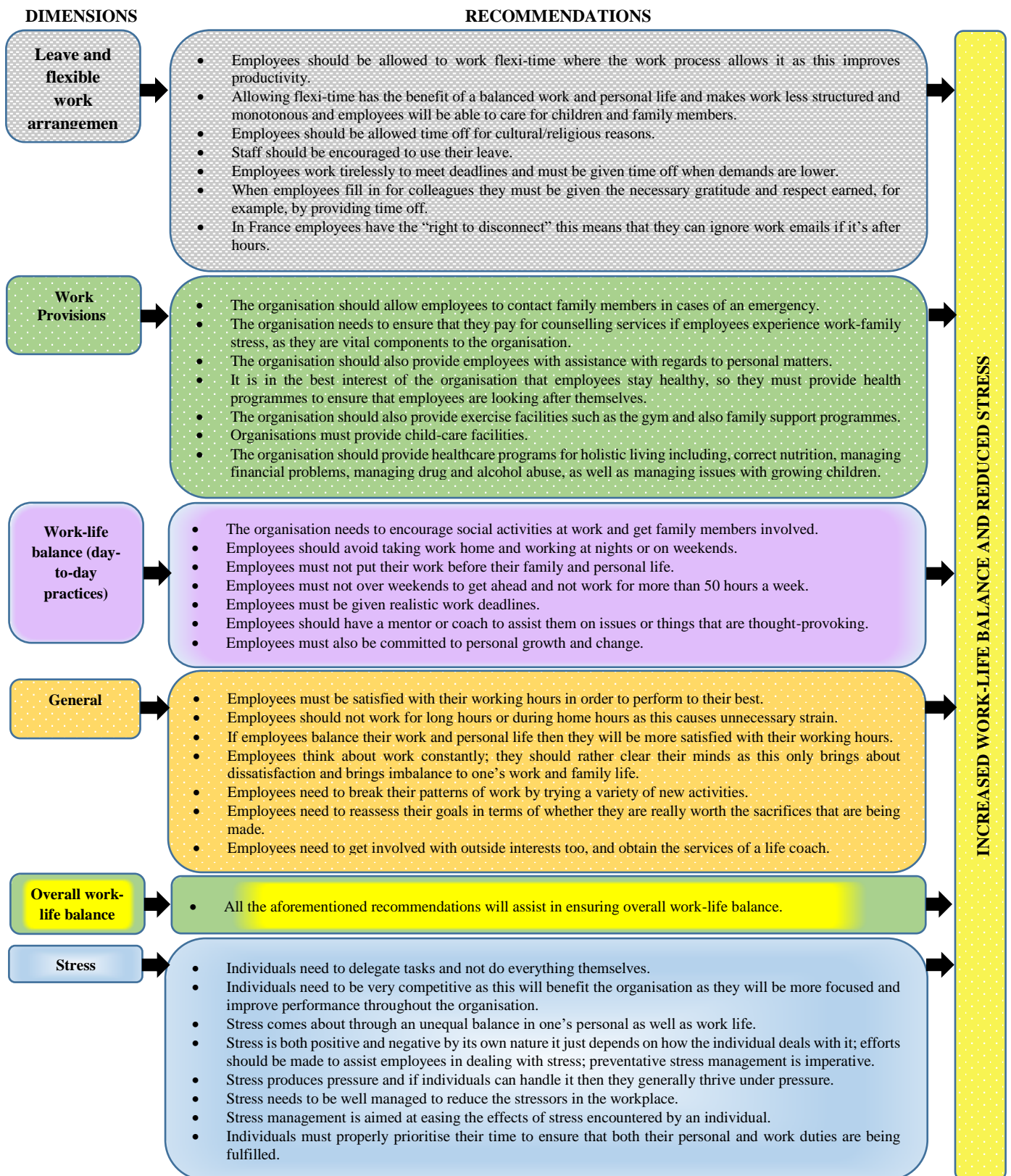


FIGURE 7.1
RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

7.3 Recommendations for future research

Not much research has been conducted on the impact of work-life balance and stress on employees within a large motor vehicle industry, which however seems to be very actual. The results of this study do not claim to solve the problem of employee stress; however, they might generate a valuable foundation for future research. An extended study on work-life balance and stress and a larger target sample can provide further understanding of the variables studied.

Demographic variables, such as gender, age, marital status and tenure play a major role in terms of work-life balance and stress. Hence, a better understanding of the underlying reasons may be obtained by engaging in a qualitative study or a mixed methods study.

A comparison of various industries concerning work-life balance would be another useful avenue for research which could be conducted in terms of work-life balance and stress outcomes. A study of various occupations and life satisfaction would enable a better understanding of stressful triggers and behaviours and enable the design of stress management strategies. The large amount of people reporting an unpleasant work-life balance on a daily basis even in casual conversations signals the need for future research in this area.

7.4 Conclusion

In concluding, management could largely profit from this kind of research, as it is a contemporary issue facing all organisations world-wide. Work-life balance and stress is prevalent in South Africa and across the world and thus needs serious attention as it affects the majority of employees and ultimately this affects one's personal as well as professional life. An organisation's human resources is its greatest asset that can provide it with a competitive advantage if managed effectively. Therefore, it is imperative that organisations that aim to be successful pay greater attention to its workforce by ensuring work-life balance, thereby ensuring a healthier, happier and more productive cadre of management of employees. Taking cognisance of and effectively implementing the recommendations presented in Figure 7.1 will assist in enhancing work-life balance and reducing employee stress levels.

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APPENDIX A - QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: Biographical Data

For each of the following, mark a cross (X) in the box that best describes you.

1. **Gender**

Male		1
Female		2

2. **Age**

20-29 years		1
30-39 years		2
40-49 years		3
50-59 years		4
60 years and over		5

3. **Marital status**

Single		1
Married		2
Divorced		3

4. **Race**

Black		1
Indian		2
Coloured		3
White		4

5. **Tenure**

0-5 years		1
6-10 years		2
11-15 years		3
16-20 years		4
Over 20 years		5

SECTION B: Work-Life Balance

Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following items using the scale below:

Strongly disagree (SD) - (1)

Disagree (D) - (2)

Neither agree nor disagree (NA/ND) - (3)

Agree (A) - (4)

Strongly agree (SA) - (5)

No.	Item	SD 1	D 2	NA/ ND 3	A 4	SA 5
Leave and flexible work arrangements						
1.	My organisation allows employees to take time off to care for and support a sick family or household member or children, if day-care arrangements for children suddenly break down.					
2.	My organisation allows employees to take time off for study or training.					
3.	My organisation allows employees to take time off for cultural/religious reasons (excluding religious public holidays).					
4.	My organisation allows flexible work arrangements.					
Work provisions						
5.	My organisation allows employees to contact family members telephonically, if needed.					
6.	My organisation pays for counselling services for employees experiencing, among other things, work-family stress.					
7.	My organisation provides a referral service – a telephone service that you can use for assistance with personal matters.					
8.	My organisation provides health programmes eg. Quit smoking programmes, flu vaccinations on site, dietary advice.					
9.	My organisation provides onsite exercise facilities or subsidises gym membership.					
10.	My organisation provides a parenting or family support programme eg. Formal educational programme on parenting.					

No.	Item	SD 1	D 2	NA/ ND 3	A 4	SA 5
Work-life balance						
11.	In this organisation, it is frowned upon by management to take leave for family related matters.					
12.	The management of this organisation seem to put their job ahead of their family and personal life.					
13.	This organisation encourages the involvement of employees' family members in work celebrations.					
14.	This organisation has social functions at times that are suitable for families.					
15.	In this organisation, it is acceptable to talk about one's family or personal life at work.					
16.	Many employees here resent people who take time off for family reasons eg. child care.					
17.	In order to get 'noticed' in this organisation, employees must constantly put work ahead of their family or personal life.					
18.	Employees are often expected to take work home at night or on weekends.					
19.	Employees are expected to put their jobs before their family or personal life.					
20.	To get ahead, employees are expected to work more than 50 hours a week.					
21.	When trying to balance work and family responsibilities, it is easier to work things out among colleagues than to get management involved.					
22.	This organisation is serious about equal opportunity and anti-discrimination when applying work-life balance issues.					
General						
23.	I am satisfied with my working hours and how it fits into my private life.					
24.	I am able to balance my work and family life.					
25.	I work for long hours and even work in my home hours.					
26.	I often think about work even when I am not actually at work.					

SECTION C: Stress

No.	Item	SD 1	D 2	NA/ ND 3	A 4	SA 5
1.	I frequently bring work home at night.					
2.	There is not enough hours in the day to do all the things that I must do.					
3.	I deny or ignore problems in the hope that they will go away.					
4.	I do the jobs myself to ensure they are done properly.					
5.	I underestimate how long it takes to do things.					
6.	I feel that there are too many deadlines in my work/life that are difficult to meet.					
7.	My self confidence/self-esteem is lower than I would like it to be.					
8.	I frequently have guilty feelings if I relax and do nothing.					
9.	I find myself thinking about problems even when I am supposed to be relaxing.					
10.	I feel fatigued to tired even when I wake up after an amount of adequate sleep.					
11.	I often nod or finish other people's sentences for them when they speak slowly.					
12.	I have a tendency to eat, walk and drive quickly.					
13.	My appetite has changed; I have either a desire to binge or have a loss of appetite or may skip meals.					
14.	I feel irritated or angry if the car or traffic in front seems to be going too slowly/I become very frustrated at having to wait in a queue.					
15.	If something or someone really annoys me I will bottle up my feelings.					
16.	When I play sport or games, I really try to win whoever I play.					
17.	I experience mood swings, difficulty making decisions and my concentration and memory is impaired.					
18.	I find myself preoccupied with my own thoughts.					
19.	I experience an increase in muscular aches and pains especially in the neck, head, lower back, shoulders.					
20.	I am unable to perform tasks as well as I used to; my judgement is clouded or not as good as it was.					
21.	I find that I have a greater dependency on alcohol, caffeine, nicotine or drugs.					
22.	I find that I do not have time for many interest/hobbies outside of work.					

Thank you for your time and co-operation.

APPENDIX B – ETHICAL CLEARANCE LETTER



31 July 2017

Mr Lushen Govender (210529505)
School of Management, IT & Governance
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Govender,

Protocol reference number: HS5/0354/017M

Project title: Understanding the relationship between work-life balance and stress amongst employees at a large motor vehicle manufacturing plant in KwaZulu-Natal

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 18 April 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Sanjana Brijbal Parumasur
Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor Brian McArthur
Cc School Administrator: Ms Angela Pearce

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Stress is an inevitable element in the fabric of modern life. Stress is typically defined by the behavioural concept with regards to stimulus and response linkages. Stress can be defined as the stimulus that, if strong enough, can trigger tension in the individual who undergoes it. Stress is likely to create problems within the organisation which has the potential to have an impact on the bottom line. Organisations throughout the world have identified their most valuable assets as being human resources and, therefore, organisations spend a significant amount of money in helping employees achieve a balance in their work life as well as personal life. Stress has become a global issue and as evolved over the years and plays a significant part

in an institution's success or failure. Educating employees about stress will help in identifying

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