



**THE CONNECTION BETWEEN WORK-LIFE BALANCE (WLB) AND A SENSE OF COHERENCE
(SOC) AT A MUNICIPALITY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR.**

**By
Abe, Ethel Ndidiamaka**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**School of Management, IT and Governance
College of Law and Management Studies**

Supervisor: Dr Ziska Fields

2015

DECLARATION

I, Ethel Ndidiamaka Abe declare that

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DEDICATION

This research effort is dedicated to my husband Isaac, my children Peace and Praise Abe, my mother Mrs Juliet Ibekwe and the memory of my late father Mr. John Ukah. Throughout the period of this study, you all were the reason I found strength to go on when I should have quit. Thank you.

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to explore the connection between work-life balance (WLB) and sense of coherence (SOC) among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector. These individual employees struggle with WLB challenges like relational tension, parenting, child and elder care, alcohol and substance abuse, debt and financial issues, absence of job autonomy, function vagueness / role conflict and job stress. This study examined SOC as a proposed coping mechanism which could be viewed as an individual trait to continuously resist stress successfully.

This study's population includes all heads of units, managers, supervisors and coordinators at the municipality. A sequential transformative mixed methods research design was adopted. Data was collected using a self-report questionnaire administered to 370 respondents, 307 questionnaires representing a response rate of 83% were returned. Additionally, eleven members of top management were interviewed. The SOC-13 version of *Orientation to Life Questionnaire (OLQ)* was used to measure SOC. WLB was assessed with a three-dimensional scale. Work-life balance strategies (WLBS) were measured with a 10-item scale and wellness programmes were assessed with a work-life wellness scale (WLBW). Stressors were assessed on a three-dimensional work stressor and three-dimensional family stressors scales respectively. These scales yielded acceptable levels of Cronbach alpha coefficient ranging from 0.781 to 0.983. The study utilised a combination of cluster, simple random and convenience sampling methods.

The research objectives were achieved through descriptive and inferential statistics. Quantitative data was analysed using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 to test for bivariate associations among the variables and to determine the validity and reliability of the evaluating measures. NVIVO was used in organising qualitative data for ease of content analysis. The overall intention was to derive sufficient and rigorous statistical assessment of data towards proffering sufficient explanations on the connection between WLB and SOC.

The findings indicated that WLBS had a statistically significant association with the wellness programmes. It was empirically confirmed that work and family stressors predicted SOC at the municipality. The study found no statistically significant connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. This study furthers the boundary of

knowledge in the work-family literature and organisational behaviour by examining WLB from both cognitive and behavioural perspectives.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Work-life balance (WLB) is basically related to the modification of patterns around work to harmoniously accommodate life's responsibilities and aspirations by individuals regardless of gender, age, education, personality, culture, etc. (Maxwell & McDougall, 2004). Most studies in this area focus on ways of creating more time for work in the family space and more time for family in the work space (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003), and the overflow of work into family life (Guest, 2002; Greenhaus, Ziegert & Allen, 2012). The disparity in the manner in which individuals balance their work and non-work responsibilities have been commonly overlooked (Spreitzer, Grzywacz, & Demerouti, 2013; Sumer & Knight, 2001). This study focused on the relationship between WLB and SOC and the role of work-life balance strategies (WLBS) in that connection. Additionally, it sought to ascertain the influence that work and family stressors have on SOC. According to Holmberg, Thelin, and Stiernström (2004), SOC forms the fundamental basis on which a person's ability to cope is based, and it is made up of three proportions of comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness.

In this chapter is a presentation of the background and significance of this study as well as a statement of the problem on the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. The research questions deriving from the problem statement as well as the objectives of this study are also highlighted. Appropriate statistics were used in achieving the research objectives formulated for this study and answering the research questions. Additionally, this chapter presents the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background of the study

WLB concerns itself with balance between work and life, but for the purpose of this study, WLB refers to satisfaction with work and family situations. The idea of WLB became prominent in the 1960s and 1970s among business administrators, psychologists and sociologists in America and Europe. Conflicts emanating from work and life domains continue to gain prominence as being among the stressors faced by employees (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). According to Greenhaus et al. (2003), WLB is the degree of equal involvement and satisfaction that a person has with respect to his/her performance of work and home functions. This definition is consistent with Marks and MacDermid (1996) definition of

WLB as a manifestation of the inclination an individual has among various functions in life. This definition comprises negative and positive balance.

The definitions of WLB by these scholars (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Marks, Huston, Johnson, & MacDermid, 2001; Marks & MacDermid, 1996; Maxwell, 2005; Maxwell & McDougall, 2004) and others like Kalliath and Brough (2008), and Chauhan (2010), focus on work patterns and non-work issues and not on the individuals and factors that influence their coping with life's stressors and making meaning of WLB. Sumer and Knight (2001) reported that although various replicas have been estimated and tried on work-family relationships using a correlational background, the individual uniqueness in the way people balance work and family lives have generally been disregarded. Edwards and Rothbard (2000) corroborating this statement asserted that balance is never considered as a tool that connects both home and work because it cannot explain in what way, and what a person does or is involved with in one sphere of life, causes what they do or get involved with in another realm of life. Rather WLB is an indication of a person's coordination of various roles in life as well as other happenings in between work and life (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). Marks and MacDermid (1996) citing Mead (1964) differed from the popular opinion that people arrange what they do according to what is priority and recommended that people have the ability and ought to show corresponding affirmative responsibility in every function and responsibilities thrust upon them in life (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Organisations realising that employees need to find balance, have devised various ways of assisting their employees find meaningful balance (Khan, & Agha, 2013; Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea, & Walters, 2002).

In the context of the above, the municipality in this study adopted wellness programmes to assist their employees in coping with work and life roles. Some of the programmes embedded in the wellness programmes are: HIV/AIDS counselling, substance/alcohol abuse helpline, stress management, domestic relationship counselling, family matters, financial advice, work, relationships, and finance/debt counselling (DPSA, 2008). The researcher sought to find if these programmes were capable of assisting employees in the public sector to address their work and family stressors as well as achieve WLB. This was because of the peculiarity of the African, especially Sub-Saharan Africa and particularly South African workplaces. The study considered that attempts at helping employees find meaningful balance through WLBS should take into consideration the peculiarities of their background.

The report by Wong and Ko (2009) confirmed that countries in the European Union have a cultural view of WLB different from that of the United States of America (USA). They further

reported that the strategies adopted by organisations in the United Kingdom are backed by the government authority and Act of legislation. In the USA, government commitment is literally absent, rather, organisations use the concept of WLB for cut-throat benefit in competition (Joshi et al., 2002).

The public sector in South Africa inherited an institutional legacy from the apartheid government and a responsibility to help the government of the day right the many wrongs of the apartheid era. It was reported that the apartheid regime summarily had a discriminatory structure of labour which largely segregated the black and the coloured population of South Africa (May & Govender, 1998; Mirafatab, 2004; Özler, 2007). Poverty rate was about 68% among the black population (May & Govender, 1998; Ozler, 2007). Children were unshielded from the violence of the day both at home and in the larger community, and they were equally exposed to hunger, irregular nurturing and education (May & Govender, 1998). These scholars confirmed that powerlessness, sickness, increased worry and strain were the distinctive property of those living in poverty in those days. By 1994, the emergent South African nation and its municipal administration were thrust upon with all the disparities and challenges; having the local government which formerly served a segmented (small) portion of the populace transform into a democratised era where metropolitan governments were the leading creation (Cameron, 2005; Mirafatab, 2004).

Between November 2011 and May 2012, the researcher worked closely with professional level employees in the municipality, and came face-to-face with the challenges they had to face at work. Additionally, the researcher also had the privilege of facilitating a WLB seminar for one hundred and fifty (150) sales managers of a manufacturing company from different parts of West Africa in Ghana in 2011. From these interactions, pertinent challenges facing employees at the professional level of employment were highlighted. The problems of workers in West Africa do not seem to be too different from those of their colleagues in South Africa, and the major issues were related to how to make meaning of schedules and tasks in the midst of conflicting family and work interests, as well as cope with stressors from the environment. For employees in West Africa, unending traffic locks, increased number of elderly people needing care, child care, impact of HIV/AIDS, need for routine medical check-ups, and trauma that follows loss of lives among colleagues through failure to follow up medication regime, debt and financial crises, need to improve performance, earn bonuses and promotions, job insecurity, and so on seem to be gravely overwhelming. Whether privately, corporately or

publicly employed, there is a possibility that employees share similar experiences all over Africa; even as one can easily trace some of the occurrences in West Africa to that of South Africa. Ahmed (2013a) reports that professionals working in a highly competitive work environment face great pressure to not just perform, but excel. This study assumed that with all the pressures to perform at work and the need to fulfil family roles at home, stress levels are high among professional level employees.

In the context of the foregoing, this study examined the connection between WLB and a SOC among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Work has been described in contemporary establishments around the world as becoming progressively multifaceted, unclear, and inexact (Kuchinke, Cornachione, Oh, & Kang, 2010). In addition to the changing and challenging workplace demands, individual employees daily have the need to perform numerous and concurrent roles emanating from the domestic unit (Lee, Zvonkovic, & Crawford, 2013). The resultant effect of stress emanating from work and family domain have become notably important to both employers and their workers (Morris, Messal & Meriac (2013). Employees at various hierarchies in organisations are predisposed to adverse effects of stress. These adverse effects directly or indirectly pose as challenges to individuals and workplaces by manifesting in ill-health, dissatisfaction, poor parenting, relational tension, tiredness, absenteeism and poor performance (Dar, Akmal, Naseem & din Khan, 2011; Evans & Kim, 2013; Milot & Vezina, 2014; Quick & Tetrick, 2003; Quillian-Wolever & Wolever, 2003; Spielberger, Vagg & Wasala, 2003). Professional level employees in the South African public sector, like employees elsewhere globally, are not excluded from the situation. Hence, there is need to strike balance between work and family responsibilities resulting from the inherent stressors in both domains which individual employees have to contend with (Mackenzie, Keuskamp, Ziersch, Baum, & Popay, 2013). To be able to achieve balance between work and family domains, individual mental resources such as sense of coherence (SOC) and organisational practices like work-life balance strategies (WLBS) are needed.

Employers realise that workers battle to manage work-life demands and to achieve balance. Local governments in trying to minimise escalating medical costs make recourse to different innovative strategies (Benavides & David, 2010). One of such strategies is the employee health and wellness programmes (EHW). The South African Department of Public Service adopted

the employee health and wellness strategic framework (DPSA, 2008) to aid employees address their work-life demands and possibly achieve WLB. Scholars report that despite efforts by organisations to implement viable WLBS (Kumar & Chakraborty, 2013), employees still struggle to find balance between work and family. This gives rise to the need to evaluate WLBS to ascertain their efficacy at achieving the goals for which they were implemented. In the context of the foregoing, this study sought to ascertain the WLBS in place at the municipality. It also determines the extent to which WLBS predicted wellness programmes at the municipality investigated.

The interface between work and family has been reported to have the capacity to be both beneficial and damaging to psychological wellbeing (Mackenzie et al., 2013). This could be as a result of numerous domain-related stressors and insufficiency in the resources required to manage them. Though some organisations provide interventions and strategies (for example, WLBS) to aid employees in coping with stressors, individuals also need personal mental resources (like SOC). SOC has been described as a mental resource acquired by a person from infancy through adolescence (Antonovsky, 1987; Rivera, García-Moya, Moreno, & Ramos, 2013) which assists in coping with stressors (Sarenmalm, Browall, Persson, Fall-Dickson, & Gaston-Johansson, 2013).

Some of the examples of resources that develop SOC are riches, strong character, ethnic constancy, plus communal backing (Holmberg et al., 2004). Given the historical background of South Africa and the consequences of protracted years under apartheid, most children and adolescents in those days were not exposed to the resources that could build strong SOC (May & Govender, 1998). Additionally, the municipal workplace could be highly stressful and may task employees' ability to cope. Sarenmalm et al. (2013) report that a person with strong SOC when challenged by a stressor has the capacity to sensibly assess the stressful circumstance, cope with the event by utilising accessible resources and appraise the situation as being worthy to invest additional effort in. Researches have also shown that high SOC manifests in dismal level of work-related pressure (Feldt, 1997; Hanse & Engstrom, 1999; Julkunen & Ahlström, 2006; Muller & Rothmann, 2009). Empirical research also found that SOC had an inverse relationship with stress and that continued exposure to stressors causes SOC to deteriorate (Wolff & Ratner, 1999).

This study sought to ascertain whether the consequences of apartheid had any effect on the SOC of professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public service by

examining the role of stressors on SOC. This is to determine if stressors predicted SOC among the respondents. The influence of SOC on the achievement of WLB was also investigated.

According to De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott, and Pettit (2005), WLBS are described as the practices adopted by organisations which improve the independence that employees should have in order to be able to organise and synchronise their work and family life satisfactorily. This implies that such WLBS should have the capacity to address domain-related stressors so as to enable employees achieve satisfaction with work and family situations. A number of studies discovered that notable negative association exists between WLB and WLBS (Ezra & Deckman, 1996; Hill, 2005; Hill, Ferris, & Mårtinson, 2003; Hill, Mårtinson, Ferris, & Baker, 2004); some studies report that there were either non-existent or weak linkages among WLBS adopted by organisations and work-family clash (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Batt & Valcour, 2003; Haar & Spell, 2004) or satisfaction with work (Shinn, Wong, Simko, & Ortiz-Torres, 1989). But Xiao and Cooke (2012), report that evidence from a consensus of empirical research based on diverse contexts and conducted in various societies, show that WLBS have not been much effective in reducing work and family stressors for several reasons. The bulk of the researches, however, have been carried out in developed countries such as Europe, America and Australia. This study examines the influence of WLBS on the achievement of WLB among respondents. However, there seems to be a dearth of studies investigating the effect that WLBS have on stressors emanating from the work and family domains respectively. Therefore, this study bridges this gap by ascertaining whether the WLBS in place at the municipality investigated addressed domain-specific stressors.

WLB has been a topical issue of discussion in contemporary times in boardrooms, classrooms and even political settings globally (Felstead et al., 2002). Wong and Ko (2009) report that some scholars reviewed prior studies on the connection between work and non-work domains (Cushing, 2004; MacInnes, 2005; Staines, 1980). Literature shows that many researches on WLB are based on the role conflict perspective (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Eagle, Icenogle, Maes, & Miles, 1998; Eagle, Miles, & Icenogle, 1997; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991; Jones, Burke, & Westman, 2013; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996; Williams & Alliger, 1994). The findings of these scholars contribute to the debate on WLB, but not much has been written on how WLB connects to other variables that could impact its achievement. Such variables include the SOC. Although WLB and SOC research in the past century has significantly enhanced understanding of human workplace behaviour, recent developments have advanced

and research in these areas remain largely untapped. This study contributes to the discussion by examining WLB from the satisfaction perspective and ascertaining whether an association exists between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector.

1.4 Research objectives

The primary objective of the study is to determine the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. The secondary objectives are:

1. To examine what WLBS are in place at the municipality.
2. To ascertain the contributions of WLBS to the wellness programme.
3. To investigate the effect of work and family stressors on SOC.
4. To examine the influence of WLBS on work and family stressors.
5. To determine the extent to which WLBS influence WLB.
6. To establish if a relationship exists between WLB and SOC.

1.5 Research questions

The foregoing objectives of the study gave rise to the questions below:

1. What WLBS are in place at the municipality?
2. To what extent do WLBS contribute to the wellness programme?
3. How do work and family stressors affect SOC?
4. How do WLBS affect work and family stressors?
5. To what extent do WLBS affect WLB?
6. Is there any relationship between WLB and SOC?

1.6 Motivation for the study

The reasoning behind this study was the gap identified in prior literature which gave rise to the need to further the boundaries of knowledge by providing explanations on the association between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. In addition, the realisation that the apartheid administration may have left some adverse effect on individual

employee's ability to cope with work and family stressors and achieve WLB prompted this investigation. The study therefore originates from the need to explore the effect that work and family stressors could have on an individual's SOC and the influence that SOC could have on the achievement or otherwise of WLB. It integrates the examination of the WLBS at the municipality to ascertain if it assisted employees in addressing their work and family stressors and possibly achieve WLB.

1.7 Significance of the study

The findings of this study should expand the frontiers of knowledge on the gap recognised and hopefully be significant in adding worth to knowledge for bridging the gap discovered. It should possibly be a source of information on the issue of WLB to the public sector human resource management. It is hoped that the findings shall form the essential database for HR departments to integrate the knowledge about SOC in formulating WLBS, especially in the African context. The significance of this study further rests on the examination of the wellness programmes adopted by the municipality to ascertain its efficacy as WLBS capable of assisting employees to address work and family stressors and achieve meaningful WLB.

The examination of the interface among work and family stressors and SOC to establish how employees manage their resources is novel. By examining WLBS, SOC and work and family stressors, the study could be significant in suggesting practical ways of crafting and implementing WLBS that should holistically address work and family stressors and possibly aid employees in achieving WLB. Hence, the study provides practical explanations and solutions to identified issues on the connection between WLB and SOC, which should be beneficial to the management of the municipality investigated, as well as other municipalities and public sector entities in South Africa and other nations.

1.8 Scope and limitations of the study

The scope of this study is narrowed to the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. WLB is the dependent variable on the link between WLB and SOC, while SOC is the independent variable. On the link between WLBS and SOC, WLBS is the independent variable while SOC is the dependent variable. Work and family stressors are the independent variables while SOC is the dependent variable on the link between SOC and work and family stressors respectively. These linkages were adopted to provide detailed explanations on the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African

public sector. Therefore, the explanations provided in this study are limited to the resultant effects of these linkages explained in this section of the study. Further studies can be conducted on the connection between WLBS and WLB; or the mediating role of WLBS and SOC on the connection between work and family stressors and WLB. Future studies on these areas focusing on other departments and parastatals in the South African public sector or private sector organisations in and outside South Africa could yield meaningful results.

The population of this study was restricted to eight clusters of the municipality in the South African public sector. South Africa was selected on the basis of her reputation as the most developed country in Africa and the public sector's provision of a strategic framework to guide the adoption and implementation of employee health and wellness programmes. On the other hand, the municipality selected is a metropolitan municipality reputed for her care for employees. Hence, the empirical results of this study are limited to the collected and analysed data from employees of the seven randomly selected clusters from the municipality in the South African public sector. Due to the diversity and sensitivity of the work-environment, this study did not collect data from racial and cultural dimensions even though it would have provided robustness to the collected data. In addition because of the political nature of the municipality and requisite secrecy in the political sector, confidentiality and anonymity was complied with through the presentation of the results of this study by using the generic name "*a municipality in the South African public sector*".

1.9 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised along the following lines into ten chapters:

1.9.1 Chapter one: Introduction

Chapter one is the introductory chapter to this study. It presents the study's background and significance, problem statement, research objectives and questions, as well as the study's scope and limitations.

1.9.2 Chapter two: South African public sector: Employee health and wellness strategic framework for the public service

This chapter is the commencement of the review of literature. It presents the historical perspective to the South African public sector and the Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service (EHWSFPS) and its objective. The rationale for introducing the EHWSFPS is reviewed in this chapter. In addition, the literature on the wellness programme

is reviewed to ascertain if it could be classified as work-life balance strategies (WLBS) capable of assisting employees to manage their work and family stressors and possibly achieve work-life balance.

1.9.3 Chapter three: Work-life balance strategies (WLBS)

This chapter presents the appraisal of associated literature previously written on WLBS and explains the construct comprehensively. The link between WLBS and SOC is presented and discussed. Theories supporting WLBS and those underlying the adoption of WLBS as well as types of WLBS are also discussed in this chapter.

1.9.4 Chapter four: Sense of coherence (SOC)

This chapter presents the review of the literature on stress. It also highlights the review of literature on work and family stressors and their effect on SOC. In addition, SOC is explored to unveil its meaning, components and how it is developed. The roles of SOC and its measurement are also presented. A good understanding of these variables is required to better appreciate their influence on the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality.

1.9.5 Chapter five: Work-life balance (WLB)

Chapter five presents explanations about WLB, identifies various paradigms through which the construct has been studied and reviews the theories of WLB propounded by various scholars. The connections between WLB and sense of coherence, WLBS and WLB are also discussed. The gap observed in the literature on these connections led to the suggestion of a definition for the concept in this study. This also led to the proposition of a conceptual framework (discussed comprehensively in chapter six) on the connection between WLB and SOC for this study.

1.9.6 Chapter six: Theoretical framework guiding the study

This chapter showcases the theoretical framework guiding this study on the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. Hobfoll's (1989, 2001, 2011) conservation of resources (COR) theory, Voydanoff's (2005) demands, resources and strategies (DRS) model and Jeffrey R Edwards and Rothbard (1999) person-environment (P-E) fit were examined. The appraisal of these theories led to the development of a conceptual framework to guide this study. The explanations were made bearing in mind that the connection between WLB and SOC could be influenced by WLBS and work and family stressors.

1.9.7 Chapter seven: Research methodology

Chapter seven presents several research philosophies relevant to this study and discussions based on the strengths and weaknesses of each philosophy as well as the justifications for their adoption for use in this study. This study is a non-experimental research that used correlational approach in its design. This is necessary in explaining sufficiently the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector using descriptive and inferential statistics. A cross-sectional data collection and analytical approach was adopted based on the sequential transformative mixed methods, whereby equal priority was given to both the quantitative and qualitative data. The population of the study, sampling methods, survey instrument, administration of the instrument data collection and analytical processes and the limitation of the methodology in this study were also presented in this chapter.

1.9.8 Chapter eight: Findings

Chapter eight presents the way in which data was analysed and interpreted based on the responses of participants to the survey instrument used in this study that explored the connection between WLB and SOC. Tables, charts and graphical illustrations are used in presenting the results of the quantitative and findings of the qualitative data respectively. Descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis provided answers to the research questions leading to the achievements of the formulated objectives.

1.9.9 Chapter nine: Discussion of findings

A detailed discussion of the findings of this study is presented in chapter eight. Discussions are focused on the formulated objectives of the study and the research questions framed from the problem statement. A holistic discussion on the extent that the findings substantiate or refer to previous literary work and or theories on the connection between WLB and SOC is presented.

1.9.10 Chapter ten: Summary of findings, recommendations and conclusion

The general conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of this study on the connection between WLB and SOC are presented in this chapter. It further presents the summarised version of the major findings from the chapters on review of the literature, and numeric and non-numeric data analysis. Based on the main findings of this study, the implication for practice is stated in this chapter. In addition, the limitations of this study and suggestions for further research are highlighted and discussed. The original contribution made

by this study to knowledge and practice of human resource management and work-life literature is also delineated.

CHAPTER TWO: SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SECTOR: EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE

2.1 Introduction

The public sector in South Africa inherited an institutional legacy from the apartheid government and a responsibility to help the government of the day right the many wrongs of the apartheid era. As reported by May and Govender (1998), Özler (2007) and MirafTab (2004), the apartheid regime summarily had a discriminatory structure of labour which largely segregated the black and the coloured population of South Africa. It also maintained societal grading and regulated societal movement of the blacks and coloureds (Mabin, 1992). The regime also graded the individual rights to social services and infrastructure. In the days of apartheid, poverty rate was about 68% among the blacks (May & Govender, 1998; Özler, 2007). Children were unshielded from the violence of the day both at home and in the larger community, they were equally exposed to hunger, irregular nurturing and education (May & Govender, 1998). Additionally the scholars report that powerlessness, sickness, increased worry and strain were the distinctive property of those living in poverty during the apartheid era. These may have had effect on the individual ability to cope with challenges.

The foregoing is the basis for this research to engage in the discussion on the connection between work-life balance (WLB) and sense of coherence among professional level employees at a municipality from a behavioural and cognitive perspective. This is because it is assumed in this study that most of the employees in this category of employment at the municipality were born and nurtured during the apartheid era. The cognitive implication of the environmental factors (such as poverty, racial discrimination, violence, family disintegration

and poor education) of those days may have had significant implication on employee behaviour towards stressors and work and family demands.

This chapter reviews literature relating to the South African public sector and explores the Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service (EHWSFPS) and its objective. The situations that led to the introduction of this framework (EHWSFPS) will be reviewed. The literature on the wellness programme will be reviewed to ascertain if it could be classified as work-life balance strategies (WLBS) capable of assisting employees to manage their work and family stressors and possibly achieve WLB. This is to help shape the reader's understanding of the South African public sector and the EHWSFPS, as well as the reason why it was implemented at the municipal workplace being investigated in this study. It is deemed necessary to do this for an empirical analysis of the connection between WLB and SOC in this sector.

2.2 Defining major concepts

This section will briefly discuss the South African public sector and the situations that led to the adoption of the EHWSFPS by the South African public sector and ultimately the municipality's adoption of the Employee Health and Wellness Programmes (EH&WP)

2.2.1 The South African public sector

Municipalities were created to assist the National Government in rectifying some of the many disparities of apartheid as well as to be a framework for social and economic growth (Cameron, 2005). The author highlighted that there are difficulties of competence, mainly in the area of handling the accumulation of issues with respect to the poor. In addition, he stated that the challenges of metropolitan government are not only limited to reorganisation of administration and competence, but also severe shortfalls of governance (Cameron, 2005). Since the new administrative systems and developmental local government were introduced, structural reforms have been made twice, territorial changes twice, and novel methods of service delivery as well as performance management have been represented in the past ten years. Coping with the challenges of an evolving political and administrative structure, employees have too much to do and cope with. As Cameron (2005) suggested, coping with these multiple changes is challenging if all things were equal, but what is much more challenging is that the implementations occur concurrently. Additionally, the national changes in employment equity making provision for the erstwhile disadvantaged group to be employed despite the fact that

most of them would be needing further education to perform a tedious job (like formulating and implementing correct strategies for service delivery), makes this extremely stressful (Cameron, 2005).

Scholars have for some time been writing on public institutions which have been identified as major role players in the political scene (Appleby, 1945; Ioris, 2015; Kettl, 2006; K. Kim, 2015; Waldo, 1948, 2006). Many researchers comprehensively explore the effect of the political arena shrouded in bureaucratic administration (Meier, 1997; Rainey, 2009; Stillman, 1997; Vincent, 2015). Some of the complications of the system include the dual authority of the administrative and the political which tend to give conflicting responsibilities and authority. For instance, an engineer is a professional in his/her career. Administratively, the engineer can carry out his/her job with professionalism and excellence, but s/he may need the political head to grant approval for the release of funds to enable him/her deliver on a target. This may take longer time than is expected due to the bureaucratic nature of the municipal organisation. To account for the impacts of the environment of political nature is a very tedious assignment (Pandey & Wright, 2006), and it is stressful. People require good coping abilities to manage stress effectively. One of the resources proven to be effective in managing and coping with stress is the sense of coherence which Antonovsky (1987) suggests is developed from upbringing through adolescence. SOC is formed by the presence of wealth, contribution to decision making, character, peace, belonging to a family and religious beliefs.

It is very important for any nation to have a balanced, vibrant and productive public sector. Ahmed (2013b) states that in a highly competitive work environment, there is great pressure on professionals to not just perform, but excel. In the private sector, performance and goals are easily clarified by indices like price and profit, unlike the public sector. Pandey and Wright (2006) report that where the forces of demand and supply drives the public institution, they (demand and supply) do not always result in high efficiency in the public sector since public organisation buyers are not necessarily the recipients (Cowles & Myers, 2015; Kettl, 1995; Rockman & Hahm, 2011; Wagenheim & Reurink, 1991). There is often the need to demonstrate equity, account for, be responsive as well as demonstrate high efficiency in the management of public programs that are sponsored by people who are not direct beneficiaries (Pandey & Wright, 2006). With all the pressures to perform at work and need to fulfil family roles at home, stress levels are high among professional level employees. Closing the gap between the past challenges and the complicated realities of the present and the future, demands that the government makes concerted efforts to initiate strategies that should assist the public

servant in delivering service and remaining healthy. This is why the researcher has chosen to use the municipality as a case study in investigating the relationship between WLB and a SOC among professional level employees in the municipality.

2.2.2 Human Resource (HR) practices adopted by the South African public service to assist employees

Before now, the majority of the workforce neither expected nor needed assistance from the organisations where they worked to manage non-work demands (Darcy, McCarthy, Hill, & Grady, 2012; Ezra & Deckman, 1996). The workforce then constituted mainly of men focusing on their work since their family (including the wife) at home provided dependable support systems (Romzek, 1991; Verma, Bhal, & Vrat, 2013). As a result of the rise in dual-earner families, non-work duties started spilling into the work domain creating the demand for HR practitioners to reconsider their method of doing their own jobs as well as selecting and retaining talented employees. Ezra and Deckman (1996) suggest that there is a need for HR managers to modify their outlook on employee adjustment to organisational systems by improving the level of flexibility in structuring the organisation so as to address emerging employee expectations about work and family.

The practice of strategic human resource management has evolved significantly from decisions being made centrally at the levels of the top management to that of decentralised decision making cascading responsibility to professional level employees (Bond & Wise, 2003; Colling & Ferner, 1992; Hales, 2006; Alma McCarthy, Darcy, & Grady, 2010; Stoker, 2006). Professional level employees have been reported to be playing extensive roles in decision making and often mediate between the strategic (operational) and political activities of organisations (Dopson, Risk, & Stewart, 1992; Hales, 2006; Stoker, 2006). According to McCarthy et al. (2010), decentralising decision making could create differences and variation between policy formulated and actual implementation. This is supported by Legge's (1995) argument that HR strategies may be somehow separated from what is practiced in reality, and some other studies lean towards this inclination (Cunningham, James, & Dibben, 2004; Purcell, Hutchinson, Kinnie, Rayton, & Swart, 2003; Whittaker & Marchington, 2003).

Conventional research on HR policies were explanatory in analysing the characteristics and degree of effectiveness of work-life practices and policies (Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). A review of the literature conducted by Kossek and Ozeki (1999) reveals two fundamental flows: a *demographic stream* and a *policy impact stream*. They report that the *demographic stream*

observed the connection between individual and family features and work results (for instance the level of absence from work among women living with minors), and the way employees perceive WLBS to be attractive (Grover & Crooker, 1995; McNall, Nicklin, & Masuda, 2010). On the other hand, the *policy impact stream* evaluates the effect that HR policies like WLBS have on the behaviours and work attitudes of the employees that use them.

Studies that examined policy impact often measured the association between usage and accessibility to the policies and behaviours and work mannerisms like turnover rate, level of absenteeism, and citizenship behaviours. Another measure adopted to examine policy impact was by exploring the before-and-after use approach for efficacy of adopting any particular policy, for instance provision of crèche or flexi-time on comparable outcomes. The paucity of studies that evaluated the reasons behind ‘use’ or ‘non-usage’ of the initiatives is observed by this researcher. This study, among its objectives, examined the WLBS (such as, the employee health and wellness programmes) in place at the municipality to ascertain their characteristics and effectiveness but did not explore the impact of the usage and accessibility to these strategies on employee work behaviours like level of absenteeism, intention to leave or citizenship behaviours. Rather, it examined the effect that usage has on work and family stressors, SOC as well as the achievement of WLB.

Irrespective of any approach adopted in examining WLBS, researches fundamentally study if the use of the initiatives lessen unacceptable work conducts like unauthorised absence from work and high rate of employee turnover (Burke, 1988; Demerouti, Bouwman, & Sanz-Vergel, 2015; Farquharson et al., 2012; Goff, Mount, & Jamison, 1990). Some other studies examined the way in which the use of WLBS enhances attitudes of workers with respect to dedication to the organisation (Cohen & Golan, 2007; Michel, Mitchelson, Pichler, & Cullen, 2010; O’Driscoll, Ilgen, & Hildreth, 1992; Wiley, 1987), productivity (Greenhaus, Bedeian, & Mossholder, 1987; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999), and extra-role behaviours (Lambert, 1996).

Extensively, literature reveals that studies have mainly concentrated on flexi-time and support for the provision of care to children (Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). They further report that limited attention has been given to spousal care, elder care, part-time work, telecommuting and temporary work by the HR literature. Although HR literature expansively examines official policies, it scantily concerns itself with unofficial supports from superior officers, colleagues and family members.

The researcher reviewed some studies conducted from the 1980's to date to be able to appraise and possibly ascertain if there were prior studies similar to the present study. But this review has shown no result with respect to studies examining the impact of WLBS on an employee's SOC and its effect on the achievement of WLB. It has also been unable to find a study that examined the influence of WLBS on stressors; summarily confirming the scarcity of studies examining WLB from the cognitive and behavioural perspectives. Therefore the present study is valuable in examining the connection of WLB and SOC and the influence of WLBS in that connection.

WLBS are officially tailored and adopted by organisations often managed by HR management. Nevertheless WLBS are in a greater sense executed and handled at the departmental levels by line management (Parris, Vickers, & Wilkes, 2008; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Ryan & Kossek, 2008). According to Poelmans and Saibzada (2004) in Ngo, Foley, and Loi (2009), there is a dearth of studies that evaluate the actual implementation of WLBS in organisations. Therefore, the present study seems to be timely in examining the wellness programmes in place at the municipality and the relevance in addressing work-life needs of professional level employees.

HR initiatives formulated and designed to bridge the gap between challenges faced by employees as a result of the challenges of the past and the complicated issues of the present and near future were needed in South Africa. The Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework was one of those established to attempt to address the challenges of employees in the public service. It is reported to be a consolidated model that is *responsive and pre-emptive to employee and employer health rights and responsibilities, as it provides a platform for implementation and co-ordination in a synergistic manner by stressing the virtues of health as a priority for our workforce*(DPSA, 2008).

2.2.2.1 Appraising the Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service (EHWSFPS)

The South African Department of Public Service recognised the reality of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, chronic sicknesses and diseases and occupational injuries as major challenges facing the country and its citizens. Based on this, the service sought to formulate a consolidated, needs-driven, participatory, and complete approach to employee health and wellness in the public sector. This led to the establishment of the Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service (EHWSFPS). The EHWSFPS was the result of studies and

appraisal of best practices nationally and internationally as well as contributions of stakeholders from prior Employee Health and Wellness (EHW) Indabas (forums) (DPSA, 2008). The consolidated approach to EHW identifies the significance of individual health, wellness and safety and its connection to the overall wellness and productivity of organisations in the public service.

The EHWSFPS was formulated based on the *World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Plan of Action on Workers Health 2008-2017*, the *International Labour Organisation's (Kroll & Neri). Decent Work Agenda in Africa and the recommendations of the report of the WHO's Commission on Social Determinants of Health*(DPSA, 2008, p. 8). At the time that the EHWSFPS was formulated, the country was faced with the disease burden among the working population of which the public service constituted its 10%. This led to the prioritisation of employee health by the government.

The key objective of the EHWSFPS is to expedite the advancement of strategies, systems and initiatives by public departments and interventions by national departments and provincial governments for the implementation of management systems that should address issues relating to HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, health and productivity, safety, health, risk and quality management, and wellness in the public service. There is a need to explore the conditions prevalent in South Africa prior the establishment of the framework and the aspects of the framework that pertain to this study in order to be abreast of the need for the wellness programme.

2.2.2.1.a Situational analysis

The principle to improve working situations in order to ensure effectual service delivery to comprise employee's health, disability, HIV/AIDS and other wellness situations to assist personnel and their families was established by Part Six of the Public Service Regulations, 2001. The contents of this section of the Public Service Regulations 2001 are occupational health and safety, HIV&AIDS and TB management, chronic disease management and productivity management, safety, health, environment, risk, and quality management and the wellness pillar. These are discussed as follows:

HIV/AIDS and Tuberculosis: One of the major challenges that South Africa faces is the HIV/AIDS pandemic. A UNAIDS/WHO 2008 report showed that 5.7 million South Africans were estimated to be infected with HIV. The pandemic among South African citizens was both generalised and concentrated, but the occurrence was mostly found among individuals between

ages 15 and 49 years at a prevalence rate of 18.1% (Shisana, 2005). In addition, the country is one of the twenty two (22) *high burden countries* contributing approximately 80% of the world's burden of all tuberculosis cases and was rated to have the seventh highest tuberculosis incidence globally. It was reported that HIV and TB co-infection makes activities geared towards prevention and control very challenging, because each disease hastens the progress of the other and a combination of both is deadly, but alone, each is less destructive (DPSA, 2008). Therefore, concerted efforts were needed to stop new infections and halt the deterioration of those already infected with either HIV/AIDS or TB or both. HIV/AIDS counselling are integrated into employee health and wellness programme adopted by the municipality.

2.2.2.1.b Health and productivity management

It was observed that non-communicable diseases such as lingering diseases associated with lifestyle as well as injuries and diseases associated with occupation, contributed mostly to the increased burden of disease among several developed and developing nations. This heightened the difficulties in addressing the dual burden of communicable (transferable) and chronic diseases. Heart disease, cancer, diabetes and lingering respiratory disease were accountable for over 60% of mortality worldwide and predicted to be responsible for two third of deaths worldwide over the next 25 years (DPSA, 2008). Until the present time, conventional illness management programmes, health promoting and educational programmes, performance improvement and public service delivery enhancement were not consolidated. The EHWSFPS integrates all these interventions to establish a holistic health and performance management intervention to be implemented in the South African public service.

2.2.2.1.c Safety, Health, Environment, Risk and Quality Management (SHERQ)

This deals with the physical and intangible aspects of safety, health, environment, risks and quality management in order to optimise the safety and health of personnel, citizens' safety, environmental sustainability, risk management (occupational and general) as well as maintaining of government's products and services. This was done to comply with international benchmarking and national legislation. Some of these standard generating authorities are: OHSAS 18001 for occupational health and safety, ISO 14001 for environmental management, and ISO 9001 for quality management. Others are the report on the survey conducted following the public sector strike of 2006, the January 2008 Cabinet Lekgotla decision to improve the working environment in government front and back office environment, and the Parliament noting of ILO Convention 187 Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health,

2006, which are all events and documentation that adds to the rationale for this pillar. Although aspects of the SHERD (such as environmental safety, management and sustainability) could be addressed as health enhancing factors, yet, they are not strategies to assist employees manage their work and family situations. Therefore, this section (SHERD) will not be addressed in the present study examining the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. This is because this section (SHERD) constitutes the public sector's response to the ILO Convention (187) of 2008 and Department of Labour's OHS Policy of 2005 which may not be significant to this study.

2.2.2.1.d Wellness management

This aspect of the framework focuses on the individual and organisational wellness in a pre-emptive way. It is a drastic departure from the Employee Assistance Programme which was seen as limited in latitude and practice due to its reactive and not preventive nature. *This is against the analysis done by many epidemiological and health information and medical aid cost driver trend reports like the Key Health trends from the Government Employee Medical Scheme (GEMS) and other medical aid schemes which confirm the trends of psychosocial problems, organisational climate assessments of hostile working physical and psychosocial working environments* (DPSA, 2008, p. 10). This study examines the wellness pillar of the framework further as it underpins the HR practice of a municipality to assist employees address their work and family related challenges to comply with the national framework.

The municipality under study adopted wellness programmes and occupational therapy initiatives in assisting their employees balance work and family responsibilities. According to McCarthy et al. (2010), most WLBS targeted at professional level employees tend to demand that the working time be reduced through programmes like job-sharing, and part-time work. This, they suggest could be challenging to these employees since they are held between the need to improve or maintain performance and making allowance for flexibility and or reduced time of working. The present study examines the wellness programmes among its objectives in order to assess their efficacy in helping employees achieve meaningful WLB. The study also examined the contribution of WLBS to the wellness programmes.

Stated below is the functional description of the wellness programme as available in the EHWSFPS. This researcher examines the EH&W initiative in the study to avail information for proper analysis of efficacy of the wellness programme assisting employees manage their work and family challenges and possibly achieve WLB.

2.2.2.2 Wellness programmes

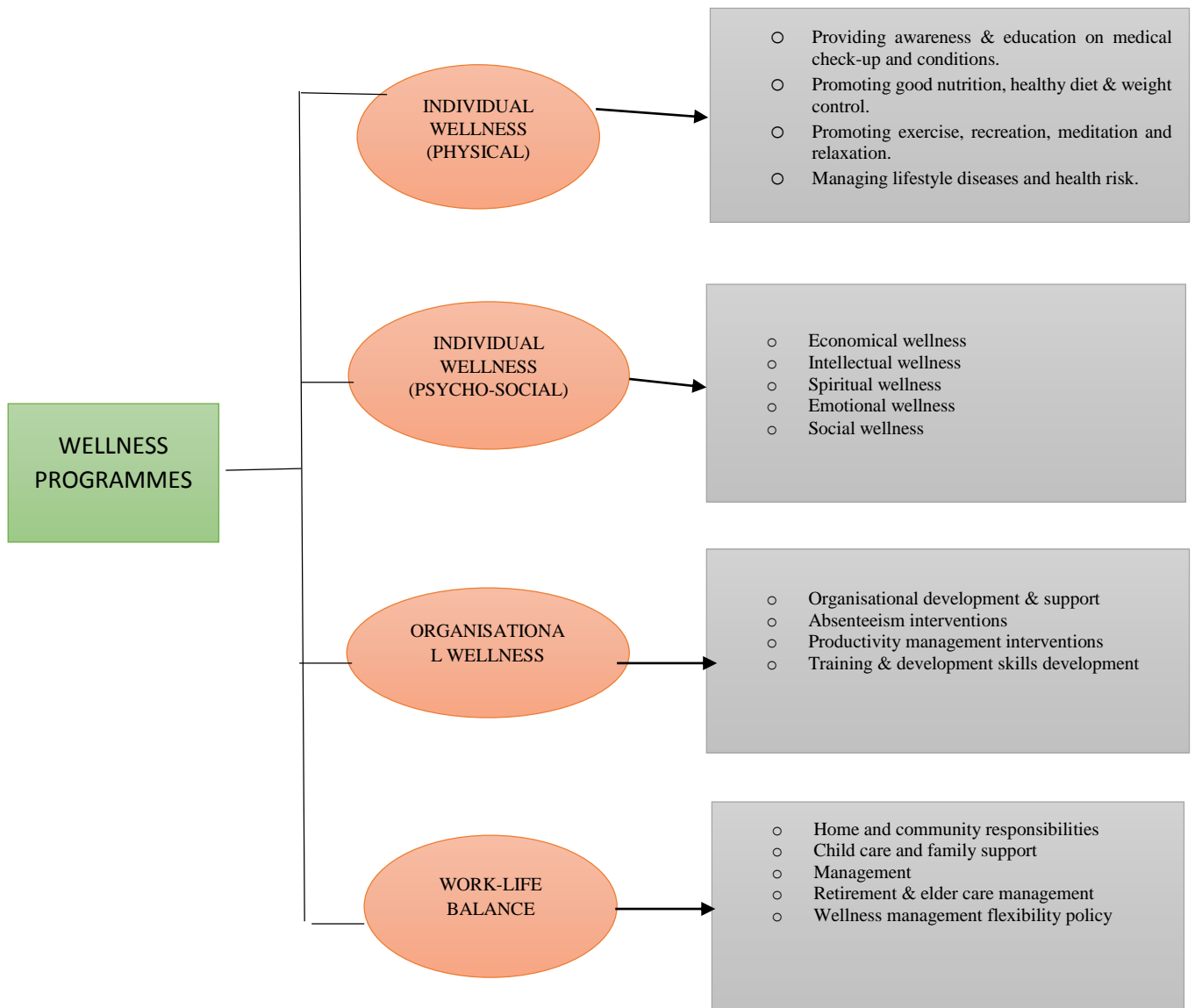
This concerns the physiological, social, emotional, occupational, spiritual and intellectual wellness of individual employees. It was envisaged that these are attainable through the creation of a conducive organisational environment and culture supportive of identifying and comprehensively addressing psycho-social health threats. Wellness programmes were suggested as being capable of promoting individual and organisational well-being as well as WLB towards enhancing public service efficiency and proficiency. The intention was to optimise and sustain talented and skilled labour capable of responding positively to public needs. The wellness programmes were prioritised as a result of the rising recognition that employee health and safety had direct influence on organisational outcome. Hence, it is the organisation's responsibility to ensure that employees are assisted at all times in order that they perform optimally.

Jointly, individual and workplace factors affect overall employee wellness and performance. *Wellness is regarded as the optimal state of the health of individuals and groups of individuals with two main focal points of concerns, namely: the realization of the fullest potential of an individual physically, psychologically, socially, spiritually and economically, and the fulfilment of one's role expectations in the family, community, place of worship, workplace and other settings* (DPSA, 2008, p. 30). The framework reports that the wellness programmes emerged from EAP and WLB programmes.

As stated in the EHWSFPS, EAPs mostly assisted individual wellness, via counselling and such educational strategies as stress management, change management and relationship counselling and programmes that promote employee wellness. *The work-life-balance program promotes flexibility in the workplace to accommodate work, personal and family needs; which can result in benefits to organisations due to higher levels of employee satisfaction and motivation. Wellness management strives to meet the health and wellness needs of the public servants through preventative and curative measures by customizing those aspects from traditional programmes such as EAP, work life balance and wellness management programmes that are most relevant and fit the uniqueness of the public service and its mandate* (DPSA, 2008, p. 30).

The framework for operationalising wellness programmes as reported in the EHWSFPS is presented in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. 1 Framework for operationalising wellness programmes



Source: Adapted from the EHWSFPS DPSA (2008, p. 31).

From the description given to WLB in the text and figure 1.1 above, there seems to be a misinterpretation of the meaning of the WLB concept in the EHWSFPS. Therefore, this researcher seeks to review the literature on wellness programmes to clarify the misconception.

2.2.3 Wellness programmes in the literature

The municipality under study adopted wellness programmes in line with the EHWSFPS which was based on the *World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Plan of Action on Workers Health 2008-2017*, the *International Labour Organisation's (Kroll & Neri) Decent Work Agenda in*

Africa and the recommendations of the report of the WHO's Commission on Social Determinants of Health (DPSA, 2008, p. 8). The adoption of this programme as a WLBS may be attributed to the institutional and situational theories discussed in chapter three of this study.

The particular idea for endorsing health and wellness programmes in the workplace began earnestly in the 1980s (Després, Alméras, & Gauvin, 2014). Sieberhagen, Pienaar, and Els (2011) report that organisations are increasingly recognising the challenges relating to workers' wellbeing (Hooper, 2004) and that there is the heightened interest of the public in the integration of wellness events and the responsibilities of the employers (Hillier, Fewell, Cann, & Shephard, 2005). The foregoing have resulted in the establishment of programmes like EAPs and EWPs to look into matters regarding wellness of employees at the workplace (Frey, Osteen, Berglund, Jinnett, & Ko, 2015; Sieberhagen et al., 2011). They confirm that both EAPs and EWPs similarly address wellness issues. Similarly, Meyer and Maltin (2010) report that wellness programmes are adopted by today's organisations purposely to enhance employee health and the possibilities of advancing organisational success.

Traditionally, the reason behind EAPs was to assist employees with their domestic problems capable of undermining their work performance. The initial EAPs concentrated on addressing alcohol and substance abuse, which negatively affected workers' performance. For example, some of the first EAPs focused on addressing issues emanating from abuse relating to alcohol and substances which negatively affected workers' performance. But in contemporary times, some EAPs integrated dependant elder relative care, domestic relationship counselling, stress management, legal advice, financial/debt counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling, and substance/alcohol abuse counselling (these are life strategies) to help workers address their personal life challenges (Benavides & David, 2010). Klingner and Nalbandian (2003) are of the view that these interventions are *“designed to diagnose, treat and rehabilitate employees whose personal problems are interfering with work performance.”* On the other hand, they further reported that employees perceived the programmes as having the objective of treating workers' personal problems so that they do not degenerate to the point of permanently affecting the employee's performance at work. EAPs are reactionary programmes intended to alleviate prevailing adverse situations by attending to core issues (subjective, psychological and medical) in the way they impact an employee's performance at work (Benavides & David, 2010).

Similarly, wellness programmes are designed to promote employee's awareness of their wellness needs as well as facilitate personal psychological and physiological change towards promoting individual health and a supportive workplace. But according to Sieberhagen et al. (2011), employee wellness is a poorly defined concept in South Africa. Leiter and Durup (1996) report that EWP activities are particularly targeted to provide relief to employees from stress emanating from substance/alcohol abuse, finance/debt issues, medical and chronic diseases, career crises and job demands (Tuwai, Kamau, & Kuria, 2015). Basically, most of the strategies adopted by EWPs are counselling based and use is voluntary. By their formulation and design, EWPs are not structured to address work-related issues (Reynolds & Bennett, 2015) like job stress, function vagueness/role clash, and or absence of autonomy and their outcomes on employees' stress levels. Moreover, the services rendered through the wellness programme to employees are targeted at personal and health related matters instead of addressing WLB issues. Some of the challenges facing participation in wellness programmes are stigmatisation (Gerber, 1995; Naidoo, & Jano, 2003a) as well as trust and confidentiality related issues (Sieberhagen et al., 2011). According to Gunavathy (2011), although corresponding interventions seem to be under the umbrella of WLBS, sound knowledge of the concept per se is still grey.

The municipality in the South African public sector investigated in this paper, adopted the wellness programmes as WLBS to assist employees in addressing their work and family related challenges.

However, the result of a survey conducted in 2007-2008 found that the idea of providing wellness programmes though gaining ground has not resulted in significant changes in the facilities and structures of organisations (Després et al., 2014). Similarly, Shamian and El-Jardali (2007) examination of the implementation of wellness programmes in the healthcare sector showed that significant improvement to the work environment due to legislation and governmental policy which combined empirical information and inculcated information from literature was noted. Edries, Jelsma, and Maart (2013) found wellness beneficial in enhancing health related behaviours and employee perception of quality of life. Brown, Gilson, Burton, and Brown (2011) and Ho (1997) report that employees who participated in the wellness events showed greater levels of satisfaction with their jobs than those that did not participate. In line with prior studies, Zheng, Molineux, Mirshekary, and Scarparo (2015) found that a relationship exists between health, wellness and WLB (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Kossek, Colquitt, & Noe, 2001; Meyer & Maltin, 2010). Després et al. (2014) suggest the need for a new breed of

studies on the assessment and development in practices regarding employee health and wellness.

Therefore, this study is significant in assessing the work-life practices (wellness programmes) at the municipality to appraise its efficacy in assisting employees address their work and family challenges. As observed from the framework operationalising wellness programmes in the public sector and confirmed by Sieberhagen et al. (2011), the definition of wellness as well as WLB is inconsistent with the literature. This researcher assumed that the definition problem may affect the effectiveness of the wellness programmes in assisting individual employees cope with work and family stressors and achieve WLB, since it may have been formulated along a different direction. To ascertain the actual situation, there was therefore a need to assess individual benefits in order to ascertain the efficacy of the strategies (wellness programme) adopted by the organisation (municipality). According to Casper and Buffardi (2004) and Arthur (2003) in Casper and Harris (2008), the examination of the various strategies may have distinctive results on workplace outcomes and possibly relate in predicting outcomes. The expected outcome in the paper is the reduction of work and family stress and the achievement of WLB by employees.

To Casper and Harris (2008), workplaces give WLBS for the purpose of facilitating optimistic outcomes (Osterman, 1995), therefore, gaining insight into the efficacy of these interventions in the achievement of the goals for which they are adopted has become imperative. Grover and Crooker (1995) suggest that there is a need to analyse specific WLBS since various merits may accrue to organisations based on the attributes of each strategy adopted, and could assist in the prediction of outcomes (Arthur, 2003; Casper & Buffardi, 2004). Cascio (2000) in Alma McCarthy et al. (2010), suggest that WLBS are assistances or working arrangements that are promoted and backed up by an organisation that aids employees in finding balance between work and domestic needs. They report that inclusive in these initiatives are transient measures that permit workers to cut down on the number of working hours (such as part-time work, flexi-time, job sharing, tele-working, and home-working) as well as employee assistance programmes (EAPs), stress and time management coaching, provision of crèche at the work environment or financial subsidies in lieu of the facilities for child care. Fundamentally, WLBS are provided by organisations in order to support and assist employees in handling their work and family needs (Grady, McCarthy, Darcy & Kirrane 2008; McCarthy, 2004).

Examining the wellness programme adopted by the municipality alongside WLBS noted in the literature, reveals that the municipality has in place strategies that should assist employees in managing their work-life challenges. Nevertheless, the need to evaluate the efficacy of these strategies in achieving the organisational objective as well as addressing individual employee work-life needs is necessary. According to Kossek, Baltes, and Matthews (2011), scholars of work-life are yet to considerably impact the lives of workers when compared to the quantum of studies on the subject. They suggest that reduction in work stress, improved balance between work and family life and effectiveness in the implementation of effective and holistic WLBS should be the desired outcome capable of proving impactful research on the lives of employees. This is in line with the report from the study conducted by Valcour and Batt (2003), which found that the challenges of work and life domains could not be solely tackled through initiatives that are crafted to give flexibility and restrict general work demands.

The question as to the effectiveness of the wellness programmes in improving the SOC and assisting professional level employees achieve WLB comes to mind. The present study opines that there is a gap between WLBS and the need of the employees. For instance, there is no strategy among the wellness programme that addresses the SOC of employees. For example, an employee with weak or low SOC who is faced with job ambiguity may not be helped by counselling, and or stress/time management training. If a professional level employee heading for instance, Mayoral Administration is asked to prepare to host four thousand guests of the mayor two days before the event, one would naturally expect this employee to face enormous stress. Assuming that he/she has weak SOC, he/she may be unable to cope with this stress. Therefore, to assist him/her in coping with these stressors and enhancing his/her SOC, WLBS should be developed to integrate ingredients that enhance SOC. Likewise, it could be assumed that stress emanating from the job structure may not be handled through attending a stress management course, especially if the stress is an outcome of the way in which the organisation is structured.

Although the framework (EHWSFPS) indicated that individual psycho-social wellness (economical, intellectual, spiritual, emotional and social wellness) was embedded in the wellness programmes, this study examined the impact of these on an individual's SOC. The employees examined in the present study are professional level employees who may not have the need to utilise the wellness programme for reasons that may range from the fact that junior employees mainly use them and may not want to be seen by their subordinates at the service

provider's offices or the fact that they are not designed to assist employees at the professional status. Literature reveals that the challenges faced by professional level employees are mainly work-structured problems although they may be facing similar familial problems as their subordinates. But the questions here are, "Is the wellness programme designed to assist professional level employees address stressors emanating from the work and family domains?" Does the wellness programme have the resources that develop, enhance or strengthen SOC embedded in it?

Even where the WLBS is designed to integrate necessary SOC ingredients and address work-family needs of employees, there is a need to bridge the gap between policy and its implementation. Scholars have reported the existence of an implementation gap (Kossek & Lambert, 2005; Kossek, 2005, 2006). For instance, the WLBS (wellness programmes) adopted by the municipality under study is outsourced to an external service provider. There are many reasons for outsourcing the service, ranging from confidentiality to need for expertise. But literature reveals that WLBS are better managed at unit levels (Parris et al., 2008; Ryan & Kossek, 2008; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; McConville & Holden, 1999). Yet, Kossek et al. (2011) are of the opinion that unit heads are not sure of the way to effectively execute and administer emerging WLBS. Moreover, they report that there are circumstantial evidences showing that employers have faced significant challenges in implementing encompassing strategies as well as enhancing performance, however, there are limited studies clearly addressing these difficulties (Ryan & Kossek, 2008; Kelly et al., 2008).

The municipality under study outsourced the implementation of its wellness programme. The researcher assumes that this could be as a result of the challenges in implementation as revealed in the literature. However, this researcher is of the opinion that outsourcing WLBS will keep the service 'invisible'. 'Invisible' here implies that it will not be in the view of employees and as such, most employees needing the service may not even be aware of its existence in the organisation. Even though scholars in work-family study have shown that workers who have successfully used WLBS benefited mentally, for instance by experiencing better satisfaction with their jobs (Kossek, Pichler, Bodner, & Hammer, 2011), but there seems to be absence of the studies linking the use of the WLBS to enhancement of SOC and the management of stress towards the achievement of WLB.

Contemporary literature reveals that benefits of providing support to employees through WLBS by employers accrue to employers. Such benefits include recruitment and selection of

talented employees, improved attitudes among employees, and cost reduction (Kossek & Michel, 2010). Kossek et al. (2011) report that satisfaction with work and loyalty among employees, and improvement of the quality of employees, are associated with the provision and implementation of WLBS. They went on to confirm that organisations that provide WLBS are often seen as desirable employers and harvest the reward of having a large pool of applicants (Kelly et al., 2008). Decrease in costs accrue from the reduction in employee behavioural issues like unauthorised absence from work high rate of employee turnover, and reduced costs of labour arising from employee trade-off of salaries and flexibility (Kossek & Hammer, 2008; Kossek & Michel, 2010; Kossek, 2006). Despite the foregoing benefits attributed to the provision of WLBS, as noted in this chapter, a notable drop in the *support* of WLBS by organisations has been reported (Shellenbarger, 2008).

Kossek et al. (2011) report that a study conducted by the American Psychological Association indicates that a significant reduction from 42% in 2009 to 36% in 2011 has been recorded in the rate of satisfaction by employees about employers' assistance with respect to work-family demands (Clay, 2011). Kossek et al. (2011) further confirm that an increasing number of employers are also not satisfied with WLBS and that a contemporary survey in 2010 by Society for Human Resource Management shows that several organisations are doing away with various WLBS. Shellenbarger (2008) supports this claim in the report that there was a notable reduction over the past ten years from 27% to 16% of full-time salary and time allowed for maternity leave. It is important to note this contradictory reduction in satisfaction with WLBS since the study in work-family has burgeoned in recent times. Consequently, it is imperative to look into the reasons for this paradoxical trend and see if it could be linked to the fact that they (WLBS) have not been able to help employees address their work-family needs or if they need to be tailored to integrate resources that improve employees' SOC.

The wellness programme seems to have been designed to address employee personal health and family related demands. WLB was mentioned in the framework but nothing therein seemed to be targeted at addressing the WLB needs of the employees. The programmes' strategic vision seemed to have in focus the outcome of making employees more healthy and productive rather than addressing their WLB challenges. The wellness programme appeared to be a one-size-fits-all strategy since it is tailored in a manner that does not look at challenges holistically; it seems to be tailored along equality and simplicity in management rather than rendering personalised support to persons like elderly employees and single parents. To expatiate on this, taking a look at an employee's need to support his/her child by attending the soccer match where the

son/daughter is captaining for the first time is not provided for by the wellness programme. Also stress management training may not be able to address the stresses faced by a manager as a result of the employment of a new head of unit in a department that has employees who are equally experienced and have put considerable years of service into the organisation. Furthermore, sending an employee to counselling will not assist an employee facing stigmatisation for alcohol abuse when s/he returns to work without commensurate support from management and colleagues. Implementing the wellness programme may not be able to address pertinent needs of employees needing time off to address matters other than personal needs. The South African public sector employs a diverse population with diverse work and family challenges. Therefore, as a result of the diversity of the working population, the municipality may face difficulties in ascertaining the WLBS that suit the workforce and the way to guarantee equality and organise various programmes and assistance (Kossek et al., 2011).

The proponents of the EHWSFPS seemed to have evaluated the wellness programme as being more able to address employee health and wellness issues better than WLBS, but they may not have realised that a wellness programme is only an aspect of WLBS. Due to the confusion in the description of WLB, employee assistance programmes and the wellness programmes in the framework, this study assumes that employees may not be able to address their work and family stressors holistically by using the wellness programmes. Secondly, it may not impact positively on employee sense of coherence. Thirdly, this study assumes that employees may not be able to use the wellness programmes to achieve WLB.

2.2.4 Conclusion

This chapter offered a fundamental understanding of the EHWSFPS. It highlighted the background of the study and an appraisal of literature in the area of wellness programmes. The framework guiding the operationalisation of the wellness programmes was presented as a guide to clarify the way the programme was envisaged. This was instrumental in ascertaining the influence of the wellness programme on the ability of employees to manage work and family stressors and the achievement of WLB.

This study did not evaluate the effect of the EHWSFPS on the health and wellness of individual employees at the municipality investigated, but assessed the efficacy of the programme in assisting employees to address work and family related stressors. It also appraised the effect of the programmes on employee sense of coherence and achievement of WLB. The next chapter will focus on the various types of WLBSs.

CHAPTER THREE: WORK-LIFE BALANCE STRATEGIES (WLBS)

3.1 Introduction

This study refers to WLBS, which are those formal workplace practices that are adopted and implemented by organisations to assist employees in coping with their work and family stressors and achieve WLB. This chapter explores the background of the WLBS construct as well as the theories supporting the adoption of WLBS in this study. Since workplaces and individual needs are varied and diverse, this chapter examines several types of WLBS that could be implemented by organisations to assist employees in managing work and family domain-related challenges. A tactical combination of strategies can be implemented by organisations to assist employees in addressing work and family stressors and achieving WLB.

In addition, this chapter presents the appraisal of associated literature previously written on WLBS and explains the construct comprehensively. The link between WLBS and SOC is discussed. The gap identified in the review of previous studies on this link contributes to the theoretical framework conceptualised as a model for the connection between WLB and SOC. In the model, WLBS is the independent variable and sense of coherence and WLB are dependent variables. The discussion on this is presented in a more detailed form in chapter five.

3.2 Work-life balance strategies (WLBS) background

Historically, ‘work-family policies’ (in this study WLBS) could be traced to the changing face of the workforce and employment equalisation (Kossek, Pichler, et al., 2011) as well as the enactment in the United States of the *Equal Employment Opportunity Legislation* (like the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1971 and Civil Rights Act of 1964). WLBS such as the provision of a crèche, job-sharing and flexible working provisions, were designed in order to accommodate women entering the workforce in large numbers (Wajcman, 2013). The word *work-family policies* was initially made popular by the media in describing efforts by employers to support workers with the most prominent non-work need for child care and alternative working hours especially female employees with infant children (Jones et al., 2013). Employees without dependant relatives or families felt alienated from the policies, so they demeaned those using the initiatives for lesser commitment. As a result of stigmatisation attributed to *work-family policies*, corporate employers and large organisations sought to rename these policies to encompass most of the issues creating problems for users and non-

users of the initiatives. Terminologies like *work-life policies* replaced *work-family policies* (Kossek, Pichler, et al., 2011). Family is defined here to include both nuclear family and non-work functions performed by employees. The present study adopted WLBS in order to embrace the initiatives that address work-life needs at the organisational and individual level (personal and familial). It is called WLBS in this study to see if the benefits of these policies can be honed in addressing work and family demands among employees and assist them in achieving WLB. The theories guiding WLBS selected for this study and review of the literature on WLBS are presented in the following sub-sections.

3.3 Theories supporting WLBS in this study

Apparently, family and work are connected to one another, therefore, interest in the development of approaches to advance understanding into the interface among them has grown among scholars and practitioners (Voydanoff, 2005b). The boundary theory and ecological systems help in providing useful conceptualisations. Voydanoff (2005a) explains that the ecological systems theory views family and work as microsystems comprising activities, duties, and interactive networks of relationships that happen on a one-on-one basis. This implies that whatever happens in the work domain whether they are demands or resources, impacts somehow on the family domain (cross-domain processes). According to Voydanoff (2004) and Edwards and Rothbard (2000), “cross-domain processes include resource drain, resource generation, and positive and negative spillover” Hence, the use of resources made for one domain, for instance quality time with family (drain), generates resources for work, while earnings from the work domain can be used to sustain the family domain. But spillover (negative and positive) will not be discussed in this study because it may not be significant to the study.

The boundary theory proposes that where the borders between family and work microsystems become amply porous and elastic, practices happen that cause some aspects of family and work spheres to impact one another (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000). When the boundary between work and family is permeable, the demands, resources and strategies available in one domain influence individual outcomes in both domains. Voydanoff (2005) suggests that seeming WLB is a cognitive assessment of the influence of the family and work spheres on one another. This implies that the perception that individuals have is that the interaction among resources and demands in the work and family domains influence each other positively and negatively. Lazarus and Folkman (1984b) suggest that perceptive appraisal is the practise of

determining if an experience is positive, demanding (challenging) or unnecessary with respect to wellness (Voydanoff, 2005b). When people perceive that the challenges (needs) in the environment are more than the resources (strategies) available to meet them, they appraise the situation as being demanding or stressful (Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010). Demands include those designed or mental claims that involvement with a particular role makes on an individual and these include norms and expectations that a person is required to conform to in the course of performing a mental or physical task. Resources comprise those organised or mental assets which could be used in improving performance, reducing challenges or developing more resources (Voydanoff, 2004). This study aims to ascertain if employees perceived that they achieved WLB and addressed their work-family stressors by using the WLBS in place at the municipality. There are theories that underpin what WLBS are adopted by organisations.

3.3.1 Theories underlying the adoption of WLBS

Felstead et al. (2002) report on four theories underlie an organisation's adoption of WLBS. They are *institutional theory*, *organisational adaptation theory*, *high commitment theory* plus *situational theory* (Wood, 1999). Felstead et al. (2002) further suggest that in contemporary times, the commencement of the assumptions of each of these theories is the perception of an intensification of focus on organisations' supportive family policies and WLB. Moreover, they report that independently, the theories predict the sectors in the economy where they are most predominantly found.

The *institutional theory* postulates that organisations mirror and adapt to the influence of societal norms, though to differing levels (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Oliver, 1991; Powell & DiMaggio, 2012). The need to sustain compliance to societal norms drives the differences in the level of adaptations by organisations and may not permit the adoption of realistic strategies to address real employee needs. Large corporate sector organisations and the public sector institutions are majorly found among those that usually want to conform to norms due to their visibility resulting from size and accountability to their constituencies respectively. Organisations realise that inability to conform could destroy their standing with stake-holders (clients, suppliers, and current employees), and may challenge the recruitment of talented employees (McKee, Mauthner & Maclean, 2000). In line with this same reasoning, organisations that have trade unions and exposure to public scrutiny are more likely under pressure to conform than those that do not have these settings (unions). But, a reversed outcome might result when conformity underpins adoption of a policy. It could foster organisational

inflexibility and hinder external bodies from pressuring the organisation to conform. Based on this, the implementation of WLBS can be predicted to differ as a result of scope, industry/sector, and presence or absence of trade unions (Felstead et al., 2002).

Contemporary literature shows that there are studies proving that the institutional theory is a simplified description (Fuenfschilling & Truffer, 2014; Goodstein, 1994; Ingram & Simons, 1995; H. Morgan & Milliken, 1992). Therefore another conception that organisations should react to normative arrangements in society and explore ways of making this known to and adapted by top management was formulated. This is known as *organisational adaptation theory*. It keeps the proposition of predictors by the *institutional theorists* and integrates other factors that are associated to the developmental process of recognition and interpretation of emerging trends around an organisation. Some of the newly integrated variables to this perspective include the nature of the labour force, the organisational environment and structure, and the behaviour of management to matters surrounding WLBS (Felstead et al., 2002). According to this theory, for example, the gender constitution of the working population in an organisation affects the degree of recognition that management accords the importance of the issue.

This theory (organisational adaptation theory) postulates that the level of responsiveness of an organisation to pressures from the society is based on the number of female employees. This suggestion is based on the assumption that female employees present stronger demands for WLBS. The employment of women employees on a part-time basis may to a great extent moderate the weight assigned by management to the provision of WLBS in an organisation (Felstead et al., 2002). Likewise, some other aspects of the workplace could develop or lessen the way in which an organisation responds to the pressures emanating from the society. The scholars further suggest that the kind of job performed may contribute to management responsiveness. For instance, professional level employees and top management are often presumed to be highly mobile in the labour market, switching employment if organisations do not meet the conditions of service that they consider acceptable, whether expressed or implied (Bauder, 2012; Beaverstock & Hall, 2012; Vaiman, Scullion, & Collings, 2012). For this same cause, talented professional employees are considered challenging to replace, giving them the power to negotiate with management and employers.

The way in which work is designed in an organisation can also affect its implementation of WLBS. For example, it will be easier for an organisation that has given significant autonomy

to employees to carry out their duties and decide the pace of work to grant additional concessions with respect to time and space of job performance. In addition, the theory (organisational adaptation theory) suggests that the way societal norms are perceived and interpreted in an organisation could be impacted by the values that the top management holds. For instance, where the attitude of management highlights their feeling that the workplace ought to assist employees in managing their work-life demands, the likelihood of promoting and supporting the implementation of WLBS are high.

High commitment theory is proposed to describe the variations in the use of WLBS and their implementation at different organisations. It is an offshoot of the attention on work organisations and the relationships between employees and the employers seeking to improve the dedication of employees to the workplace (Gallie, Felstead, & Green, 2001). According to Felstead and Ashton (2000), these human resource interventions are central to finding ways of promoting more engagement between management and employees as well as creating transparency of decisions and making information readily available to employees for examination or analysis. Osterman (1995) is of the opinion that employees' commitment to an organisation can be enhanced by the demonstration of the employers' understanding and acceptance of the work-life challenges faced by employees (Brescoll, Glass, & Sedlovskaya, 2013; den Dulk, Peters, & Poutsma, 2012; Wang & Verma, 2012). Providing WLBS to assist workers address their work-life challenges is the most glaring sign that employers appreciate employee challenges (Felstead et al., 2002). The theory submits that there is a connection between the HR policy of an organisation and the implementation of WLBS.

In conclusion Wood's (1999b) theory known as *situational theory* is more practical in its method because it submits that workplaces merely respond and try to counter issues of stress as they emerge in their WLBS use. To Osterman (1995), this is known as the *pragmatic reaction theory*. This perspective views the adoption of WLBS by an organisation as emanating from neither variation in the national value structures as recommended in the *institutional* and *organisational adaptation theories*, nor the beginning of HR's ground-breaking strategies as suggested by *high commitment theory*. Instead, it is founded on the establishment of defined challenges that threaten organisational performance and profit (Felstead et al., 2002). Some of these challenges may include absenteeism, high rate of employee turnover, unoccupied vacant positions, and ailing workforce as a result of a pandemic (e.g. HIV/AIDS). In light of this, the theory observes that WLBS are direct initiatives that try to tackle the foregoing issues and

others that appear to be like them. Addressing situations as they arise instead of proactively appraising situations before challenges emerge may be ineffective.

The municipality under study adopted wellness programmes (explained in details in chapter 2) to address issues like financial problems arising from debts and debt recovery, alcoholism and substance abuse, and effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. From the evaluation of the theories in the literature, this researcher considers that the adoption of this programme (wellness) as a WLBS by the municipality investigated is based on both the situational and institutional theory. The rationale for this opinion is that the municipality is a public entity that must comply with the framework provided by the Department of Public Service. Secondly, the need to address emerging pandemics (HIV/AIDS) as well chronic diseases among employees and their family required a pragmatic intervention, such as the wellness programme, to be implemented.

The wellness programme is an aspect of WLBS needed to assist employees in managing their work and family related challenges. Other aspects of WLBS are reviewed in this study to place the concept into perspective.

3.4 Review of literature on work-life balance strategies (WLBS)

According to De Cieri et al. (2005), WLBS have been defined as *those that enhance the autonomy of workers in the process of coordinating and integrating work and non-work aspects of their lives*. This definition allows for a wide range of practices or strategies to be included under WLB initiatives. Some organisations have arrangements that create conditions that ameliorate employee work-life conflicts while others do not. Some of the arrangements made by organisations towards employee wellbeing may have WLB elements in it but may be unable to help employees achieve WLB on regular and consistent bases (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006).

The concept has been identified in various studies as work-life initiatives which focus on modifying workplace arrangements to adapt to the dynamic work-life demands of employees as well as to conform to legislative requirements on organisations to make provisions for dual earner families and gender issues (Kossek, Lewis, & Hammer, 2010), *work-family policies and employer work-life supports* (Kossek et al., 2006), *firms with good WLB and a poor or strong WLB strategy* (Bloom, Kretschmer, & Van Reenen, 2011). Darcy et al. (2012) are of the opinion that WLBS are those measures and practices initiated willingly by organisations for the facilitation of reconciliation between employees' individual lives and their work.

Fleetwood (2007), citing Gambles, Lewis, and Rapoport (2006), reaffirms that even though it looks like various adaptable work programmes have the potential to assist individuals in achieving WLB, some of these practices restrain the successful achievement of WLB. This could be as a result of their insufficiency (where strategies addressing only work or family challenges are provided) or that they were not properly formulated to address both work and family challenges as well as aid in the achievement of WLB.

Some formal initiatives that are adopted by organisations to assist employees in coping with work and family challenges include: paternal and maternity leave, dependant-relative care and assistance programmes, flexible work practices (FWP), straight-forward financial assistance, provision of a crèche at the workplace and counselling and referral services (Bardoel, Tharenou & Moss, 1999; Kramar, 1998; Kossek et al., 2011). Bardoel, Tharenou, and Moss (1999) identified 100 types of work-family practices, indicating that many different strategies have been implemented within organisations as a means of addressing WLB. To Voydanoff (2004), these initiatives are ‘boundary-spanning resources’ due to the fact that they are targeted at the interaction between family and work (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). Most studies on the efficacy of these strategies have examined them either as independent factors or a group of work-family initiatives, concentrating on personal level resultant variables and considering mainly the availability and use of such strategies. For instance many researchers discovered that FWP resulted in reduced work-family clashes (Glaveli, Karassavidou, & Zafiroopoulos, 2013; Hammer, Allen, & Grigsby, 1997; Hammer, Kossek, Bodner, & Crain, 2013; Shinn et al., 1989; Thomas & Ganster, 1995), lesser somatic reports (Kuschel, 2015; Thomas & Ganster, 1995), and more sentimental obligation to the workplace (Grover & Crooker, 1995; Harhara, Singh, & Hussain, 2015; Mills, Matthews, Henning, & Woo, 2014).

The provision of support for child care for employees by an organisation was reported to have an indirect and significant association with reduced level of absenteeism and directly linked to lesser levels of work-family conflict (Demerouti et al., 2015; Goff et al., 1990; Kahya & Kesen, 2014) This implies that use of organisational benefits improves employee ability to cope with stressors. This study assumes that WLBS can aid employees in addressing work and family stressors as well as improve individual employee SOC. This could lead to the achievement of meaningful WLB.

Although numerous studies discover that notable negative association exists between WLB and WLBS (Hill, 2005; Hill, Martinson, Ferris & Baker, 2004; Ezra & Deckman, 1996; Hill, Ferris

& Martinson, 2003), yet, some studies report that there were either non-existent or feeble linkage among WLBS adopted by an organisation for use and used by employees and work-family clash (Anderson et al., 2002; Batt & Valcour, 2003; Haar & Spell, 2004) or satisfaction with work (Shinn, Wong, Simko & Oritz-Torres, 1989). Even though the study by Thompson, John, Kopelman, and Prottas (2004) discovered that some WLBS associate positively to workers' sentimental obligation to the organisation, it also reveals that they had no effect on family-work clash. They further report that employees' perception of support for their families by the organisation had a positive impact on their sentimental commitment to an organisation and reduction in work-family clash. Baral and Bhargava (2010) found that a negative association exists among WLBS and satisfaction with work, while the findings by Thompson and Prottas (2005) suggest that unstructured aspects of the workplace like management support and support from colleagues contribute more to the variation in work outcomes than formalised strategies. A male dominant sample was also seen in the study of Baral and Bhargava (2010) demonstrating that male employees may not show enthusiasm about WLBS (Lyness, Thompson, Francesco, & Judiesch, 1999) that their female colleagues would demonstrate over crèche and flexible work practices.

Moreover, certain studies did not find noteworthy associations (Batt & Valcour, 2003; Behson, 2002; Dikkers, Geurts, Dulk, Peper, & Kompier, 2004; Kossek et al., 2006; Lapierre & Allen, 2006; Moen & Yu, 1999; Tausig & Fenwick, 2001; Thompson & Prottas, 2006), and some other studies suggest that a positive association exists between these WLBS and work-non-work conflict (Brough, O'Driscoll, & Kalliath, 2005; Hammer, Cullen, Neal, Sinclair, & Shafiro, 2005). Chiang, Birtch, and Kwan (2010) found that the provision of WLBS in the face of high job demands and low job control increased stress levels.

One of the key reasons why organisations adopt WLBS is to assist employees in integrating and coping better with work and family challenges and duties. The adoption of these practices indicate to employees that their workplaces support them totally (Anvari, Mansor, Rahman, Rahman, & Chermahini, 2014; Grover & Crooker, 1995), and through the use of the programmes, employees could achieve more satisfaction with work and family and may not indicate turnover intentions. Thompson et al. (1999) suggest that the provision of WLBS could result in lesser stress, intention to leave organisations and work-family clash, and increased job satisfaction as well as mutually beneficial spillover between work and family.

According to Kelly et al. (2008), greater focus of literature has been on the availability of WLBS rather than on the use of these initiatives (Hammer et al., 2005). This study examines the concept from another perspective which suggests that through the adoption by the organisation of well-crafted WLBS suited for the need of the employees and the adequate use of these programmes, employees will achieve WLB.

However, scholars are of the opinion that the integration and support of an organisation's total culture (ways of doing things) and management support could be of superior importance than the real WLBS adopted by the workplace (Allen, 2001; Anderson et al., 2002; Thompson et al., 1999; Thompson & Prottas, 2006). According to Thompson et al. (1999), work-family culture referred to as the "shared assumptions, beliefs and values regarding the degree to which an organisation supports and values work-family integration," associated favourably to sentimental obligation and connected in a negative manner to the intention to leave as well as work-family clash. Moreover, according to the scholars (Thompson et al., 1999), the presence of WLBS did not affect these results when delimited in examining the effect of work-family culture. Allen (2001) likewise reported that after controlling WLBS, the result showed that employees that felt that their workplaces were supportive of their families indicated a lower intention to quit, lesser work-family clash and more satisfaction with work and citizenship behaviours. There are many other studies in support of supportive organisational culture (Anderson et al., 2002; Bond, Thompson, Galinsky, & Prottas, 2003; Casper, Martin, Buffardi, & Erdwins, 2002; O'Driscoll et al., 2003).

Management support though an informal context in the area of work, seems to affect workers' capacity to manage work and family (Thompson & Prottas, 2006). According to Thomas and Ganster (1995), a supportive manager is that superior employee that sees reason with an employee who has the desire to achieve a balance amidst work and family duties and obligations. For instance, a supportive manager will allow an employee to make calls to check his/her child after school, make use of flexible work arrangements without reprisal, understands if an employee would have to leave the workplace earlier than the closing time once every while to take dependent relatives or children to see doctors. Empirical evidence shows that employees that have supportive management may not report work-family clash (Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Anderson et al., 2002; Goff, Mount & Jamison, 1990), may have lesser degrees of work related stress (Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997) and more job satisfaction (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). According to Thompson, Jahn, Kopelman, and Prottas (2004), when work-life initiatives were controlled, supervisory family backing was discovered to associate positive

sentimental loyalty and had a negative association to job hunt behaviour. Thomas and Ganster (1995) report that employees that feel that their supervisors at the workplace are supportive of them and their families often perceive that they have a better grip of work and domestic unit.

McCarthy et al. (2010) report that studies on WLB discovered that management support of WLB has significant influence on the outcomes of WLB (Lapierre et al., 2008; Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Thompson et al., 2004). They further note that although there is a growing recognition of the usefulness of professional level employees and supervisors in WLB, not much empirical examination has been conducted to determine the factors that influence their support for WLBS. Eby et al. (2005) are of the opinion that staff of organisations whose management employees are supportive of their needs with respect to WLB portray more likelihood of being satisfied with their work.

This study does not examine support (social and management) in discussing the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. This is due to the exploratory nature of the study in ascertaining the connection between the two variables (WLB and SOC). This researcher recognises the importance of support in the work-family literature and acknowledges its influence of the individual employee outcomes.

Zheng, Kashi, Fan, Molineux, and Ee (2015), submit that financial and non-financial WLBS at an organisation did not assist employees to achieve improved wellness, but indirectly affected the achievement of well-being through personal coping strategies. They also discovered that FWP proved more influential in assisting employees improve their coping strategies than health and wellness programmes. Hence, they attributed this outcome (improvement of coping strategies) to the time made available through FWP for individuals to arrange their personal and communal itinerary as well as domestic needs (Skinner & Chapman, 2013).

As suggested by Thompson and Prottas (2006) and Perlow (2001), it is vital to understand not just if, but the reason why, WLBS could be associated with staff capacity to combine work and family responsibilities and their psychological and physiological well-ness. Additionally, McCarthy et al. (2010) report that not much is established about the underlying elements influencing management support and the way in which workplaces may nurture attitudes supportive of WLB by professional employees and top management (Casper, Fox, Sitzmann, & Londy, 2004; Eby et al., 2005). Although the present study is not examining the factors that influence management support and the way that it can steer attitudes of employees towards

adopting WLBS, the researcher deems it important to examine the previous literature on support (management and family).

Eikhof, Warhurst, and Haunschild (2007) argue that the discussion about the necessity for *good WLB* and strategies is often based on presumptions from dull interpretation of tentative information or misconceived ideas concerning workers' attitudes to their job and family. They suggest that the foremost reality to the argument about WLB and the procedures associated with WLBS should be investigated. Although myriads of literature on WLBS abound, studies investigating the capacity of these strategies to assist employees in achieving meaningful WLB are scarce. According to Skinner and Chapman (2013), the major limitation of research in Australia and New Zealand is the absence of methodological thoroughness in ascertaining causal associations among work factors and the results of work-life interface. They further report that thorough empirical evidence regarding work-life practices and evaluation are scarce. It becomes imperative therefore to examine the types of WLBS available to organisations in order to verify their efficacy in aiding employees address work and family stressors and possibly achieve WLB.

3.4.1 Types of work-life balance strategies (WLBS)

Generally speaking, WLBS are provided by workplaces to help employees cope with the needs of work and family demands (McCarthy, 2004; Grady, McCarthy, Darcy & Kirrane, 2008). WLBS can be classified into three major groups namely: *flexible working programmes (FWP)*, *family-friendly programmes*, and *health and wellness programmes* (Caillier, 2013, p. 342). According to Caillier (2013), FWPs are those that offer workers the required flexibility to achieve WLB, for e.g. telecommuting, compressed work week and flexible working hours (start and finish). Although WLBS were initially concerned with shorter working hours, contemporary literature has found that WLBS do not focus only on lesser number of hours of work. It has evolved to become a many-sided concept (Maxwell, 2005). Smith and Gardner (2007) citing Frone (2003) and McCarthy et al. (2010), identifies the following types of WLBS.

3.4.1.1 Flexible work arrangements (FWA)

Maxwell (2005) reports that flexibility is the foundation of WLBS (Felstead et al., 2002). FWA includes all those arrangements around employee performance of work from home such as *flexible working hours*, *compressed work week*, *job sharing*, *telecommuting*, and *part-time*

work. Part-time work is not discussed in this study because it might cross-load on other aspects of flexible work arrangements such as compressed work week.

3.4.1.1. a. Flexible working hours

Flexible working hours characteristically need an 8-hour working day but permit workers to commence and end work at times different from the traditional 08:00 hours to 17:00 hours' time frame. Numerous constraints are attached to flexible working hours on acceptable commencement and finishing times. In particular, employees using the flexible working hour option are required by the organisation to be at the workplace for the core workday time (for instance, the employee may be required to commence the workday at 10:00 hours and not leave earlier than 14:00 hours). This way, times are generally created for meetings and organisational face-time in the workplace (Wadsworth, Facer, & Arbon, 2010). Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, and Neuman (1999) report that performance increase and job satisfaction are some of the benefits arising from the adoption of flexible working hours for an organisation and its employees respectively, while Pruchno, Litchfield, and Fried (2000) concur that organisations that adopt this practice (flexible working hours) derive benefits from lengthy customer hours. Organisations offer flexible working hours usually as a WLB route which could additionally be a cost-saving alternative for employee time and petrol consumption since they are able to modify their commuting times to fall away from the traffic peak periods (Wadsworth et al., 2010). Most of the challenges of flexible working hours are associated with scheduling specifically to ensure that targets are achieved and customers are satisfied.

3.4.1.1.b. Compressed work week

This involves an employee's engagement with work for longer periods in a fewer number of days of the week instead of the normal (traditional) 08:00 hours to 16:00 hours daily for five-day-work week (Wadsworth et al., 2010). Benefits accruing from the adoption and use of the compressed work week option to organisations and employees are reported to include increased performance (Baltes et al., 1999), a greater degrees of job satisfaction (Baltes et al., 1999; Wadsworth et al., 2010), reduced turnover (Cohen, Kessler, & Gordon, 1997), and non-attendance of work (Tombari & Spinks, 1999), and reduced stress and anxiety levels (Ivancevich, 1974). The key shortfall of a compressed work week to organisations lies in the issues surrounding internal and external interfacing (Baltes et al., 1999). While the major disadvantage to the employees is the prolonged work day that has the potential to facilitate

work-family clash (Bond, 2004) as well as wellness issues (Sparks, Cooper, Fried, & Shirom, 1997).

3.4.1.1. c. Job sharing

According to Wadsworth et al. (2010), job share involved dividing a particular job among two employees. The division is inclusive of salaries, time, and benefits. There are cases where the split in time demands that one of the employees comes to work in the morning while the other works later in the afternoon. There could be variations in the arrangement where certain days of the week is worked or every other day, as the case may be. Wadsworth et al. (2010) submit that job sharing is characteristically engaged as a WLB option, especially among esteemed personnel that choose to work part-time with an organisation. The problem of communication, managing duties and responsibilities as well as the added administrative duty in order to coordinate job share are some of the difficulties associated with this option (job sharing) (Branine, 2004). The benefits of job sharing are similar to those derived from telecommuting (as described in sub-section 3.4.1.1.d).

3.4.1.1.d. Telecommuting

According to Nilles (1998), telecommuting permits employees to work from a distant site, for instance, a home office, via computer and electronic technology.

This arrangement offers a level of autonomy to employees, which affords them opportunity to more effectively balance work and life needs. Scholars report that telecommuting decreases the degree of work-family conflict but has slight or no significant impact on family-work conflict (Golden, Veiga, & Simsek, 2006; Lautsch, Kossek, & Eaton, 2009). This implies that an employee using this strategy has the capacity to manage a sphere of WLB efficiently but finds the management of the aspect of family interference with work challenging. The benefit of telecommuting to an employee includes the reduction or total removal of commuting cost as well as time spent on travelling to and from work. Some of the benefits accruing to the organisation from the adoption of telecommuting include increased performance, reduction in cost of operations, attraction and retention of skilled labour, and environmental benefits (preservation of property, decorations and workplace aesthetic beauty) (II, 2009). Despite these merits, some areas of concern with respect to telecommuting are: individual employee performance, and reduced sense of friendship as a result of the lessened face time with colleagues and superiors at work (Wadsworth et al., 2010). Lautsch et al. (2009) express the concern that managing telecommuters to ensure performance may be challenging, hence, the

need to create controls, fairness and equity among those at the workplace and telecommuters. Additionally, II (2009), suggests the need to reinforce security for the remotely accessed systems.

According to Maxwell (2005), big corporations, service industry and institutions in the public sector (Persaud, 2001) show more commitment to flexible work arrangements. The study by Wadsworth et al. (2010) among HR directors in 151 city government organisations found that the professional level employees perceived flexible work arrangements as being more beneficial to employees and the organisation (for example, improved morale and achievement of WLB) than shortcomings.

Other work-life balance strategies include the following:

3.4.1.2 Needy (dependent) relative care assistance

This involves the provision of day care at the workplace, funded elder care, day care for employees' children as well as transfer to childcare.

There are other initiatives that enable change or modification on employees' association with their work and non-work environments like sabbatical leave, paid holidays and returner strategies; these all provide alternative ways for employees to restructure their work-life boundaries (Felstead et al., 2002). Vacation arrangements, including paternity and maternity leave as well as leave to take care of dependent relatives who are sick, are included in this category of WLBS.

3.4.1.3 Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs)

Traditionally, the reason behind EAPs was to assist employees with their domestic problems capable of undermining their work performance. The initial EAPs concentrated on addressing alcohol and substance abuse which negatively affected workers' performance. For example, a number of the first EAPs focused on addressing issues emanating from abuses relating to alcohol and substances which negatively affected workers' performance. But in contemporary times, a number of EAPs integrated dependent elder relative care, domestic relationship counselling, stress management, legal advice, financial/debt counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling, and substance/alcohol abuse counselling (these are life strategies) to help workers address their personal life challenges (Benavides & David, 2010). Klingner and Nalbandian (2003) are of the view that these interventions are "*designed to diagnose, treat and rehabilitate employees whose personal problems are interfering with work performance.*" On the other

hand, they further reported that employees perceived the programmes as having the objective of treating workers' personal problems so that they do not degenerate to the point of permanently affecting the employees' performance at work. EAPs are reactionary programmes intended to alleviate prevailing adverse situations by attending to core issues (subjective, psychological and medical) in the way they impact an employee's performance at work (Benavides & David, 2010).

Zheng, Kashi, et al. (2015, p. 6) report that in a revision of 225 studies publicised in *industrial-organisational psychology and organisational behaviour journals* for the period 1980 to 2003 (24 years), Casper, Eby, Bordeaux, Lockwood, and Lambert (2007) gathered 1667 *coded variables* to assess various variables associated with work and family domain. From the list of these plentiful items, five characteristic groups emerged to represent WLBS and programmes adopted by organisations to help enhance employee wellness: 1) flexible working practices, 2) requisite leave to address family needs, 3) childcare assistance or services, 4) establishment of health and wellness programmes, and 5) management support and endorsement. Additionally, Mescher, Benschop, and Doorewaard (2010) submit that flexible work practices, child care assistance requisite leave and establishment of wellness programmes seemed beneficial to employees in coping with challenges emanating from the work-life linkage.

3.4.1.4 Employee health and wellness programmes

Wellness programmes are designed to promote employee awareness of their wellness needs as well as facilitate personal psychological and physiological change towards promoting individual health and a supportive workplace. Leiter and Durup (1996) report that EWP activities particularly aim to provide relief to employees from stress emanating from substance/alcohol abuse, finance/debt issues, medical and chronic diseases, career crises and job demands (Tuwai et al., 2015). Basically, most of the strategies adopted by EWPs are counselling-based and their use is voluntary. By their formulation and design, EWPs are not structured to address work-related issues (Reynolds & Bennett, 2015) such as job stress, function vagueness/role clash, and or absence of autonomy and their outcomes on employees' stress levels. In addition, the services rendered through wellness programmes to employees are targeted at personal and health-related matters instead of addressing WLB issues. A number of challenges facing participation in wellness programmes are stigmatisation (Gerber, 1995; Naidoo, & Jano, 2003a) as well as trust and confidentiality-related issues (Sieberhagen et al., 2011). According to Gunavathy (2011), although corresponding interventions appear to be

under the umbrella of WLBS, sound knowledge of the concept *per se* is still grey. A detailed explanation of wellness programmes has been provided in Chapter two of this study.

However, there seems to be a convergence of opinion among scholars in that they concur that although it is important for organisations to adopt WLBS and individual employees to use the initiatives, the WLBS are not enough in reducing work-life clash (Thompson et al., 1999; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998, 1999). For example, official policies adopting flexibility are defined as formal, written and approved HR practices providing flexibility as approved by the HR unit and the discretion of a superior officer (Eaton, 2003). But Kossek et al. (2006) extended the definition by describing ‘formal flexibility policy use’ as relating to a person’s official receipt of permission to utilise an existing documented telecommuting policy and the identification by the HR unit of that person as one that is known to be using the policy. This clarifies the fact that a person is not said to have a flexible job if he/she uses the policy once in a while, rather, it must be evidently documented by HR that such a person is a regular user of the policy.

What is obtainable in practice is that although organisations formally adopt policies of flexibility, the implied message could be dictating that workers should not utilise the initiatives through the placement of limiting conditions for particular categories of individuals (Kossek et al., 2006). Sturges (2012) argued that people can precisely use their own rational, associational and physical methods to achieve WLB. There may be cases also where in reality, an employee may utilise telecommuting unofficially either because of informal permission by a supervisor or the individual’s own choice to telecommute before or after hours or during holidays (Kossek et al., 2006). The value placed on flexibility and WLBS could vary among various segments of the working population.

To Scandura and Lankau (1997), accessibility to WLBS is more connected to dedication to the organisation and fulfilment with the job among female employees with duties arising from relationships. Thomas and Ganster (1995), in their study among professionals in the medical profession, most of whom were women with childcare responsibilities, discovered that utilisation of WLBS associated significantly with lesser despair. Researchers are of the opinion that female employees may likely reorder their jobs in order to fulfil their familial roles and that the utilisation of WLBS could lessen the intention to leave work (Grover & Crooker, 1995; Kossek & Nichol, 1992).

There is a likelihood that professional level employees identify more with, and are highly involved with their work. Therefore some research on the work-family interface state that

generally, there is a negative association between lengthy working hours and stress (Bond, Thompson, Galinsky & Prottas, 2003), but that the associations often do not spill over to samples of managers and professional level employees (Kossek et al., 2006). For instance in Brett and Stroh (2003), it was discovered that professional employees working lengthy hours experienced more satisfaction from their non-work lives than their colleagues who worked lesser hours. The scholars concluded that the fact the employees were satisfied with their family responsibilities contributed to their working lengthy hours. They further surmise that number of hours worked does not necessarily predict wellness or work to family clash.

Nevertheless, studies show that although professional employees that work lengthy hours may be viewed as effective performers, the demands of work increases with increased hours worked, leading to more work to family clash (Jacobs & Winslow, 2004). The present study does not envisage to examine any connection among hours worked and wellness, work to family or family to work conflicts, depression, absenteeism or turnover intentions.

Casper and Harris (2008), report that schedule flexibility and dependent care assistance are the two most commonly investigated types of WLBS (Casper & Buffardi, 2004; Grover & Crooker, 1995; Rau & Hyland, 2002). Grover and Crooker (1995) suggest the necessity to explore particular WLBS since various advantages of each strategy could have peculiar outcomes on organisational results, while Casper and Buffardi (2004) and Arthur (2003) agree that this could relate to the prediction of results.

In Lambert (2000) report, individuals that use official WLBS were shown to have higher probability of proffering recommendations towards workplace improvement and exhibiting positive organisational citizenship behaviours. Employees using WLBS may perceive more that the organisation is supportive of family than those individuals who do not use the initiatives. The possibility of their coping better with job stressors and meeting their family demands is more. Kossek et al. (2006) reiterate that employees appreciate and are willing to remain with organisations that provide formal flexible work arrangement for employees (Scandura & Lankau, 1997). Literature reveals that WLBS associate with vital results, among which is improved sentimental loyalty (Casper & Harris, 2008) and reduced intention to leave an organisation (Kossek & Nichol, 1992; Goldberg, Greenberg, Koch-Jones, O'Neil & Hamill, 1989).

However, a study by Zheng, Kashi, et al. (2015), which focused on the importance of the linkage between personal coping strategies and WLBS adopted at the workplace, found that personal coping strategies (in this study SOC) in themselves are more significant in assisting employees achieve wellness and WLB than organisationally adopted WLBS. They further discovered that WLBS established and used by employees associated positively to stress but had no significant association with achievement of WLB. Previous studies found that individual resources influenced wellness and engagement with work, and also that mental detachment and recuperation strategies contributed to wellness (Demerouti, Bakker, Sonnentag, & Fullagar, 2012)

Additionally, empirical evidence that onsite crèches relate to decreased turnover exists (Auerbach, 1988, 1990; Marchese, Bassham, & Ryan, 2002; Youngblood & Chambers-Cook, 1984). Research has further discovered that the provision of information regarding childcare associates with decreased plan to leave an organisation as well as heightened sentimental loyalty to an organisation (Grover & Crooker, 1995). Thompson et al. (1999) found that family leave connects to more commitment and lesser intention to leave a workforce. Moreover, scholars have also reported that flexitime and condensed job rosters associate with less turnover plans and improved affective obligation (Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright & Neuman, 1999; Allen, 2001).

There are suggestions in the literature that the use of flexible working arrangements like working from home by employees can fundamentally create control and monitor problems for management. For instance, Skinner and Chapman (2013) suggest that WLBS that alter working arrangements, such as flexibility and time of work, ought to be designed and implemented by integrating practical modifications to workloads. As a result of this, many employers and management have designed strategic ways of addressing the issues in order to ensure that targets are achieved and performance standards are maintained. Scholars have reported that organisations that offer WLBS that allow employees to work from home also implement various performance management procedures (Dwelly, 2000; Huws, 1993). However, whatever procedure adopted could be influenced by factors such as organisational climate and management styles (Felstead et al., 2002). For instance, the use of reward systems that are based on paying according to outcomes are used in environments where the level of trust is low, in order to ensure that employees control themselves and perform according to expectations (Felstead & Jewson, 2000, 1997, 1996). While the use of team events, get-

together to evaluate progress and setting agreed-upon targets by managers and those employees working from home are the major features of work environments where trust levels are high. Also, to assess the standard of work performed by employees working from home, feedback from customers and the employees themselves is used.

Finally, myriads of scholars have written on work-family policies, work-family initiatives, work-family benefits, and work-family practices as shown in the literature review above, but few scholars such as De Cieri et al. (2005) assessed the achievements and challenges of WLBS. This researcher was not successful in finding scholars that examined the role of WLBS in the achievement of WLB and enhancement of SOC. Hence, this study is valuable in providing such literature, because unlike previous studies on WLBS, this study not only evaluated both the life strategies and work strategies available for an individual employee to use in addressing work-family challenges, but also assessed the personal resources (SOC) that an individual could use in an effort to cope with stressors and achieve WLB.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter offered a fundamental understanding of the South African public sector and HR practices relating to WLBS from national and international perspectives. The historical perspective of the South African public sector was also briefly discussed, and this facilitated the establishment of an understanding about the adoption of the wellness programme as prescribed by the EHWSFPS in the municipality. It presented the context of the study and an examination of literature relating to the subject of WLBS. SOC and stressors (work and family) will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: SENSE OF COHERENCE (SOC)

4.1 Introduction

This study investigates as an objective, the influence of stressors (emanating from work and family domains) on an individual employee's SOC in appraising the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. Additionally, the effect of WLBS on work and family stressors were investigated. It has been reported that stress resulting from the work and family domains is part of daily life (Zheng, Kashi, et al., 2015).

In this study, stressors are referred to as those factors in the environment of work and family that result in strains to individuals, which impact negatively on SOC and the individual's ability to achieve WLB.

Van Zyl (2002) reports that South Africans are obviously experiencing great stress levels from different sources and suggest that consideration should be given to measuring the stressors as a base point for managing them (Van Zyl, 2002). Stressors present in the workplace include function vagueness/role conflict, job stress and absence of autonomy. On the other hand, parenting, child and dependent elder care, relational conflict and level of child misbehaviour are some stressors emanating from the family domain. Van Zyl (2002) observed that employers at the public and private sectors fail to appreciate the impact that high stress have on employees. Some of the adverse effects of stress arising from work-place stressors include decreased performance and efficiency, increased work-family conflict (Rantanen, Kinnunen, Feldt, & Pulkkinen, 2008), high rate of employee intention to leave an organisation, impaired health and wellness, alcoholism and substance abuse, reduced rate of customer service, lateness and absenteeism, engagement in destructive habits and behaviours like gossiping and stealing (Happel, 2003; Perrewé, 1991; Quick, Quick, Nelson, & Hurrell Jr, 1997), plus possibly suicide (McGrath, Reid, & Boore, 2003). Although stress has been reported as one of the factors that adversely affects an individual's wellness (Van der Colff & Rothmann, 2009), empirical evidence confirms that SOC constitutes an important element in a person's wellness and health (Antonovsky, 1987, 1993).

SOC has been proven to be one of the personal resources that act as a buffer in the face of stressors (Antonovsky, 1987; Cunniff & Mostert, 2012; Feldt, 1997). Studies have indicated that differences exist in the way individuals manage stressors and that personal resources that cushion the impact of these stressors have been successfully investigated (Glasø, Matthiesen, Nielsen, & Einarsen, 2007; Vessey, DeMarco, Gaffney, & Budin, 2009). Diraz, Ortlepp, and Greyling (2003) and Du Toit (2002) report that individuals having strong SOC cope better with stressors. Therefore, it could be presumed that strong SOC may result in better coping abilities subsequently leading to the achievement of WLB while weaker or less levels of SOC will result in work-life imbalance. On the other hand, this study assumes that individuals with low levels of SOC might achieve WLB since SOC can be improved with better organisational climate and support (Tsai, Horng, Liu, & Hu, 2015). In addition, this study suggests that work and family stressors can influence a person's SOC.

This chapter presents the review of the literature on stress. It also highlights the review of literature on work and family stressors and their effect on SOC. This is because SOC has been identified as a mechanism that assists an individual in coping with stress; hence, discussing stress in this chapter could add value to the study. In addition, SOC is explored to unveil its meaning, components and how it is developed. The roles of SOC are also examined as well as its measurement. A good understanding of these variables is required to better appreciate their influence on the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality.

4.2 Definitions: Stress/stressor

The word stress means adversity or suffering, and it came into focus in the 14th century (Lazarus, 1993; Lumsden, 1981). The concept came into prominence technically in the 17th century through the study of Robert Hooke (Hinkle, 1974). According to Lazarus (1993), attention on stress as a source of suffering and malfunctioning in individuals grew as a result of unfolding evidence. The study by Lazarus and his colleagues in those days revealed that stressors produced no reliable results as individuals responded differently to the same stressors. They surmised that to some people, stress resulting from a certain situation may be much, while to others, it may be less. Based on an assignment, in the face of stressors, some people's performance was remarkably reduced while others' performance became better, and some others showed no measurable outcome (Jannoo, Yap, & Haron, 2015; Lazarus & Eriksen, 1952; Zhang, LePine, Buckman, & Wei, 2014).

According to Lazarus (1993), Hooke (1974) focused on the dissimilarity among individuals in considering the pliability of metals and the factors that founded their resilience. He illustrated with the example that the differences between cast iron and wrought iron is demonstrated by their brittleness and ease in breakage, as well as softness plus suppleness leading to ease in bending without breaking easily, respectively. This visible fact was used metaphorically to illustrate resilience to mental stress. Therefore, the ability of these metals to repel distortion predicted the attention that visited the study of dissimilarities among individuals when examining the coping abilities of individuals facing stressors (Lazarus, 1993).

In the present day literature on stress, there is notable development in the study. Resilience of people to stress has been studied vis-à-vis personality traits (Strümpfer, Danana, Gouws, & Viviers, 1998) plus developments that assist individuals in coping better with stressors than others. Likely examples of the personality traits to coping are hardiness (Maddi & Kobasa,

1984; Orr & Westman, 1990), learned resourcefulness (Rosenbaum, 1990), constructive thinking (Epstein & Meier, 1989), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1982) and SOC (Antonovsky, 1987).

The study on stress has not gone without attendant controversies. Lazarus (1993) reports that with respect to definitions, stress literature is bedevilled with unpredictable and confusing issues. This contributed to the reason for engaging with older literature references on the discussion about stress in this study, in order to glean the meaning that is pertinent to the study. For instance, it is reported that in the medical parlance, stress is seen as a group of mental and physical responses to harmful causes. To Selye (1975), ‘stressor’ represents the cause while stress represents the outcome or response. Smelser (1963) reports that sociologists see stress as a troubling cause (for instance, social inequality), and strain as the group response (for instance protest or fright). Numerous meanings have been associated with stress and stressors, but the present study will review some meanings to bring the subject into the perspective that is appropriate to this study.

4.3 The meaning of stress (or)

Selye (1974) cited in Henle and Blanchard (2008) reports that stress is a common mental and physical reaction to challenging situations in a given environment. While Hogh and Mikkelsen (2005) report that threatening events become stressful where the individual involved lacks requisite coping capabilities to respond to the threat (Lazarus & Folkman, 1991). This implies that an event that is threatening may also not be seen as stressful by an individual who possess the needed coping abilities to respond positively. Lazarus (1993) suggests that no matter how stress is defined or explained, there are four theories associated to stress. They are:

- (a) External source or internal cause, described by Hooke (1974) as ‘load’, and in the literature as stress or stressor.
- (b) An assessment (through a mental or physical structure) that separates threat or danger from what is non-threatening. This includes individual resources and dispositional abilities that assist individuals in processing stressful situations.
- (c) The mind’s (or body’s) processes against stressors.
- (d) Complicated mental and physiological configuration about the impacts of stress known as stress response.

Stress denotes a departure from normal behaviour or a state of expectation. Scholars agree that although an imperative interface exists between the psychological and the physical stress (ors), each require different degrees of examination (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984a).

Lazarus (1993) concurs that the agent of physiological stress (dangers or threats to skin) could not be said to be the same as what is threatening or stressful to the mind (mental state). This simply means that the effect of stressors on the mind and the body respectively need to be studied thoroughly to determine the degree of strain on a person's psychological and physiological well-being and functioning. That is why the present study examines the impact that stressors have on a person's SOC and ability to achieve WLB.

Lazarus (1966) clearly highlights three types of stress, namely: harm, threat, and challenge (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984a; Lazarus & Launier, 1978). The scholar defined *harm* as a mental injury caused that cannot be reversed. *Threat* was described as an expectation of injury that is susceptible to occurrence. *Challenge* was seen as the outcome of challenging needs that an individual believes he/she can overcome through the mobilisation and use of the individual's resources for coping. All three kinds of mental stressors are reported to be purportedly highlighted by various precursor situations prevalent in the environment as well as in an individual, capable of producing differing outcomes (Lazarus, 1993). The stressors examined in this study are those relating to threat and challenge. For example, job stress which could cause illness may be the result of a poor job design that causes role conflict/ambiguity among employees. The poor job design is a threat expected to cause conflict and ultimately stress. Similarly, time-related challenges can be addressed through well-crafted and implemented WLBS. This study assumes that stressors from the work and family environment could create imbalance in a person's work-life or be mitigated by the presence of strong SOC and appropriate WLBS in the organisation.

There are two categories of stress namely acute (sharp) and chronic (lingering) stress. According to Latendresse (2009), acute (critical) stress is very transient in nature and often ends in the immediate and successful resolution of a threatening or demanding problem. On the other hand, chronic stress takes a longer time and results in the absence of resolution to the problem or threatening issue. For instance, a heated argument between a couple that resulted in the effective addressing of a threatening problem or a threat is a good illustration of an acute stress while constant and repeated relational conflicts that defy resolution illustrates chronic stress (Latendresse, 2009). There are measures used in measuring stressors. According to Beehr et al. (2000), due to the fact that chronic stressors are often theorised as a result of their being the same in every job, common measures are used for them. Also, different measures are used

for acute stressors because of their specificity to jobs in concept and operations (Motowidlow, Packard & Manning, 1986).

Due to the dissimilarity among lingering (chronic) and sharp (acute) stressors, Beehr and Franz (1987) report there could be a difference in the manner in which they affect an individual's stress and outcome. Latendresse (2009) reports that individuals comprehend stress from the resources they have adapted to, for example, coping abilities. The scholar further posits that an individual with sufficient personal coping ability may view stressors from a positive perspective, otherwise, he/she could utilise other coping methods, bearing in mind that he/she could rely on prompt help from his/her social network (support system). On the other hand, individuals who isolate themselves or operate from an unfriendly or violent environment could feel overwhelmed and pessimistic, leading to incorrect assessment of stressors (Latendresse, 2009). It could therefore be correctly presumed that, since the impact of stressors on individuals are subjective, dispositional factors like SOC could ameliorate the dire effect that stressors could have on those who possess strong SOC when compared to the impact that the same stressors could have on those with low SOC.

To Beehr et al. (2000), stressors which are connected to a specific job (whether it is chronic or acute) could as a result of their prominence among workers in that specific employment affect a person's level of strains and outcome (Beehr et al., 2000). This is imperative in the sense that a person can remove him/herself from a job that is notable for specific strain, thereby freeing him/herself from the strain. Also, the reality that a particular stressor is known to be an integral part of a particular job could inform the formulation of WLBS that could assist employees in coping with the stressor.

Lazarus (1993) reports that an empirical search into how people appraise and cope with stressors revealed that these (appraisal and coping) inform the way that individuals reacted to stress. In addition, the scholar affirms that these variables were impacted by factors present in the environment and those inside the individual. This opinion is in sync with the assumption of the present study that the environment of an individual's upbringing and the resources present therein inform their SOC and the level thereof (Antonovsky, 1987). This could influence the way the individual manages stress and/or achieves WLB. Therefore, a person's SOC coupled with strategies (resources) available in the workplace (WLBS) should assist the individual to manage stressors and achieve meaningful WLB.

4.4 Stressors and coping

The coping process became prominent along with the research into thoughts as a mediational variable (Lazarus, 1966; Lazarus, Averill, & Opton, 1974). Lazarus (1993) views coping as the modification of a person's situation, or the way they are seen, in order to cause them to look better and more desirable. He sees coping as a 'process' - an individual's continuous efforts both in thinking and deeds targeted at handling certain needs seen as challenging or overpowering. Folkman and Lazarus (1985) postulate that though it is important for ways of coping to be realistic, the construct (coping) is very relative due to the fact that its efficacy is dependent on its ability to change overtime through various stressors (Lazarus, 1993).

Coping is used in expressing the perceived, behavioural and the mental processes that individuals use in managing, avoiding or controlling difficult circumstances (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984b; Zeidner & Endler, 1996). From Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) report, they primarily observed that 'problem-focused' (effective coping) and 'emotion-focused' (inactive coping) are two different tactics for coping. Effective coping (problem-focused) tactics comprise those strategies that are used in appraising an issue, creating and assessing options for solving the problem as well as deciding and implementing a plan about what to do. On the other hand, emotion-focused tactics comprise methods like evasion, refusal to believe, affirmative definition of the problem, and pursuit of emotional support (Van der Colff & Rothmann, 2009).

Additionally, Latendresse (2009) primarily reports that the way a person responds to a stressor is affected by their coping process. Literature shows that coping impacts ensuing response to stress in a dual manner; firstly, in the event that an individual modifies his/her association with the environment through the way he/she copes with the stressors, his/her mental stress could change in a better direction. Lazarus and his cohorts referred to this as 'problem-focused coping'. For example, success achieved in persuading a spouse who is always very busy at work to help pick up (fetch) the children from school on a day that the other spouse who normally picks them up is indisposed will remove the initial threat or challenge faced by the spouse if there was no one to pick up the children.

Secondly, another coping procedure called 'emotion-focused coping' is mainly concerned with the manner in which people give attention to and attach meaning to events around them (Lazarus & Folkman, 1985). Lazarus and Folkman (1985) further suggest that a successfully avoided dangerous thought has no power to bother an individual. In the same manner,

evaluating a threat in a way that makes it void of threat eliminates the perceptive angle of response to the stress (Lazarus, 1993). For instance, the reasoning by a spouse of a belittling remark by his/her spouse as something that came out wrongly or was unintended to cause hurt, or was a result of work-related stress or ailment, could lead to the dissipation of reactive clamour or wrath. Lazarus (1993) affirms that in whatever way it is viewed, coping associates positively with mental stress (Lazarus, 1993).

The present study examines chronic common stressors like job stress, role conflict/function ambiguity, and absence of autonomy for their predictions on SOC and WLB as well as their association with WLBS. The question is, do work stressors associate significantly with SOC? Also, do stressors associate negatively to WLBS? The study suggests that work and family stressors associate negatively to SOC. For instance, continued effects of stressors on an employee with weak SOC could erode the little coherence and lead to imbalance between his/her work-life domain. As a result of these stressors, it could be assumed that employees may not be satisfied with their work situation if stressors are high.

In this study, WLB is indicated by the achievement of satisfaction with work and family situations. SOC indicator is stability in the achievement of WLB demonstrated by constancy in satisfaction and effectiveness in the work and family domains of the individual professional level employee. Likewise, the researcher assumes that the use of WLBS by employees will associate positively to SOC, in the sense that it is expected that more individuals with low SOC will use WLBS while individuals with strong SOC may not use WLBS as sources of coping with stressors.

To Beehr et al. (2000), stressors associate more strongly to behavioural manifestations. This is in consonance with the suppositions of the present study that stressors could impair individuals' SOC and this could result in work-life imbalance emanating from the individual's dysfunctional behaviour. For example, an employee under stress will likely perform his/her role at home or at work but may not be efficient at such role performance nor be satisfied with the outcome of the role performed. The effect of role conflict and function vagueness (stressors), for instance on behaviours relating to work is universal, as reported in the meta-analysis of Jackson and Schuler (1985), and Fisher and Gitelson (1983). They confirm that these factors (role conflict and function vagueness) have relationship with reduced job fulfilment levels, involvement with work, and dedication as well as increased degrees of strain and susceptibility to resigning from the workplace (Dierdorff, Rubin, & Morgeson, 2009;

Hang-Yue, Foley, & Loi, 2005; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Netemeyer, Johnston, & Burton, 1990; Schulz & Auld, 2006).

Moreover, Netemeyer et al. (1990) report that though studies on role conflict and function vagueness abound, just a few of them have actually explained and examined the theories of the results of these constructs (Bedeian & Armenakis, 1981; Gilboa, Shirom, & Fried, 2005; Jackson, 1983; Karatepe & Sokmen, 2006; Kemery, Bedeian, Mossholder, & Touliatos, 1985). This study investigates the impact of work and family stressors on an individual's SOC. The study duly adds value to the literature by examining the effect of stressors on SOC with the aim of analysing the association between SOC and WLB.

4.5 Types of stressors examined in the study

Two types of stressors, namely work and family stressors, are investigated in this study. This is because the study examines the connection between WLB and SOC, hence, the need to appraise the work and family domain-related stressors in order to determine their influences on individual SOC and the achievement of WLB. Lazarus and Folkman (1984a) emphasise that coping is important as an intervening factor in the association between stress and its outcome (strain). SOC is proposed in this study as a coping mechanism against stress. Berkowitz (2003), in L. L. Meier and Spector (2013), states that employees faced with work stressors experience destructive emotions (such as infuriation and irritation) which are capable of generating belligerent behaviours that could result in counterproductive behaviours (work-life imbalance in this case). Previous studies found that work stressors positively associate to work behaviours that are counterproductive and capable of hurting others or the organisation (Hershcovis et al., 2007; Robinson & Bennett, 1995) and possibly themselves. However, this study is not investigating the counterproductive behaviours resulting from stress. But based on Folkman and Lazarus (1985) it is important to highlight that the need for coping is influenced by stressors prior to examining the association with coping mechanisms.

The work stressors that are examined in the present study are job stress, role conflict/function vagueness and absence of autonomy. Similarly, family stressors like relational tension, parenting and child/elder care responsibilities as well as absence of spousal support leading to marital dissatisfaction (Bellavia & Frone, 2005; Byron, 2005) are examined in this study.

4.5.1 Job stress

Job stress is one of the work stressors investigated in this study. Beehr and Newman (1978) report that there is no consensus on the definition of the construct (job stress) among scholars. Some authors have used job stress to explain those factors in an environment that are seen to be impacting negatively on individuals (Beehr, 1976; French & Caplan, 1972; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964); overall body reaction to any need (Selye, 1975), excess demand in an environment that portends to threaten an individual's abilities and resources to manage it (McGrath, 1976), and danger to the individual as a result of the features of the work environment (Caplan, Cobb, French Jr, Harrison, & Pinneau Jr, 1975, p. 3). To Beehr and Newman (1978, p. 670), job stress refers to *a situation wherein job-related factors interact with a worker to change (i.e. disrupt or enhance) his or her psychological and/or physiological conditions such that the person (i.e. mind and body) is forced to deviate from normal functioning* (Yozgat, Yurtkoru, & Bilginoğlu, 2013). Empirical evidence backs-up the claim that the more the imbalance among needs and a person's capacity, the more they felt job stress (Jamal, 2005). In line with this, this study suggests that the impact of stressors from work on an individual could weaken a person's coping resources leading to imbalance in work and family life.

Caplan et al. (1975) identify two kinds of job stress that may pose as dangers to the individual namely *demands* that an individual may be unlikely to manage and *supplies* which are not adequate to help the individual manage his needs. In tandem with this, Chen and Silverthorne (2008) report that job stress is specifically a personal reaction by individuals which could be seen as being different from common stress, because it has its root in the work place and is therefore work-related. For instance, a newly recruited employee that is brought into an organisation to occupy a top position may be faced with colleagues and/or subordinates who may not be willing to cooperate with him/her. This could be as a result of the 'bad blood' that results from the fact that employees closer in rank to that position may have been expecting to be interviewed to fill the position. Although this individual may have the requisite resources to perform his/her job, conflict from colleagues may pose a serious challenge which the individual may be unable to manage. Therefore, where the individual does not have the necessary resources to cope with these stressors in him or herself, support from the workplace in the form of family friendly practices could assist. This is in line with the demands and supplies sufficiency proposition of Caplan et al. (1975).

The person-environment alignment (misalignment) theory propounded by French, Rogers and Cobb (1974) clarify the two kinds of job stress postulated by Caplan et al. (1975). This theory, adopted as one of the theoretical frameworks guiding the present study is discussed elaborately in Chapter six of this study. According to Beehr and Newman (1978), the degree to which an individual's competency and capabilities are in sync with the needs and obligations of the job indicates a type of fitness (alignment). Also, the degree to which an individual's demands are provided in the workplace highlights another type of alignment. Therefore, job stress could be theorised as an oddity of any of the associations between an individual employee and the workplace. The oddity of any kind endangers a person's wellness, leading to stress (Beehr & Newman, 1978). This implies for example that if an individual is experiencing absence of autonomy, the inability to perform optimally as a result of this could be said to be job stress and will be demanding on the individual's SOC.

McLean (1974) observes that job stress is any job-associated element that results in a person's display of faulty adaptation in their responses (including negative impacts on job performance plus relationship with others). This could be presumed to have impact on social relationships at work and at home that could lead to work-life imbalance (dissatisfaction with work and family situations). The present study presumes that job stress could lead to behaviours that could impair the achievement of WLB as a result of the negative effect it may have on an individual's SOC. The study assumes that an individual with strong SOC will cope better with job stress than those with low SOC. In addition, it is assumed that continued presence of job stress may ultimately affect the strength of an individual's SOC.

In this study, job stress is measured using two items from the job stress scale. The items assess the perception by the individual employee of the frequency that work-connected problems as consequences of role overload and duties at work are experienced by him/her. An item on the scale is: *"I frequently feel tired and worn out during a good part of the day."* The items are rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.

The issue of job stress is a workplace imperative that concerns employee health and wellness while satisfaction with job is viewed as a very important element when considering highly rated services and quality performance among employees (Trivellas, Reklitis, & Platis, 2013). Job stress is also considered as belonging to the commonest category of challenges that confront employees on a regular basis (Yozgat, Yurtkoru & Bilginoglu, 2013). Owing to the fact that job stress is prevalent in the workplace, an increasing number of workers report that they

experience stress as a result of role overload, function vagueness, role conflict, and the absence of autonomy to perform given responsibility (Yozgat et al., 2013). In a study conducted by Beehr and Newman (1978) which among others reviewed the state of studies based on individuals' health in the context of work, job stress was indicated in the context of employees' health. They state that in the past illness was looked at as being the outcome of *germs, toxin, endocrine imbalance, vitamin or nutritional deficiency*.

However, emerging evidence has promoted the acceptance of the fact that ill-health is a result of many factors (Beehr & Newman, 1978). In this context, Hosie and Sevastos (2010) and Warr (2007) submit that stress emanating from work could affect an individual employee's mental health and physiological wellness. Excessive stress resulting from incongruence among work and family life have been reported also to lead to reduction in functionality among employees (Casey & Mathews, 2011). But, Zheng et al. (2015) report that there is a general belief that WLB is one of the highly efficient measures in achieving reduction in psychological illnesses and stress associated with work and improving employee wellness (Carlson et al., 2011).

The present study considers job stress as those situations that place an individual employee in a position where he/she is ill-disposed to perform his/her function maximally as a result of strain resulting from the job and/or work environment. These for instance include role overload and all such work-connected burdens that lead to tiredness and depression. It assumes that job stress could associate negatively with satisfaction with work and family situations. Literature shows that the construct (job stress) has been researched in relationship to job fulfilment, functioning at work, incentive and propensity to leave (resign) job (Beehr & Newman, 1978). The effect or relationship that job stress has on an individual's SOC has unfortunately not been studied expansively.

4.5.2 Absence of autonomy

The second work stressor examined in this study is absence of autonomy. According to Liu, Spector, and Jex (2005), autonomy is a very important part of the broad expansive concept of control. Spector and Fox (2003) report that in the centre of most theories around organisations are autonomy and control (Hackman & Oldham, 1976, 1980; Karasek Jr, 1979; Spector & Jex, 1998). Parker, Axtell, and Turner (2001) refer to job autonomy as the discretionary level that employees are allowed to make decisions with respect to important issues about their work. Such decisions may include time and ways of performing one's tasks at the workplace. Absence

of autonomy refers therefore to the lack of discretion to make important decisions concerning one's job. Job control (autonomy) is noted to be one of the imperative characteristics of the design of work that impacts the results from employees like satisfaction with their job (Hackman & Oldham, 1980; Parker & Wall, 1998). Summarily, Kim and Stoner (2008) report that the level of control that an individual has with respect to his/her proximate job schedule and duties could be referred to as job autonomy (Liu et al., 2005).

Perlow (2001) reports that the nature of a particular job in itself may affect the capacity of workers to combine effectively their work and family roles. This implies that some inherent features of a job could influence employees' ability to cope with their work and family responsibilities. Thompson et al. (1999) report that a job which gives independence and freedom for an employee to make important decisions like how, where and when a job is to be done, empowers the employee to cope with many conflicting work and family needs. They further posit that the extent to which stress and strain is reduced is the extent to which work and family quality is enhanced, and satisfaction with both domains of life are recorded. These are the outcomes of increased perceived control and official and non-official support from the workplace and job design. This means that organisations that do not make available such supports and job design may expose their employees to increased stress, leading to poor quality of work and family life and dissatisfaction with work and family situations (imbalance).

Job autonomy has been measured from availability of flexibility (ability to choose when to start and end work) instead of the real feeling of control (Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Valcour & Batt, 2003). Thompson and Prottas (2006) refer to job autonomy as the level of freedom and discretion to arrange the flow of work and make decisions as to the method of performing a job, inherent in that job (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Valcour and Batt (2003, p. 196) observe that *autonomy in decision making should translate into greater employee ability to control decisions over when, where, and how to integrate work and family responsibilities*. This implies that control and autonomy do not mean the same thing (Thompson & Prottas, 2006). Chiang et al. (2010) found that low job autonomy and high job demands with the provision of WLBS led to increased stress levels.

The present study suggests that job autonomy could improve an individual employee's sense of coherence and conversely reduce stress associated with absence of autonomy. This could lead to the achievement of satisfaction with work and family which are indicators of WLB. This is supported by the report by Liu et al. (2005) that a connection has been established to

exist between job autonomy and the mental, physiological and behavioural results of employees. Citing Spector (1986), Liu et al. (2005) further report that felt autonomy associated positively with satisfaction (at personal and organisational levels), responsibility, involvement, work outcomes, and incentive. It associates negatively with physiological signs, absence from work, high rate of employee turnover and intention to leave an organisation, emotive distress and role-related stress. Moreover, there are studies that report that felt control associates negatively with neurotic disease (Kornhauser, 1965), depression (Karasek Jr, 1979) stomach ache, insomnia, head pains, and heart conditions (Hurrell & Lindström, 1992), and nervousness (Kohn & Schooler, 1973; Kornhauser, 1965; Miller, Schooler, Kohn, & Miller, 1979; Nahar, Hossain, Rahman, & Bairagi, 2013; Schooler, 2014).

Thompson and Prottas (2006) report that job autonomy could affect the wellness of an employee and his/her family life positively. They further report that literature has shown that employees who have the discretionary power to say how, when and where their work is to be done, observe that they are highly satisfied with the work they do (Clark, 2001; Hackman & Oldham, 1976; S. Parasuraman & Alutto, 1984). Clark (2001) reports that individuals having job autonomy have a higher probability of reporting cohesiveness in their families, feel reduced stress (Parasuraman & Alutto, 1984), reduced work-family stress (Parasuraman & Alutto, 1984), and reduced work-family clash (S. Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk, & Beutell, 1996). Conversely, it could be argued therefore that employees who experience absence of autonomy would report impaired health and wellness, dissatisfaction with work, lack of family cohesion and increased stress and work-family clashes. The present study proposes that an individual with SOC and facing absence of autonomy in the work place will report less of the associate vices enumerated above while his/her colleague with a weak SOC will experience the vices.

When considering absence of autonomy, questions on how it affects job stress, SOC and other and WLB become imperative. According to Batt and Valcour (2003), the autonomy to make decisions about one's job heightens workers' feelings of control in their jobs. They further posit that employees' control over their work could also be linked to their control of other facets of personal life. Similarly, it could be assumed that when there is absence of autonomy, an employee could also feel that he/she has no control over other aspects of life especially among those individuals having weak SOC.

There is empirical evidence that shows that people are inspired to look for ways of controlling their surroundings, and having this control has been reported to impact health and wellness (

Bond & Bunce, 2003; Ganster, Fox, & Dwyer, 2001; Greenberger & Strasser, 1986; Marmot & Stansfield, 1997). Greenberger and Strasser (1986) argue that there exists in organisations, situations that heighten the feeling of control, or reduce them. For instance, refusing to approve the request by an employee to have some days away from work could reduce the employee's feeling of control while on the other hand, permitting an employee to work from his/her home once in a while could boost the feeling of control (Thompson & Prottas, 2006). Consequently it could be inferred that absence of autonomy inherent in a job could impair a person's perception of self-control which could lead to stress; and stress could adversely affect an individual's SOC. Adams and Jex (1999) discovered that when a person perceives that he/she has control, this mediates the association between tactics used in managing time (prioritising and goal-setting) and satisfaction with work as well as well-being. Cordery, Morrison, Wright, and Wall (2010) found that autonomy among teams improved their performance. These important findings point to the fact that autonomy and control could be valuable when considering the work-family interface.

Generally studies on job autonomy and control typically use self-report data collected from employees. The questionnaires assess the way employees perceive control as well as their satisfaction with work (Spector et al., 2006). Evidence from studies show that these variables could correlate (Spector, 1986; Fried & Ferris 1987), yet there are scholars that query the findings of these studies due to the limitedness of the interpretation of such findings (Spector, 1992; Frese & Zapf, 1988; Taber & Taylor, 1990; Roberts & Glick, 1981) and the absence of clarity on the extent of correlations between the variables and particular job situations. The present study adopts self-report methodology of data collection because the case of autonomy, which is subjective to the individual and often, only such individuals can proffer credible and objective answers to questions in the regard.

In the present study, absence of autonomy was measured by engaging the Factual Autonomy Scale (Fast, Williamson, & Keating, 1999). The FAS scale was constructed to determine the way in which employees appraise their ability to choose how and when work commences or ends daily (Spector & Fox, 2003). The scale was propounded to confound the problems associated with self-rated measures used in measuring job stressors. One of the problems is the subjectivity of the scales which yields inconclusive outcome with more variables (Suominen, Helenius, Blomberg, Uutela, & Koskenvuo, 2001). Among the items on the scale are "*In your present job, how often do you have to ask permission?*" to 1) take a rest or 2) leave early for

the day. The response choices from items 1-7 are *Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Quite often, and Always*, while *Never, Once or twice, Once or twice per month, Once or twice per week, and Everyday* are the response choices for items 8 to 10. Items 1-7 are based on a 5-point scale ranging from 1=Never and 5 = Always, while items 8-10 are based on a five point scale ranging from 1=Never and 5 = every day.

4.5.3 Function vagueness and role conflict

The roles and responsibilities performed by individuals in the complex workplaces ought to be clearly designed and stated to avoid ambiguity and conflict. Traditional organisation theory recognised two principles, namely *chain of command* and *unity of command* plus direction as having effects on role clashes in organisations that are complex in nature (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). The *chain-of-command* principle acknowledges that members of organisations that are set up with hierarchical connections clearly stipulating authority flow from top to bottom of the organisation (Zheng, Yang, & McLean, 2010), report better satisfaction and efficiency in performance and achievement of goals. Contrarily, organisations that are not with such a unitary chain of command record an opposite outcome. Rizzo et al. (1970) further report that it is assumed that a unitary chain of command like this gives executive management efficiency in control and organisation, and is likewise advantageous since it aligns with the unity of command principle.

The principle of *unity of command* states that employees are required to obtain orders from a supervisor only before acting on anything. It also prescribes a leader and a plan for related activities sharing the same goals. The purpose of this principle is to keep organisational structures streamlined to avoid exposing members to being caught in the midst of unrelated orders or unrelated expectations emanating from more than one superior officer (Rizzo et al., 1970; Zheng et al., 2010). Davis (1951) in (Heames & Harvey, 2006), proposed a theory known as the *principle of single accountability* which suggests that an individual must give an account of his/her successful completion of his/her duties to just one superior. He further posits that the purpose of this arrangement is to achieve a flow of reporting that makes appraisal and control of junior employees' work easy. In that way, allocating time and input by employees will not be done according to personal preferences but according to the needs of the job, or the order of superiors. This therefore prevents employees from playing one superior against the other as well as inaccurate appraisal of employee performance through vague or manipulative reporting of time allocation and work done.

According to the role theory, if expected behaviours from an individual are not consistent, the individual may feel stressed, experience dissatisfaction and perform more dimly than if there were no clashes in expectations (Lambert, Hogan, Paoline, & Clarke, 2005). It could therefore be said that role clash is an outcome of the contravention of the two traditional principles (unity of command and single accountability) which reduces personal satisfaction and reduced efficiency in the organisation (Bolino & Turnley, 2005; Rizzo et al., 1970).

Role theory as well as traditional organisation theory considers function vagueness. From the traditional theory perspective, each position created in the organisational structure has a specific group of assignments or duties (Zheng, Yang & Maclean, 2010). The intention for such specific definition of tasks or the requirements of each role is to permit management to allocate proper rewards and or punishment to subordinates for performing specific tasks as well as to give direction to junior personnel. Where a worker does not understand the boundaries of his/her authority to decide or perform a task, what his/her expected target performance is, or how/she is to be evaluated, the employee will not be quick in deciding about his/her job but rather depend on trials in trying to satisfy the expectations of management (Rizzo et al., 1970).

In the same manner, role theory posits that function vagueness (absence of pertinent information concerning a particular position in the organisation) (Kahn et al., 1964), could result in an employee using coping behaviours to try and solve challenges in order to escape stress sources, or else they could find ways of defending themselves which naturally distorts the real situation. Therefore, the role theory suggests that function vagueness could result in the possibility of an individual being dissatisfied with task performance, or exhibit worry, have distorted reality and subsequently perform dimly (Rizzo et al., 1970). The present study is based on a municipality which naturally has multiple sources of authority as explained in Chapter two. Many studies show that multiple authority has the capacity to upset a person's alignment to the workplace or career by placing a demand on the individual to choose between the two (Etzioni, 1959; Evan, 1962; Gouldner, 1957; Malczewski, 2014). It is also reported in the literature that professional employees in organisations that have multiple authority often experience stress due to the fact that they are caught in the clash (La Porte, 1965, 2015).

According to Tang and Chang (2010), function vagueness and function clash belong to the class of the most broadly examined role stress elements; and this informs the reason for their pertinence and examination in the present study. From the literature on role theory, function vagueness is explained to mean the absence of precision and predictability with respect to an

employee's functions and responsibilities (Beehr, 1976; Kahn et al., 1964; Tang & Chang, 2010). Role clash, according to the role theory, is an outcome of two or more groups of needs which are not compatible but involve issues associated to one individual (Kahn et al., 1964; Katz & Kahn, 1978).

The outcomes of function vagueness and role conflict on employee behaviours and work-associated mannerisms have been considerably researched. The literature on role theory reveals that when the actual behaviour of an individual in an organisation is not consistent with what others expect of him/her, the individual will be in a situation of role conflict which causes him/her to feel stressed, experience dissatisfaction and become less efficient at performing his/her role. The reverse would have been the situation if there were no inconsistencies in expectations (Hamner & Tosi, 1974; Hasan & Akter, 2014). Hamner and Tosi (1974) further report, that function vagueness is an outcome of the absence of necessary information concerning what an individual's task is. According to Netemeyer et al. (1990), citing Jackson and Schuler (1985) and Fisher and Gitelson's (1983) meta-analyses, the effect of function vagueness and role conflict on behaviours and attitudes associated to work is all-encompassing. The present study posits that work stressors may affect an employee's ability to achieve balance through SOC. It also suggests that a professional employee with strong SOC confronted with clashing roles or function vagueness will be able to cope better with these work stressors than the individual employee with weak SOC.

Pandey and Wright (2006) are of the opinion that much of whatever is known concerning a professional manager in the public sector's daily life is not a result of an understanding of how his/her world operates as seen from his/her point of view. They further report that literature on the bureaucratic systems and control concentrates on fitting governmental behaviour to the leader's desires (Moe, 1987; Waterman, Rouse, & Wright, 2004; Wood & Waterman, 1994) rather than the stresses which confront the professional employee in the civil service in the course of performing his/her duties, as well as the diverse and clashing indicators arising from multiple sources in the political environment. The scholars posit that unarguably, diverse and clashing sources of governmental influences cause significant function vagueness to the professional level employee in the public sector (Pandey & Wright, 2006).

In order to achieve goals, municipal government and governments generally face a lot of ambiguities arising from the political environment. This is supported by Pandey and Wright (2006) position that a large part of the evidence on the causes and results of institutional

vagueness of goals in the public sector confuses the established way of doing things (Rainey & Bozeman, 2000). They suggest that there is a need to examine the seeming linkage between the managerial situation and the political environment because according to them, some misunderstood behaviours among managers may be a result of function vagueness due to clashing and differing effects of many political *bosses*. Professional employees at a municipality are exposed to two different levels of authority, namely administrative and political. For instance a manager in the engineering department could be assessed as not delivering on performance by the administrative authority when all the while, he/she was waiting for a political authority to approve the commencement of the project. In line with this argument, Hamner and Tosi (1974) posit that where a worker does not understand what his role actually is, and what power he has or the manner of evaluation he/she is going to be evaluated under, such an employee will be reluctant to make decisions in line with the organisational goals. Therefore if the goal of the organisation is vaguely stated, the individual employee job function will be vaguely perceived.

Wright and Kim (2004) proposed a broad framework to support the argument that a straight forward connection exists between function vagueness and organisational goal vagueness. Based on Locke and Latham (1990) goal-setting model, Wright and Kim (2004) contend that a well-articulated organisational goal assists employees to have focus and lessens the need to look for options. On the other hand, he argued that unclear, ambiguous, multi-dimensional and clashing goals cause confusion among employees in their search for options that lead to solutions. Pandey and Wright (2006) suggest that organisational goal vagueness could impact indirectly on function vagueness as a result of its influence on the structure of an organisation. When organisational goals are unclear, the need to install devices to instil values and ways of controlling for acceptable behaviours arise. Some of the controls utilise the organisational structure (Chun & Rainey, 2005; Rainey, 1989). According to Chun and Rainey (2004), bureaucracy (red tape) and centralisation are two outcomes of ambiguous organisational goals. Pandey and Wright (2006) suggest that the third consequence of organisational goal ambiguity is 'routinisation'. They further report that the classical organisational structure of a bureaucratic system is reflected by these three factors.

In addition, the proposition by Kahn et al. (1964) that the features of organisational components demonstrated in the framing of the structure adds to function vagueness, has been supported by empirical evidence. Features of the organisation like centralised decision making hierarchies

(House & Rizzo, 1972; Morris, Steers, & Koch, 1979; Nicholson & Goh, 1983), plus formalities (Ramaswami, Agarwal, & Bhargava, 1993) are reported to heighten function vagueness. This situation is explained by the fact that as autonomy (control) is key in the association among leaders and managers (Moe, 1984), its worthiness hinges on the theory that leaders understand and support what they desire that the managers do (Behn, 1995). Pandey and Wright (2006), citing Meyer (1979) and Rainey (1983), report that even though at a given instance, professional managers in the public sector may feel that their daily roles are clearly expressed with respect to compliance to standards and procedures, in another situation, they may be unsure of their overall functions in the institution as a result of the fact that set standards and procedures look like they are in conflict with each other or with expected policy results.

However, Ramaswami et al. (1993) suggest that where workers carry out complicated assignments; these tasks may not be simply coded or made as a routine without various exceptional clauses. Also, attempts to create flawless standards about what is expected of employees by the instrument of a bureaucratic organisational system could heighten vagueness around the already complicated and confusing experiences of employees at work (Warwick, 1975; Lynn, 1981). This implies that if there is clarity in organisational goals, the individual will be focused and not under pressure. It could be assumed that when organisational goals are unclear, the employee could be under pressure with respect to reporting, role performance and target achievement (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). This condition could result in stress that may impair coherence and achievement of balance. Therefore, the present study assumes that function vagueness (role ambiguity) is a stressor in the workplace that could adversely task and impair an individual employee's sense of coherence thereby hampering the achievement of meaningful WLB.

A study conducted by Erera (1989) at the local Department of Social Services in New York, reports that practices and policies adopted by the government at the state level was responsible for function vagueness among middle level professionals. The managers in that study report that the reason for this vagueness was attributable to ambiguity, constant changes in governmental policies and irrelevance (Pandey & Wright, 2006). These elements are significant indicators of stressors. Antonovsky (1987) refers to SOC as an individual's ability to comprehend and meaningfully manage stress. Gist and Mitchell (1992), cited in Zhao, Seibert, and Hills (2005), report that most individuals who think that their work is beyond their control (indicating a high level of ambiguity and role conflict) manifest weak self-efficacy

(Tang & Chang, 2010). The present study assumes that function ambiguity and role conflict are stressors capable of adversely affecting an employee's SOC. In this context, the researcher assumes that individuals with strong SOC may effectively cope with stressors and achieve WLB, while those with weak SOC may be unable to meaningfully comprehend and manage stressors, and therefore report work-life imbalance.

Studies have shown that the association between function vagueness and satisfaction with work as well as function clash and satisfaction with work is a negative correlation (Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970). Tang and Chang (2010) report that function vagueness and role clash have also been identified in accounting literature as having negative association to satisfaction with work (Gregson, Wendell, & Aono, 1994; Rebele & Michaels, 1990; Ussahawanitchakit, 2008). Other researchers that confirm this same report are Wu and Norman (2006), Tarrant and Sabo (2010), Chang and Hancock (2003), Jackson and Schuler (1985), Chen, Chen, Tsai and Lo (2009), Karadal, Ay, and Cuhadar (2008) and (W.-H. Ho, Chang, Shih, & Liang, 2009). It also has negative association with performance of tasks among team members (Cordery et al., 2010). Although Tang and Chang (2010) report that it has rarely been reported that positive association exists between stress and satisfaction with work, function vagueness has been indicated to be important in its role as a cause of some attitudinal factors that are job-related such as involvement with work, job satisfaction and organisational citizenship behaviour (Kahn et al., 1964; Pandey & Wright, 2006; Rizzo et al., 1970).

As much as these foregoing associations' project function vagueness is an imperative factor, of more importance is the view in this study that it could affect an individual's SOC.

The present study postulates that since literature supports that negative correlation exists between role conflict and function vagueness and job satisfaction, it could be implied that individual employees experiencing role conflict and role ambiguity will experience work-life imbalance. This is because satisfaction with work and family is a major indicator of WLB in this study.

However, little or no studies have been conducted on the interface between function vagueness/role conflict and SOC, and the implication of such interface on WLB and the use of WLBS at a workplace. Therefore, the present study is valuable in enriching literature with the findings on the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in South Africa.

Since the introduction of the function vagueness (role ambiguity) construct by Kahn et al. (1964), studies on the sources and effects of the concept mushroomed (Abramis, 1994; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Tubre & Collins, 2000). Most of these studies used Rizzo, House and Lirtzman's (1970) measuring scale for role ambiguity. Rizzo et al.'s (1970) work sprang from Kahn et al. (1964) even though their thought on the concept of role vagueness was slightly different.

In this study, function vagueness and role conflict are measured with a 17-item scale adapted from Rizzo et al.'s (1970) 30-item scale where 15-items measured role ambiguity and the other 15-items measured role conflict. Items examining performance and evaluation by superiors are not included in the study since the respondents are superior officers. The items measuring role conflict highlight authorisations linked to role conduct, therefore they are connected to function vagueness elements involving the forecast of the results of an individual's conduct. However, the root cause of role clashes stated in the literature (for instance, multiple authority), is not particularly included among the items. Items measuring function vagueness highlight absolute tasks, power, and association with other individuals, time allocation and the capacity to forecast authorisations as results of conduct. Among the items on the scale are: "*I have enough time to complete my work*" and "*I work under incompatible policies and guidelines.*" The responses on these items are based on a 7-point discrepancy responsive scale ranging from 1) very false to 7) very true.

The next section discusses family and the stressors emanating from that sphere of life.

4.5.4 Family and family stressors

Butters (2002), citing Merikangas, Dierker, and Fenton (1998), report that the family is among the most influential element in childhood that fosters coping abilities and shapes a child's orientation to life. Family provides the basic platform for socialisation of individuals as well as act as a foster of coherence. Antonovsky (1987) posits that an individual's SOC is built up by resources available to the infant through adolescence to shape ability to meaningfully comprehend and manage stressors in life. He further reports that these resources include those found in the family environment where an individual is brought up. Butters (2002), reasserting the importance of family in the socialisation and shortcomings of a child, reports that the family has been picked out as being the main cause of juvenile delinquency for some time. This is assumed to be a result of present day events which have culminated in the destabilisation of families, such as, dual-earner families, the effect of single working parents and effect of

affirmative action. Stress and strain as well as clash between work and family could be easily attributed to these.

Antonovsky (1987) and Butters (2000) are in agreement with respect to the fact that the character of the environment in which a child is raised influences the way in which the individual perceives and sees strain/stress. Butters (2000) further reports that the degree of stability in the family and the structure of familial relationships contribute to the equation. Other contributors to the nature of an environment of upbringing that could abrade an individual's SOC include absence of parents as a result of separation, divorce or demise (Foxcroft & Lowe, 1991; Wells & Rankin, 1991), and adverse familial relations that lead to the feeling of insecurity and stress (Hughes, Power, Orlet Fisher, Mueller, & Nicklas, 2005; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Spera, 2005). This suggests that the environment in which an individual is raised is significant in the individual's life outcome. Therefore, if a parent is raised in an environment that did not allow the development of SOC, it may also affect the way the individual raises their own children.

In Butters' (2000) opinion, a family ought to be able to train a child to succeed in many of life's domains including in this case, work and family. Although Antonovsky (1987) states that SOC develops from infancy through adolescence and climaxes when an individual reaches thirty (30) years of age, it is gratifying to know that SOC can be improved on by great organisational climate, increased resources of wealth, autonomy and role clarity (Lindberg & Rosenqvist, 2005). Generally, everyone at the workplace comes from one family or the other having or not having acquired the relevant resources to manage stressors.

In the context of the study, family is viewed as the connection between individuals found in a domestic unit or household. Family stressors are those factors in the family domain that have the capacity to impair an individual's ability to cope with or be satisfied with the family situation. To explore the concept further, there is need to clarify core concepts like family, family units, child/dependent relations and the challenges associated with these concepts.

4.5.4.1 Family units

Individuals in a family could be connected by birth, adoption or marriage. There are some common characteristics that could be attributed to the family, namely limited size, developmental influence, emotional attachment, universality and core position in societal structure. The family is the smallest social unit which wields developmental influence on its

members from the cradle. Individuals in the family share emotional affection that could influence rights and responsibilities among members of the family. In every human society, families are found, and this makes the family a universal phenomenon.

4.5.4.2 Types of family unit

Families have existed from as far back as history can tell. Major changes in contemporary times may have led to resultant changes in the outlook of the family unit. Some of these changes include the rate of divorce (Bales & Parsons, 2014), impact of HIV/AIDS pandemic (Zaba et al., 2013) and the global economic crisis (Headey, 2013). Increased divorce rate could have led to increase in single-parent families, while the death of both parents as a result of HIV/AIDS as well as the effect of genocide may have contributed to the rise in child-headed households. Child-headed households are those where there are no adult caregivers to children whose parents have died as a result of disease, violence or war. On the other hand the global economic meltdown may have contributed to the need for working family members to live together in order to save costs, this may increase the number of extended families and the challenges associated with extended families. For the purpose of this study, four types of family units will be briefly discussed. They are: nuclear family, single-parent family, extended family and blended family.

Nuclear family consists of parents (father and mother) and their children living in the same domestic unit. It occupies a central position in human society (Maguire, 2015; Shapiro, 2013). According to Shapiro (2013), individuals in the nuclear family are connected by birth and each person's actions mutually affects every other person in the family unit. The parenting and the duty to care for members is more pronounced in the nuclear family. Individuals nurtured in a nuclear family may have the duty to give care to elderly dependent relatives later in life. Caregiving to dependent relatives could become stressful especially when combined with work needs. Support could easily be given and received among members of the nuclear family. Moos (2013) reports that events that occur in childhood through developmental stages help shape the individual's outcome in later life. In line with this, the present study assumes that individuals raised in nuclear families could have a greater need to give care to their children and dependent relations. Similarly, they may have more challenges with relational tension and fewer problems with spousal support.

Single-parent family is one where a parent lives with dependent children, either alone or in a larger household, without a spouse or partner. There was a rapid and drastic increase in the

number of single-parent families in the latter half of the twentieth century (Morawetz & Walker, 2014). The outlook of the workforce is changing rapidly especially in the area of demographics including the involvement of women in paid employment, the rising number of working mothers and the increase in need to take care of elderly relatives (Bachu & O'Connell, 2001; Fitzgerald & Harmon, 2001; Major, Germano, Jones, Burke, & Westman, 2006). Single-parent families in contemporary times daily struggle with various challenges. Some of these challenges are payment for expensive day care, insufficient time with children, balancing work and home duties, and economic issues. Parenting challenges could be daunting and handling the responsibility without a spouse could be more challenging. Single parents face challenges associated with absence of spousal support more than their colleagues from a nuclear family setting.

Extended family unit comprises two or more nuclear families of the same generational bracket living together with their respective wives and children in the same household. This often happens among two brothers from the same parents who choose to live together in the same domestic unit. It could be the result of cultural beliefs or need to reduce cost of accommodation. In many cultures, the need to be self-supporting is hard to meet, particularly where rents/property values are very high. These costs could pose as obstacles to the take-off of a new household or the formation of nuclear family. Through these cases, extended family units are formed. Although extended family units enjoy the support of members especially during child-bearing and nurturing years where possible, this kind of arrangement poses various challenges ranging from conflict between wives or quarrels among children. Child misbehaviour could be more pronounced in extended families due to the presence of a non-biological father/mother in the domestic unit.

Blended family could be defined as a joined family. It comprises of two married (or cohabiting) individuals who came into the marriage with children from earlier relationships. In this case, the children from the previous relationships do not have biological relationship with the step-father and step-mother respectively. Where all these children live together with non-biologically connected adults, complications could arise. The most common challenge among parents in blended family units is parenting, discipline and absence of spousal support.

The types of family units explained briefly above highlight pertinent stressors that could emanate from the family domain. In the section below, family stressors and their effect on an individual is presented.

4.5.4.3 Family stressors

Family stress is a situation arising through real or sensed need-capacity imbalance in the way a family functions (explained above). It is characterised by multifaceted need for modification or adaptation in behaviour (Mc Cubbin & Sussman, 2014). Additionally, the elements of stress and the way a family (individual in this case) perceives stress and its overall outcome affects the way in which the family (individual) copes, resists, or prevents the stressor's creation of crisis.

Some of the stressors faced by employees include but are not limited to parenting and child care, elder relative care, personal health factors, finance/debt issues as well as relational stress. These stressors could negatively influence a person's SOC and inversely WLB. The family stressors examined in the present study include parental workload/relationship tension, absence of spousal support, elder care and level of misconduct by the child. These were chosen because the researcher assumes that they may impact a person's SOC negatively and cause work-life imbalance. This researcher acknowledges that everyone in the workforce may not be facing these stressors especially those that are single, others that are yet to have children or some that have only adult children living at home.

Aseltine Jr, Gore, and Gordon (2000) confirm that family stressors could impact negatively on a person's internal consistency, and this may require closure or activities that should bring correction to the situation emanating from these stressors. Such corrective elements may be required to develop, enhance, or moderate an individual's resources. Thus it can be implied that a person facing family stressors may be in need of strategies to buffer (moderate) such stressors.

Parenting is tedious and time and energy consuming and so is every other family responsibility. Moreover, according to Grandey and Cropanzano (1999), when individuals perceive that they do not have sufficient energy and time to handle their work and family responsibilities, they will report dissatisfaction with their work and family outcomes. Also, anxiety, tension between family and work and overall stresses associate with living (Greenhaus, Collins, Singh, & Parasuraman, 1997; Watkins & Subich, 1995). Work and family tensions could be the outcome of insufficient resources which also result in aggression. For instance Jouriles, Murphy, and O'Leary (1989) are of the opinion that hostility among spouses is associated with the constancy and intensity of problems associated with children (Jaffe, Wolfe, Wilson, & Zak, 1985; Taneja, 2013; Wolfe, Jaffe, Wilson, & Zak, 1985). This is because parents make and enforce many

rules that they consider necessary for proper behaviour among their children (Brestan, Eyberg, Algina, Johnson, & Boggs, 2003) and in the bid to craft and enforce these rules, hostilities can arise between the couple, especially if one spouse becomes annoyed with the child's behaviour (Brestan et al., 2003), and the other does not.

Similarly, problems associated generally with marital relationships also correlate with behavioural problems among children. It is commonly known that today's children are tomorrow's men and women whose upbringing bears upon their capacity to cope with stressors (Antonovsky, 1987). Children who grew up with behavioural problems as a result of their upbringing may have weak SOC. Weak SOC could impair an individual's ability to achieve balance amidst work and family stressors.

In the same context, Johnson and Chimo (2000) and Huang et al. (2004) report that workers who are saddled with the responsibility of providing care for elderly relatives face more challenges in achieving balance between work and family when compared with their colleagues who have no such responsibilities (Jones et al., 2013). According to Hepburn and Barling (1996), in Jones et al. (2013), responsibility for providing care for elders could upset work schedules, lead to fractional absenteeism and cause disruptions at work. The scholars report that providing elder care could be more stressful in comparison to taking care of one's children because they are most of the time, unplanned for and could increase in intensity with time (Hepburn & Barling, 1996).

Mc Cubbin and Sussman (2014, p. 8) suggested a definition of stressor based on Mikhail's (1981) and Lazarus' (1966) psychological, and Selye's (1974) physiological linkage, as *a life event or transition impacting upon the family unit which produces, or has a potential of producing change in the family social system*. In addition they clarified that change could be in various aspects of family like family borders, objectives, and ways of interacting, functions, or values. For instance, a family whose member attempted suicide but survived will be clearly stressed. According to Jouriles et al. (1989), problems associated with parenting can lead to various challenges like an increase in aggression among children. Dealing with aggressive children may interfere with an individuals' ability to comprehend, manage or make meaning of life events (that is, SOC).

According to Mc Cubbin and Sussman (2014), the meaning that individual members of a family assign to an incident (stressor) could be dependent on cultural inclinations, beliefs and the

collective assessment of the family system. Therefore, the way an individual perceives stressors could be assumed to be subjective. Individual perception of difficulties, changes and life demands could similarly be linked to their SOC. Mc Cubbin and Sussman (2014) further suggest that the way that a family views events could alternate from assessing life's demands as difficulties needing a solution, to evaluating stressors as being beyond control and the beginning of the demise of the family. This is in line with Antonovsky's (1987) theory of SOC which also suggests that an individual's response to a stressor is an outcome of the strength or weakness of his/her SOC.

Antonovsky (1979) posits that stressors create conflicts at the family levels resulting in the need for coping or management capabilities. If the conflict is not resolved, it leads to stress (Mc Cubbin & Sussman, 2014). An individual facing family crisis will naturally be disoriented, disorganised or incapable of carrying out normal duties. Citing Burr (1973), Mc Cubbin and Sussman (2014) confirm that crisis is conceptualised as an on-going factor that signifies the level of disruptions, disorganisations or incapacity in the social system of a family. Crisis highlights an individual's inability to gain stability or make requisite adjustments in behaviour or lifestyle.

It is possible for stress not to reach crisis levels if an individual is capable of using the resources he/she has to understand the stressor in order to resist its damaging influence as well as maintain stability (Mc Cubbin & Sussman, 2014). SOC has been identified in the literature as being among the resources that an individual has which can be used to forestall a crisis situation. Coping abilities assist individuals to design ways of creating modifications to his/her lifestyle, family structure, roles and behaviours in order to achieve meaningful balance.

According to Metres, McCubbin, and Hunter (1974), single mothers daily face the classical and inherent duty of being both a mother and father to her children and this requires single decision making, correcting children's behaviours, managing money as well as issues relating to the health of the children. It is reported that most wives feel anxious, frustrated and displayed emotional strain as well as felt insecure due to long absence of their spouses from home (Mc Cubbin & Sussman, 2014). Depending on the type of family, most individuals facing problems with their children, elder relations needing care, relational tension and absence of spousal support may have difficulty coping both at home and at work.

To measure family stressors, the researcher used scales measuring parental workload/relational tension, absence of spousal support, elders care and level of misconduct by child(ren). Among the items on the parental workload/relational tension scale are questions testing the level of stress that decision making on different aspects of parenting and relationship has on individuals. Some of the items are: *how much stress does making decisions on the following decisions pose for you?: (1) supporting your child(ren)'s recreational activities versus spending time on your own career development, (2) developing a large portion of your time to the raising of your family versus devoting a large percentage of your time to work.* Four items modified out of six items of the spousal support questionnaire developed by Sarason, Levine, Basham, and Sarason (1983) was modified and used in measuring spousal backing or absence thereof. The items examining absence of spousal support include: *1) I can count on my spouse to listen to me when I need to talk and 2) I can really count on my spouse to be dependable when I need help.* Elder care is measured by using a one-item scale that examines the difficulty an individual employee faces as a result of taking care of elderly relatives. The item is: *caring for my parents makes it difficult for me to be the kind of employee I would like to be.* A 35-item scale measuring level of misconduct by child(ren) is used to examine if misbehaviour by child(ren) is a stressful problem to parents or not. All the items were added to arrive at the total family stressor mark (Michael R Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992).

4.6 Sense of coherence (S O C)

SOC has been reported as a dispositional mechanism that assists employees in coping with stressors (Antonovsky, 1987). The work domain has evolved through the decades due to the emergence of borderless jobs spanning across the work and family domains (Allvin, 2008; Hellgren, Sverke, & Näswall, 2008). Hence, Zheng et al. (2015) suggest that it is required of individual workers to have or personally develop ways of coping with the emerging challenges from work and family spheres (Pienaar, 2008). This study aims to examine the relationship between SOC and WLB at a municipality in the South African public sector for the purpose of ascertaining if SOC influences the achievement of WLB. This section reviews SOC by examining its definition, how it is developed, its mediating, moderating and stability roles as well as how the construct is measured.

4.6.1 Defining sense of coherence

Antonovsky (1987a) describes SOC as a universal inclination of an individual to appraise the world through three characteristic dimensions of 1) meaningfulness (interpretation of stressors

as meaningful demands that deserve to be undertaken), 2) manageability (perception that a person has sufficient resources to manage the environment in which one finds him or herself), and 3) comprehensibility (a case of perceiving an environment as being explainable, organised and predictable) (Feldt, Leskinen, Kinnunen, & Ruoppila, 2003; Kivimäki et al., 2002). Antonovsky (1987a, 1993) suggests that these three components of SOC interrelate strongly, therefore, they must not be assessed as separate constructs (Callahan & Pincus, 1995; Feldt & Rasku, 1998; Flannery & Flannery, 1990; Frenz, Carey, & Jorgensen, 1993). Antonovsky (1987) represented SOC as an individual's constant character although he allowed a window for a likelihood for modification as a result of main incidents that occur in life (Antonovsky, 1987). This is supported by Hofstede (2010) opinion that individuals have in themselves a permanent array of behaviour as a result of their upbringing. This could therefore suggest that SOC is a behavioural manifestation and not just a mental state of mind. SOC is defined as: "*A global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that one's internal and external environments are predictable and that there is a high probability that things will work out as well as can be reasonably expected*" (Antonovsky, 1979).

This definition simply takes into consideration the internal and external resources available to the individual and his/her disposition to using these resources to manage stressors with the expectation that all things being equal, things will all work out well for him/her. The concept of SOC was proposed by Antonovsky (1979, 1987a) as a buffering disposition that shields individuals from the unwanted results of life stressors (Feldt et al., 2003; Nielsen & Hansson, 2007; Richardson & Ratner, 2005). SOC is a universal inclination that is connected with the aptitude to manage pressures that individuals face. It is the aptitude which empowers an individual to face challenges and stressors with optimism basically accepting strain to be one of the things that fosters growth and maturity. A person with a high SOC has the potential to counter stress amenably as well as effectively surmount hostile circumstances (Togari, Yamazaki, Takayama, Yamaki, & Nakayama, 2008), and so might not feel the corresponding strain connected to the effect of the stress (Moksnes, Rannestad, Byrne, & Espnes, 2011).

4.6.2 Background of the SOC concept

The novel way to study health known as salutogenesis concept was introduced by Antonovsky (1979, 1984). This concept drew attention to another way of viewing the source of health in opposition to pathogenesis, a perspective which focuses on the overbearing orientation to

disease (Holmberg et al., 2004). Holmberg (2004) and her colleagues, posit that the existence of humans is always encumbered with different types of stressors, including things that are hereditary, bacteriological, communal, ethnic, and so on. They suggest therefore that there is a need for a person to have coping abilities in order to successfully handle situations that are hectic and perplexing (stressors). They further stated that a person's ability to cope grows through the assistance of common properties that build strength to fight, which are accessible to the person at infancy and all through existence. Some of the examples of resources that build resistance to challenges are riches, strong character, ethnic constancy, plus communal backing (Holmberg et al., 2004). According to the authors (Holmberg et al.), these factors advance the growth of high level SOC.

Scholars agree with Antonovsky (1987a) that the three elements of SOC are greatly interconnected (Bishop, 1993; Feldt & Rasku, 1998; Felstead & Ashton, 2000; Gana & Garnier, 2001; Hart, Hittner, & Paras, 1991; Petrie & Brook, 1992). According to Feldt et al. (2003), an individual who ranks highly in all of the three dimensions of SOC will be said to have strong SOC and enjoy wellness as well as good health (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987a, 1991). Cederblad, Ruksachatkunakorn, Boripunkul, Intraprasert, and Höök (2003, p. 586) report that many studies in Israel, Europe and America have made use of the SOC scale propounded by Antonovsky (1987); it is a self-rating scale (Antonovsky, 1993; Dahlin, Cederblad, Antonovsky, & Hagnell, 1990; Flannery & Flannery, 1990; Gilbar, 1998; Kalimo & Vuori, 1990; Lundberg & Peck, 1994). Most of these studies reveal constancy in their report that individuals with high SOC are characterised by their ability to cope satisfactorily with stressors that are contrary to them.

Criticisms of the SOC theory has been rife based on assumptions that the concept is a feature associated with cultured and influential people in society (Geyer, 1997); although numerous other reports reveal a feeble constructive association among extent of academic qualification (Callahan & Pincus, 1995; Richardson, Adner & Nordstrom, 2001). Other studies have also shown negative association to the degree of education (Larsson & Kallenberg, 1996; Nilsson & Holmgren, 2000). With respect to the cushioning effect, a SOC only starts working in the face of pressure, since it is defined as a pressure managing ability (Togari et al., 2008). Although Antonovsky (1987) claimed that the SOC level grows as a result of an individual's experiences all through infancy, adolescence and youth and stabilises after the attainment of 30 years, the investigation on stability does not confirm that a person has steady disposition as

an adult (Feldt, Kinnunen, & Mauno, 2000; Feldt, Leskinen, Kinnunen, & Mauno, 2000). Nevertheless, empirical findings demonstrate that SOC develops throughout a lifetime (Eriksson, 2007; Moksnes et al., 2011). This makes it important to examine the way in which SOC is developed in individuals.

4.6.3 How SOC is developed

According to Antonovsky (1987a), SOC develops from infancy and early adulthood, and stabilises around the age of 30 years; remaining relatively stable throughout life. It is acquired from the resources available in the environment including material wealth, intelligence-knowledge, communal support, bonds, ethnic constancy, belief, and a constant set of answers to life's paradoxes (Wolff & Ratner, 1999). Feldt et al. (2002), citing Antonovsky (1987a), report that the foundation of a strong SOC is laid in childhood through to adulthood by constancy in one's life experiences (buttressing comprehensibility), *load-balance* (which boosts manageability) and involvement in making decisions (which bolsters meaningfulness). This is in line with Weinberg's (2014) explanation that the human 'nature-nurture heritage' impacts a person's perspective or personal life experience. Weinberg (2014) opines that where this legacy is complete and devoid of lack, then an individual can mingle with his/her peripheral background with meaning and comprehension of realities which could result in sound decisions (Weinberg, 2014). On the other hand, Weinberg added that if the *nature-nurture heritage* is a result of lack, it is difficult for a person to see things in their proper form and reality thereby leading to inherent failure.

The SOC concept takes cognisance of upbringing and a nurturing environment as the source of a strong or weak SOC. Antonovsky (1979, 1987) proposed that resources present in the environment of nurturing such as wealth, religious beliefs, peace/stability, and so on, impact the level of an individual's SOC. In agreement with Antonovsky (1987), Latendresse (2009) confirms that a person's peculiar nature (ways of appraising stressors, coping abilities, and mannerisms) and situations of life (lack, the environment of the place wherein the individual is raised and support systems), add to a person's life experiences (Cohen et al., 1997).

Additionally, Cederblad et al. (2003) confirm that parents who have robust SOC have the tendency to apply and teach better ways of coping to their offspring due to the fact that they have in their own lives, based on their life inclinations, mastered successfully how to cope with life stressors. They further confirm that the three elements of the SOC, meaningfulness,

comprehensibility and manageability, contribute significantly to an individual's ability to manage stressors irrespective of cultural background.

The proponent of the concept (Antonovsky, 1979) suggests that the development of SOC could be traced to childhood (Hofstede, 2010), puberty and youth and then becomes comparatively steady when an individual passes thirty years of age. But Gilbar (1998) reports that SOC is not associated with any particular circumstance, domain of life, timeline or stressor, yet it is a pivotal factor found in the personality of a person which blends towards the attainment of one's thirtieth birthday. Conversely, Feldt et al. (2003) challenged the stability of the concept based on age and went on to conduct a study to investigate the stability of SOC in a five-year longitudinal study. They found that the constancy (stability) coefficients of SOC were precisely the same after a five-year longitudinal study.

According to Togari et al. (2008), SOC nurtures coping abilities in individuals to effectively cope with issues of life and stressors, while attaining the full potential of growth. They noted further that about one hundred other studies are conducted annually and they contribute to this body of knowledge. They reflect that the concept (SOC) is different from other self-concept theories like self-esteem and self-efficacy by its incorporation of the symbiosis of self and others with the environment (Mechanic, 1994). From Antonovsky's (1987) perspective, individuals often opt for the experiences and events which strengthen their SOC, so long as the potential of preserving the constancy, intransience plus generality of the extent of the feature could be identified (Antonovsky, 1979; Gilbar, 1998). It is presumably possible therefore that individuals who perceive their work conditions as challenging and are aware of the WLBS in place to assist them in addressing stressors, will choose to use those strategies in order to manage the stressors and achieve WLB.

Feldt, Kinnunen, et al. (2000), citing Antonovsky (1987b), report that SOC gives a conceptual frame for the examination of conditions of the workplace via which abilities to cope can be changed from weaker to stronger or vice-versa, later on in one's life. In this study, the working conditions that will be examined in light of stressors are role ambiguity/role conflict, absence of autonomy and job stress, which are supported in Antonovsky (1987 b) as among the many factors that shape a person's level of SOC (Feldt, Kinnunen, et al., 2000). A stress-free job (reversed job stress) can improve a person's ability to comprehend happenings in the work domain with clarity, by clearly identifying what is required of him/her. This builds capacity and secure feelings concerning the work domain. Ryland and Greenfeld (1991) support the

argument through their report that high level of SOC is adversely associated to apparent job stress. Kinman (2008), in a study among academics in the UK, found that statistically significant associations were found among SOC, job stressors and health outcomes. Stress creates chaos and conversely affects an individual's ability to arrange and predict ways of achieving desired goals (Landau, Kay, & Whitson, 2015). To establish the achievement of WLB by individual employees is one of the desired goals of this study.

According to Cunniff and Mostert (2012), individuals with strong SOC exhibit persistence and stable sense of confidence and therefore cope better with stressors (Du Toit, 2002). Antonovsky (1987a, 1993b) emphasises that SOC is more of a health resource, rather than a particular coping technique. Individuals possessing high levels of SOC are not fixated on a particular type of resource or managing technique, but rather they focus on finding ways or strategies that promote great flexibility (Feldt, 1997). Flexibility is one strategy that WLBS adopt to help employees achieve WLB. Therefore, inculcating strategies that promote flexibility among employees can potentially increase employees' SOC. Kinman (2008) recommends that SOC could be enhanced through strategies that deal with work stressors from the root. In addition, she suggests that based on Antonovsky's (Perrewé) suggestions to improve SOC, enriched prospects for individual development and involvement in decision-making may result in employee perceptions of better meaningfulness in work, while a sense of manageability could be encouraged through better and efficient work-load administration and increased job autonomy. Similarly, reduction in role stressors, open and fair salary structures and job security could enhance comprehensibility. Kinman (2008) reports that proof that SOC could respond to derived stress-management practices is available (Haraldsson, Fridlund, Baigi, & Marklund, 2005). She finally suggested that the findings of her study recommending programmes that enhance individual resources and help in managing stressors at the source could be considered in protecting employee wellness.

WLBS are benefits available in the workplace to help employees balance their work and family roles. They make resources available which have the capacity to improve on a person's SOC (Antonovsky, 1987). According to Cunniff and Mostert (2012), individuals with a low level of SOC show the disposition to be challenged by change and exhibit difficulty in adjusting thereto. They also see the world from a pessimistic perspective and consider demands as stressors (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2006). Strumpfer (1990) is of the opinion that modifying workers' SOC could improve the way they see themselves, increase their individual development and make way for change. Therefore, building content that should address and improve employees'

SOC into WLBS could aid the achievement of WLB by those employees having weaker SOC, which is capable of being modified by the strategies.

This study is based on professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector, most of whom are confronted daily by work and family stressors and the need to achieve WLB. The study takes cognisance of apartheid and its effect on the SOC of individual employees by appraising the connection between WLB and SOC. The aim for examining the role of SOC in this study was primarily because it is indicated in the literature that most individuals daily contend with stressors, and SOC is discovered to be a dispositional buffering influence in this perspective.

4.6.4 The role of SOC

The transactional method in the stress and coping literature (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) accentuates the significance of the interface among the person and the environment in cognitive assessment of circumstances. This therefore underpins the importance of integrating individual variables in examining the relationship between situations that are potentially stressful and which are coping strategies (García-Moya, Rivera, & Moreno, 2013). SOC is thought to be a crucial variable in the research of individual dissimilarities on health and coping (Antonovsky, 1987; Eriksson & Lindström, 2007).

Cederblad et al. (2003) report that people with high SOC are able to simplify and organise stressors facing them with the belief and motivation that the resources relevant to handling the stressors are accessible and could be easily mobilised towards dealing with the stressor successfully. This inclination permits the choice of pertinent coping techniques, and thus gives room for the achievement of good health and sustained wellness. Diraz et al. (2003) confirm that a person having a strong SOC has the ability and confidence to confront challenges and difficult situations with the assured expectation of everything turning out right within reasonable prospect. They also report that SOC performs the role of a surviving strategy which possibly helps individuals to manage everyday life challenges towards conflict reduction (Strumpfer et al., 1998) and this may result in the achievement of meaningful WLB. Diraz et al. (2003) further highlight that persons with low SOC are unable to manage everyday challenges of life (McSherry & Holm, 1994) leading possibly to lack of satisfaction and work-life imbalance. Scholars report that SOC plays a cushioning role on employees' health even in a place of work that is highly demanding (Feldt, 1997; Höge & Büssing, 2004; Vahtera, Pentti, & Uutela, 1996).

Although Antonovsky (1979) indicates that SOC is a global orientation that helps in managing stressors irrespective of cultural connotations, some studies have portrayed the concept as an element of resilience. Some cross-sectional studies have reported a connection between high SOC with good health (Antonovsky, 1993; Feldt, 1997; Suominen et al., 2001). Likewise, many longitudinal studies have discovered that SOC is a predictor of health (Feldt, Kinnunen, et al., 2000; Feldt, Leskinen, et al., 2000; Kivimäki et al., 2002; Suominen et al., 2001). Strümpfer (1997) found that there is a direct correlation between SOC and apparent health among seventy nine supervisors in the agricultural sector in South Africa. Bishop (1993) discovered that SOC acted as a buffer on life stressors when he studied the illness record of 186 students in Singapore. Strümpfer, Danana, et al. (1998) observe that satisfaction with work correlated positively with SOC among a sample of 323 individuals selected from nurses, skilled workers and management staff. Moreover, Lustig and Strauser (2002, p. 4), submit that SOC was learnt to be the differentiating factor among fulfilled/competent employees and unfulfilled/incompetent employees (Kalimo & Vuori, 1990).

There is empirical evidence that shows that SOC moderates an individual's handling of various life stressors (Lustig & Strauser, 2002), issues of violence at work and reactions to stress (Hogh & Mikkelsen, 2005), impacts of events that are stressful on health (Richardson & Ratner, 2005), effect of difficulties relating to life in the College and symptoms of depression among students (Ying, Lee, & Tsai, 2007). Therefore, it may be realistic to presume that there could be an association between SOC and work and family stressors. This association is anticipated to be able to affect the achievement of WLB. There have been little or no studies linking SOC with WLB with the objective of exploring the connectedness of both concepts. The present study presumes that SOC will influence the achievement of WLB in the face of work-life stressors, through the use of WLBS available to an individual at work. The researcher theorises that the possession of high or low SOC (Diraz et al., 2003) could determine the extent to which a person achieves WLB or otherwise.

In this context, the three perspectives to the SOC concept could be relevant in understanding how individuals manage stress and achieve WLB. These perspectives are: 1) meaningfulness (a construct that views the treatment of demands in the work-life domain as meaningful tasks that should be exploited rather than stressors), 2) manageability (a perception of one's environment as having the resources necessary to deal with the presentations (stressors in this case) in the environment, and 3) comprehensibility (an acceptance of the environment as being

organised, foreseeable and explicable (Kivimäki, Feldt, Vahtera, & Nurmi, 2000, p. 240). Individuals who score greater marks on the three facets of SOC are said to have a strong SOC (Feldt et al., 2002; Antonovsky, 1979, 1987a, 1991). Therefore, these individuals could easily manage stressors through the use of WLBS available and go ahead to achieve meaningful WLB. This study did not explore the marks scored by individuals on the facets of SOC, rather it presumes that the three perspectives of SOC could among other factors underpin the behaviour, mental assessment (Antonovsky, 1987; Hogh & Mikkelsen, 2005) and relational frame of WLB behaviour among employees.

The major assumption of the SOC theory is that the adequateness of an individual's capacity to cope with psychosocial stressors emanating from the work and family domains depends on the strength of his/her SOC (Antonovsky, 1987b; Hogh & Mikkelsen, 2005). Theoretically, it could be assumed that the reason that a person facing stressors in work and family domains may be unable to achieve WLB could be as a result of their view of the demands of these domains as threats and not challenges worthy to be taken up (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Hakanen & Roodt, 2010; Latendresse, 2009). This could naturally lead to disinterest in balancing the role demands from these domains. Likewise, inappreciation or meaninglessness associated with work and family stressors could lead to negative behaviours that may place more salience on one role and not the other, indicated by lesser involvement, time spent, satisfaction and or efficiency in handling issues in the domain that has received lesser salience (Perrons, 2003). For example, if an employee perceives job stress and absence of autonomy at work as stressors rather than challenges needing to be tackled, the individual may decide to focus on working hard to enjoy the family by spending more time with family. This could lead to inefficiency at work, job dissatisfaction, involvement imbalance and probably overall poor performance.

This study presumes that possession of strong SOC will help an individual to choose what to do with work and family stressors as well as WLB. This is indicated by the manner in which the individual perceives the world around them demonstrated by the move that the individual makes in structuring their roles predictably and explicable. It implies that a person having strong SOC could perceive the job as stressful but will find ways of meaningfully coping with the stressors. According to Feldt, Kinnunen, et al. (2000), experiences that are consistent are the root of comprehensibility. This means that ability to comprehend issues is built from experiences that are predictable in constancy. For instance, an individual exposed to the same

experiences regularly may acquire some attributes from these encounters that should build some kind of capacity or mastery over them with time. Likewise, if stress is removed from a job and an employee with a low SOC is employed in the organisation, he/she may perceive job demands as challenges that are worthy to be exploited rather than destructive issues. It could be suggested therefore that absence of or reduced job stress can improve the level of SOC among those with low SOC and enhance strong SOC.

In examining SOC and stressors for instance, Liu et al. (2005) report that some researches and theories associate job autonomy to mental health, physiological wellness and behaviour (Spector, 1986, 1998; Evans & Carrere, 1991; Ganster & Fusilier, 1991). An experience of absence of autonomy at the workplace could lead to the perception by an employee that the workplace lacks the resources that are necessary for effective job performance (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Bakker, Hakanen, Demerouti, & Xanthopoulou, 2007). Antonovsky (1987a, b; 1991) suggests that significant role balance produces manageability. Conversely, absence of balance affects manageability negatively. An employee in a job situation that he/she perceives as not offering him/her autonomy could be uncertain about, how and when to perform their function, which could lead to mental and possibly physical stress. This could influence the manner the individual gets involved with and spends time at work and ultimately the satisfaction derived from such engagement. For instance, assignment to a role that lacks sufficient control over decisions by a professional level employee could leave the employee struggling with the stressor and decision to achieve balance. Therefore, absence of autonomy (stressor) may affect SOC and conversely create difficulty in coping.

For instance, when family demands an individual employee's attention and time to attend an important family function during a period that the employee considers to be the peak (busy) period, the employee may rationalise that the family members do not understand the demand of his/her job. This could lead to conflict resulting in dissatisfaction, less involvement and ultimately, work-life imbalance.

Function vagueness/role conflict can affect a person's SOC adversely. Role ambiguity (vagueness) refers to the degree to which a person lacks clarity with respect to the expectation of others concerning his/her function, plus the extent of uncertainty relating to an individual's performance (Hoeness & Kamal, 2015; Katsikea, Theodosiou, & Morgan, 2015; Netemeyer et al., 1990). While Rizzo et al. (1970) defined role conflict as the degree to which expectations of a role are incompatible or incongruent with the reality of the role, a person having weak

SOC and experiencing function vagueness/conflict in their roles may be incapable of seeing any meaning in the demands of the job but rather may perceive challenges as not worthy of venturing into or engaging with. This researcher presumes that function vagueness/role conflict could negatively affect a person's SOC. This could be due to the fact that function vagueness and role conflict create the feeling that the workplace is unorganised, unpredictable and inexplicable which also could lead to dissatisfaction, inefficiency and instability both at home and at work (Bolino & Turnley, 2005). This mental feeling may affect an individual's use of WLBS and ultimately the manner stressors are addressed.

A study by Holmberg et al. (2004) among 1 782 of the male population in Sweden revealed that a robust negative association existed between SOC and work demand (stressor), while an optimistic association with job autonomy was observed. García-Moya et al. (2013) found that SOC associated directly with stress and that learners with strong SOC demonstrated lower probability of suffering from stress resulting from schooling. Moksnes et al. (2011) found a strong but inverse connection between SOC and subjective health complaints. It was nevertheless found that no association existed between SOC and educational level (Larsson & Kallenberg, 1996; Nilsson, Holmgren, & Westman, 2000), as well as occupation. Therefore, SOC demonstrated high association to job-related mental and environmental factors, as well as common support, nonetheless, it was non-aligned to socio-demographic variables (Holmberg et al., 2004). Holmberg et al. (2004) report that the level of job training associated strongly to SOC with both male and female workers, while Larsson and Kallenberg (1996) and Nilsson et al. (2000) show that distinct associations exist between SOC and communal backing (support).

Similarly, considering the effect of these work stressors on an individual's SOC, it will not be out of order to presume that SOC likewise plays a significant role in a person's ability to achieve WLB. Hogh and Mikkelsen (2005) are of the opinion that individual peculiarities could affect the way people appraise underlying stressors and their own coping capacity, to which they either deepen, lessen or avert stress reactions (Juth, Dickerson, Zoccola, & Lam, 2015; LePine, Zhang, Rich, & Crawford, 2015; Spector, Zapf, Chen, & Frese, 2000). Therefore, at the mental, behavioural and relational frame (Kivimäki et al., 2000), achievement of WLB could have factors that can be attributed to high SOC and low SOC. In the case where this is the reality, SOC could be a mediating variable between WLBS and WLB. Kivimäki et al. (2000) report that only indirect evidence is obtainable to validate the mediating role of SOC.

However, in a study conducted by Albertsen, Nielsen, and Borg (2001) among 2 053 Danish workers from 52 organisations, SOC was identified as a mediating variable between organisational climate and signs of stress. It confirmed that SOC also had some kind of moderating influence, because their results suggest that individuals with higher SOC demonstrated better coping abilities with stress from the work environment, than those possessing lower SOC. In addition, they suggested that SOC should be considered when analysing the influence of factors associated with organisational climate on strain and wellness (Albertsen et al., 2001). This study did not investigate the mediating role of SOC.

However, there are a few studies that explored the moderating role of SOC. SOC has been found to moderate the connection between work features and wellness (Feldt, 1997), and the connection between unemployment and bodily/mental symptoms (Hanse & Engstrom, 1999). Albertsen et al. (2001) and (Kivimäki et al., 2002) refuted the claims that SOC is a moderator of the association between causes of stress and perceived stress. But, Feldt, Kinnunen, et al. (2000) found that SOC can be altered as a result of changes in the workplace, pointing that SOC is not a rigid feature. This informed the reason why the present study considers that relevant changes made in WLBS adopted by an organisation to assist employees achieve WLB could improve individual employee's SOC. Strong SOC can help employees cope with work and family stressors and this may lead to the achievement of meaningful WLB. It could therefore be assumed that strong SOC may be positively associated with work and family stressors which could directly or indirectly result in the mitigation of the stressors. This is supported by Antonovsky (1987b) in his report that a strong SOC is notable in the manner in which individuals perceive or experience the environment they are in, and their employment conditions. He further posited that a high level of SOC promotes the perception of stressors as challenges needing to be solved rather than problems threatening the individual (Antonovsky, 1987).

Feldt (1997) suggests that the reason why the role of SOC as a moderator is not well explored may be because SOC is not basically a moderating variable (Antonovsky, 1987). The result of some of the studies that examined the moderating role of SOC looked like they support the concept as a major impact element rather than a moderator in the explanation of wellness (Flannery & Flannery, 1990; Korotkov, 1993). The outcome of the study by Flannery and Flannery (1990) shows that SOC did not moderate the association between stressors and wellness, while Korotkov (1993) reports that the SOC measure lacked clarity, structure, plus

prognostic rationality among models that moderate stress (Feldt, 1997). He suggests that the probability that SOC plays the role of a moderating variable in the association among apparent work features and wellness is not certainly clear. But where there is an absence of interface among constructs that usually moderate associations there could be need for further clarification (James, Pitt-Catsouphes, McNamara, Snow, & Johnson, 2015).

Finally, Ryland and Greenfeld (1991) observe that a strong SOC has a negative association with apparent job strain, burnout (Baker, North, & Smith, 1997; Gilbar, 1998), overall wellness (Ryland & Greenfeld, 1991) and mental tiredness at work (Feldt, 1997; Gilbar, 1998). In addition it was found that SOC had an inverse relationship with stress and that continued exposure to stressors causes SOC to deteriorate (Wolff & Ratner, 1999). They also found that contrary to Antonovsky's (1996b) prediction that SOC stabilises at age 30, unmanaged or badly managed exposure to constant stressors weakens SOC. On the other hand, SOC has a positive association with overall wellness (Ryland & Greenfeld, 1991), functional status (Carmel, Anson, Levenson, Bonneh, & Maoz, 1991), and life satisfaction (Kalimo & Vuori, 1990; Sagy, Antonovsky, & Adler, 1990). Likewise, low SOC according to scholars is found to be linked to worry (Bowman, 1996; Carmel & Bernstein, 1989; Flannery, Perry, Penk, & Flannery, 1994; Hart et al., 1991) and despair (Bowman, 1996; Flannery et al., 1994).

The present study is examined the connection that SOC has with WLB and the impact that WLBS plays in the connection. The researcher hypothesises that stressors influence SOC and that SOC could be improved by well formulated and designed WLBS that help employees manage work and family stressors, as well as assist them in achieving meaningful WLB.

Although the SOC concept has been widely researched, there are certain aspects of the construct that beg for clarification. According to Feldt et al. (2002), among the most fundamental facets of SOC that needs further examination is the stability factor, which the proponent, Antonovsky (1993) himself says requires more analysis. Just like other trait features which are associated with a person's endowment including locus of control (Rotter, 1975), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977) and hardiness (Kobasa, 1979, 1982). SOC (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987a, 1991) has been presumed to show relative stability with regards to personality dispositions after adolescence (Feldt et al., 2003).

A very critical factor in the definition of SOC is the assumption that it is a stable personality trait (Antonovsky, 1987, pp. 1987b, 1991, 1993; Antonovsky, Sagy, Adler, & Visel, 1990;

Sagy et al., 1990). Feldt et al. (2003) conducted a study to test the stability of SOC according to Antonovsky's (1987a) proposition that SOC, though a progressive construct, stabilises at age 30. In a five-year longitudinal study among two different age categories of a sample of 352 Finnish technical designers, it was found that age played no part in the constancy of, degree of, or average modification in SOC, meaning that SOC does not grow and stabilise in adulthood (Feldt et al., 2003). But Feldt et al. (2007) report that SOC was observed as showing better stability among respondents who were older than 30 years (constancy factor 0.81) than among those adults younger than 30 years (stability factor 0.70); supporting the notion that SOC is more stable in the course of maturity. In their study, Eriksson and Lindström (2005) confirm that SOC appears to be seemingly stable after 10 years but not in the magnitude of Antonovsky's (1987) original assumption. They also report that it seems that SOC increases as one ages, and forecasts an optimistic result in the long run; even though differing outcomes have been reported. The scholars are of the opinion that the SOC scale may be a valid and reliable scale which can be used across cultures to measure individual ways of handling stressors (Eriksson & Lindström, 2005). The present study is not examining the stability of SOC to ascertain its weakness or strength among individual employees.

The aim of this study is to investigate the connection between WLB and SOC in order to, among other things: 1) discover the influence of work and family stressors on SOC, 2) to examine if a connection exists between an individual's SOC and WLB, and how WLBs impact on this connection. The study assumes that stressors impact on SOC, demonstrated in the way an individual responds to stressors. A person with strong SOC may comprehend a stressor as a challenge and perceive that he/she has the resources in his/her environment (work and family domains) to manage those stressors. This can lead to the development of an ability to meaningfully strive to achieve WLB. For example, a person with strong SOC who is called in the middle of a meeting that he or she is heading and notified that his/her elderly parent has just been rushed to the hospital, will in his/her stride arrange for someone else to take over the meeting or calmly conclude the meeting after making calls to ascertain the degree of emergency of the matter, while a person with low SOC may cut the meeting short or haphazardly conclude it and in a panic, rush off to the hospital. The manner in which the person with a strong SOC will arrange his/her role over the next days around the emergency will be totally different. The person with a strong SOC will consider the development as a challenge that is surmountable by drawing from his/her work-life benefits, social support and/or personal internal resources to face the challenge, while the individual with low SOC may feel that the demand of the

emergency situation and challenges at work are too much to be managed. The present study also assumes that use of WLBS could impact on SOC and possibly lead to the achievement of WLB by an employee.

4.6.5 Measurement of SOC and the validity of the SOC scale

The *Orientation to Life Questionnaire* (E. E. Kossek et al.) designed by Antonovsky (1987a) is of two types. The first and longer type comprises of 29 items (eight items testing meaningfulness, 11 measuring comprehensibility and 10 measuring manageability). The three factors of SOC (comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness) are measured by using the initial 13-item condensed model of the OLX (Antonovsky, 1987). The scale comprises four items measuring meaningfulness, five items assessing comprehensibility and four other items measuring manageability (Feldt et al., 2003). One of the items measuring comprehensibility is: *do you have the feeling that you are in an unfamiliar situation and do not know what to do?* An example of items assessing manageability among others is: *how often do you have feelings that you're not sure you can keep under control?* One of the items measuring meaningfulness is: *how often do you have the feelings that there's little meaning in the things you do in your daily life?* Response is based on a seven-point discrepancy scale ranging from (1) *very seldom or never* to (7) *very often*.

Literature shows that the OLQ is widely used in no fewer than thirty two countries and has at least fifteen dissimilar editions of the questionnaire. Eriksson and Lindström (2005) report that among one hundred and twenty four (124) researches that used the SOC-29 (E. E. Kossek et al.), the alpha coefficient span was between 0.70 to 0.95, while the Cronbach's alpha from those that used the SOC-13 in one hundred and twenty seven (127) studies, spans between 0.70 to 0.92. Test-retest association reveals stability and spans from 0.78 in the first (1st) year through 0.64 in the third (3rd) year and 0.54 in the tenth (10th) year. It is also seen that the means of the SOC-13 is from 35.39 (SD 0.10) to 77.60 (SD 13.80) points (Eriksson & Lindström, 2005, p. 460).

Overall outcomes of past studies confirm the validity and reliability of the OLQ scale and give primary evidence about the worth of the core concept (Antonovsky, 1993; Feldt, Kokko, Kinnunen, & Pulkkinen, 2005;; Feldt, Leskinen, et al., 2000; Pallant & Lae, 2002). Literature shows that confirmatory factor analysis has been used to test the structure of the shorter version of the OLQ (Feldt et al., 2007). Feldt et al. (2007) report that the 13-item SOC scale appears to be capable of standing as a psychometrically valid measuring tool for testing the concept of

SOC as proposed by Antonovsky. The present study adopted the use of the 13-item SOC scale (by adding an extra item on control because of “job autonomy” being investigated in this study) to measure SOC among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector. Therefore, a 14-item OLQ scale was used in the present study to measure SOC.

SOC-13 consists of four items measuring meaningfulness (numbered from the original 29-item OLQ scale) as follows: (4) *Do you have the feeling that you don't really care about what goes on around you?* (8) *Until now your life has had no clear goals or purpose at all ... vs. ... very clear goals and purpose* (16) *Doing the things that you do every day is: A source of deep pleasure and satisfaction vs. ... a source of pain and boredom* (28) *How often do you have the feeling that there's little meaning in the things you do in your daily life?* The five items testing comprehensibility are stated as follows: (5) *Has it happened in the past that you were surprised by the behaviour of people whom you thought you knew well?* (12) *Do you have the feeling that you are in an unfamiliar situation and don't know what to do?* (19) *Do you have very mixed-up feelings?* (21) *Does it happen that you have feelings inside you would rather not feel?* (26) *When something happened, have you generally found that ... you overestimated or underestimated its importance ...? vs. ... you saw things in the right proportion?* Manageability is represented in the four items as follows: (6) *has it happened that people whom you counted on disappointed you?* (9) *Do you have that feeling that you're being treated unfairly?* (25) *Many people even those with a strong character sometimes feel like sad sacks (losers) in certain situations. How often have you felt this way in the past?* (29) *How often do you have feelings that you're not sure you can keep under control?* Responses are made on a seven-point likert measure ranging from (1) never to (Marmot & Stansfield) always; as articulated for each item. Five items on the scale carry reversed scores in the negative word; the overall sum of the scores could range from 13, but in this study 14 (weak SOC) to 91, and 98 (strong SOC) (Vastamäki, Moser, & Paul, 2009). In ascertaining the strength of SOC, mean score of the total items were taken and higher scores represent stronger SOC (Kinman, 2008).

4.6.6 Conclusion

The present study examined the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. Literature has shown in the previous chapter that achieving WLB is challenging due to the presence of stressors and absence of personal resources to handle them. The review of literature in the area of stressors and SOC found that it is possible to comprehend, understand, manage and cope with stressors from work and family domains by the use of personal resources and strategies available at work as well as support. SOC is

identified as one of the personal resources that help individuals to cope with stressors in the literature.

The study identifies and examines job stress, absence of autonomy and function vagueness/role conflict as some of the stressors that confront employees in the workplace. It also examines family stressors like parenting, level of misconduct by child(ren), elder care, relational stress, and absence of spousal support. These variables were identified as having capacity to impair an individual's SOC. It was also seen that the individual with a strong SOC showed more capacity to comprehend, manage and cope with stressors than another with weak SOC.

The role of SOC was also explored. It was also found that stressors could affect SOC and this could underlie the achievement of WLB. It was also found that SOC could be enhanced through WLBS in place at the organisation. The next chapter will comprehensively examine the WLB construct.

CHAPTER FIVE: WORK-LIFE BALANCE (WLB)

5.1 Introduction

Work-life balance (WLB) is referred to in this study as the destination of satisfaction with work and family situations that an individual achieves through performing work and family related roles and confronting domain related challenges. This could be achieved through the use of WLBS to manage work and family stressors. In addition, an individual's SOC (discussed in detail in Chapter four) could influence the achievement or otherwise of meaningful WLB. WLB has been a topical issue of debate across boardrooms, classrooms as well as political arenas for a long time now, with most people wondering what 'balance' really is. Due to the issue of uncommon definition for the concept, this chapter explores various definitions proposed by scholars.

This chapter presents explanations about WLB, identifies various paradigms through which the construct has been studied and reviews the theories of WLB propounded by various scholars. The connections between WLB and SOC, WLBS and WLB are also discussed. The gap observed in the literature on these connections led to the suggestion of a definition for the concept in this study. This also led to the proposition of a conceptual framework (discussed comprehensively in Chapter six) on the connection between WLB and SOC for this study. In this model, the influence of independent variables (WLBS and SOC) on the achievement of WLB (dependent variable) is discussed.

5.2 WLB background

The concept of WLB has been a subject of scholarly and political discussions (Felstead et al., 2002) in Europe and America since the 1960s and 1970s, it is comparatively new in the African context. As the structure, nature and composition of work continue to change, questions are being asked about how far the boundary line between work and life will go (Ruth Eikhof et al., 2007; Taylor, 2002). With the numerous changes such as dual earners, technological advancement and globalisation, increasing demands of the work and family domain have presented themselves as recognisable challenges that need to be examined (Guest, 2002; Jones et al., 2013). Gregory and Milner (2009) report that scholars have viewed the link between work and life from three perspectives, namely role, time and family-friendly arrangements by organisations. However, Guest (2002) identified three problem areas that need to be addressed as follows: (a) issues emanating in the work domain that could be viewed as the causes of work-life imbalance; (b) outside work issues that may be seen as the outcome of work-life imbalance;

and (c) all other issues pertinent to the person and his/her life beyond work which result in the need to tackle the problem of WLB as a present-day problem needing to be addressed strategically. In line with Guest's (2002) suggestion, this study identified three issues deriving from work, namely role ambiguity/role conflict, absence of control, and job stress that could be linked to work-life imbalance. From the life (family and personal) domain, this study identified parenting and child care, elder care, relational tension and absence of spousal support as factors that similarly could cause work-life imbalance among individual employees.

According to Wong and Ko (2009), scholars have conducted reviews of the literature in the area of the connection between the work and non-work domain (Cushing, 2004; MacInnes, 2005; Staines, 1980). Similarly, literature reveals myriads of articles on WLB from the context of role conflict (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Eagle et al., 1998; Eagle et al., 1997; Gutek et al., 1991; Jones et al., 2013; Netemeyer et al., 1996; Williams & Alliger, 1994). Their findings contribute to the debate on WLB, yet not much has been written on how WLB connects to other variables that could impact its achievement. The present study explores the connection that WLB has with SOC among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector.

Although it assumed that WLB is beneficial, rigorous examination of the construct has not been established (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Guest, 2002). In addition, Greenhaus and Powell (2003) suggest that empirical studies on the concept can only add value to knowledge of work-life underlying forces when improvement is made on the concept. According to them, many researchers defined balance in order to differentiate WLB among theories that are associated with it (Clark, 2000; Guest, 2002; Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001; Kirchmeyer, 2000; Kofodimos, 1993; Marks et al., 2001; Marks & MacDermid, 1996). However there is no agreement in the way that balance is defined among scholars. The next section presents some definitions proposed on WLB by some scholars.

5.3 Work-life balance defined

In examining WLB, there are initial difficulties associated with the meaning of balance (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Guest, 2002). According to Greenhaus et al. (2003), the majority of the reviews of the connectedness between work and family overlook work-family balance without defining the notion. They suggest that realistic study on WLB could add value to the understanding of work-home interface if the concept is developed further. Additionally, an examination of balance in work and domestic responsibilities often neglects to differentiate

balance from numerous other theories found in work-family writings (Sumer & Knight, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999). This study explores the definition of WLB by many scholars based on different perspectives.

Greenhaus et al. (2003) report that balance cannot be considered to represent an instrument connecting family to work since it cannot explain in what way what a person does or is involved with in one sphere of life causes what they do or get involved with in another sphere of life (Edward & Rothbard, 2000). Rather WLB is an indication of a person's coordination of various life roles, as well as other occurrences between work and life (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). According to Mead (1964), human beings are capacitated to view the world as whole (Schwalbe, 1991). For instance, people do not see a dog as a pair of legs with a tail and so forth, but as a whole dog. Overlooking many other activities and role companions in order to embrace a desirable role identity may be the outcome of the arrangement of a person's self. Otherwise, it can create a better route to the gathering of roles and personalities which may give rise to various consequences on wellness (Marks et al., 1996). The process of consistently reviewing one's role system could lead to role balance. Role balance can be said to be either positive or negative.

Marks and MacDermid (1996, p. 421) define positive and negative role balance as:

Positive role balance is the tendency to become fully engaged in the performance of every role in one's total role system, to approach every typical role and role partner with an attitude of alertness and care. Put differently, it is the practice of that even handed alertness known sometimes as mindfulness. Negative role balance is the tendency to become fully disengaged in the performance of every role.

This definition of positive role balance seeks to justify total involvement and commitment to each role performed as role balance. From this perspective, it seems that a person who gives casual care, and is inattentive as well as approaches roles in their role system with simplicity, may not be said to have role balance. Continuing, Marks and MacDermid theorised that role balance creates ease in role performance, while absence of balance creates role tension generally. The researcher asks the question about the means of measuring mindfulness and the challenges that a person may face in trying to be mindful (totally engaged) in performing roles, bearing in mind the fleeting nature of the mind.

In the context of the above, Greenhaus et al. (2003) report that the opinion that people arrange their functions in order of priority prevails among scholars. But Marks and MacDermid (1996), citing Mead (1964), differed from the popular opinion that people arrange what they do according to what is priority, and propose that people have the ability to and ought to show corresponding affirmative responsibility in every function and responsibilities thrust upon them in life. This implies therefore that affirmative responsibility is required to differentiate role balance from knowing how to prepare and maintain a *priority or 'to-do' list*. Most people develop *to-do lists* to avoid conflicts in their role performance. This might have led to definitions such as that of Clark (2000, p. 751) that balance is:

satisfaction and good functioning at work and home with a minimum of role conflict. She suggests that absence of role conflict coupled with fulfilment and efficiency implies WLB, thus ascribing such satisfaction and efficiency to the ability to draw boundaries between work and family and manage those borders towards achieving the desired balance. The definition does not take into consideration employees' responses to such emergencies that may arise at work and at home. For instance, the sickness of a spouse, child, parent, absentee colleague whose job responsibility (schedule) falls on another employee, and transfers. But Parasuraman (1999) considered the foregoing in the definition that reflected that the demands and stresses of the family role sometimes require taking time off from work for such matters as caring for a sick child at home, or taking care of one's spouse or parent after surgery, child birth, or to care for a terminally ill parent.

Reflectively, it is not every time that an individual experiences the situation described by Parasuraman (1999) in his definition. For instance, the events following the need to care for a sick child or a spouse may not suggest a perpetual state of balance or imbalance when they happen. Taking time off to attend to family and/or personal emergencies may trigger imbalance. Since these situations are exigencies, they may be handled better by individuals who already have WLB. If sufficient time is made available for an individual to perform these life roles, does this guarantee the achievement of WLB? The present study seeks to answer these questions in helping individuals define, reclaim and/or maintain WLB even in the face of stressors and exigencies. The study explores the connection between WLB and SOC (SOC is discussed in detail in Chapter four).

The scholars Parasuraman (1996) and Clark (2000) based their definitions on time and role performance suggesting that time has to be taken off one role to perform another role. This

researcher puts forth the argument that WLB is not just about time management and allocation of priorities, but a deliberate effort to meaningfully accomplish roles, achieve targets, improve on oneself, relate with community and be satisfied with the two domains of work and life on a continuous basis.

To view WLB from a role perspective is to narrowly examine the concept. This is because, a person in the midst of performing a role whether at work or at home, performs the given role in an environment that is subject to factors extraneous and some internal to him/her. The role concept neither takes into cognisance the resources available for the individual at work and at home such as WLBS (programmes) provided to aid the individual employee to cope with the stressors associated with work and family, nor the presence or absence of family support and their efficacy in enabling the achievement of balance. Although the concept of role balance is strictly based on role and self-efficiency and overlooks issues such as satisfaction with the role or time involved at playing roles, the present study draws inferences from positive role balance in the examination of how involved a person is in the performance of work and family roles.

According to Grzywacz and Carlson (2007), Marks and MacDermid (1996) role balance was suggested as a management tool and not a characterisation of a working adults' work-life issues. It is noteworthy also that the role balance concept does not prescribe ways to manage *equality* (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003) between work and family roles. That the role balance concept does not make any prescriptions with respect to equality (sharing resources equally between work and family domain) as conceptualised by (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003) is noteworthy. This could be partially because queries around the value of activities associated with work and family cannot be accurately answered (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

Greenhaus and Allen (2011) proposed a new definition of work-family balance based on the fit perspective as a total assessment to determine the degree that a person's efficiency and fulfilment with work and life (family) aligns with the price that the person places on life within a given period of time. In addition, they suggested that people appraise their efficiency in individual roles alongside measures that they have built in themselves to gauge accomplishment, weigh the fulfilment they get from performing every role, and at the same time ascertain if the achieved efficiency and fulfilment aligns to the importance which they assign to the role performed. This definition takes into cognisance the person in the midst of work and life and the value that he/she assigns to life's overall roles played in the work and family domain. The definition seems to have taken root in the role perspective of WLB because

the authors suggested that although life values are varied, they would like to adopt the *role priority* idea which highlighted roles (Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000).

The authors chose three role hierarchies to buttress their convictions namely: people who are focused on careers, people who are focused on family and people who are focused on both family and career. They reported that those individuals who focus more on careers or family assign the midst of their lives as well as ascribe the source of their identification to the role that takes pre-eminence in their rating. Those whose focus are on family and career rate both roles equally and deduce their self-efficacy from whatever encounters and achievements they make in the two spheres. They therefore view WLB from the perspective that career/family oriented individuals experience balance when they are at the point where they feel very efficient and satisfied with both functions.

It implies that career/family focused people will feel a sense of balance when they achieve efficiency and fulfilment in that domain of life to which they have given their highest preference (priority). They surmised that a person has achieved balance if he/she is very efficient and fulfilled in the role(s) that he/she attaches high importance and preference to (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).

This researcher sees this definition by Greenhaus et al. (2011), which views balance from the premise of focus and assessment of role performance by an individual, to be posing an empirical question. If balance is an outcome which a person attains when he/she is effective and satisfied with performing a role, are there no possibilities that the need to stay away from a dysfunctional relationship/work can make an individual place his/her satisfaction upon accomplishments at work/family? Previously, Greenhaus et al. (2011) had suggested that there are in-built parameters that individuals have in themselves that appraises their role performance. What if this in-built mechanism is founded on dysfunctional elements in his/her environment at work and/or at home; how would balance be assessed if they achieve efficiency and satisfaction based on the in-built mechanism? For instance, a person who failed dismally in a marital or work relationship respectively may decide to prioritise his/her career/or family above the other and go on to achieve effectiveness and satisfaction in the same. Another question is: how does this 'in-built mechanism' aid the individual in the face of work and family stressors? This is the reason why the present study is undertaking to investigate the SOC (a dispositional mechanism that buffers stress) of an individual and the link that it has to WLB.

In addition, Greenhaus et al. (2011) noted four dimensions in their definitions and suggested primarily that equal efficiency or fulfilment at performing work and family roles is not a prerequisite to balance; rather, equal prioritization of both functions is a necessity. Second point of note is that they viewed involvement in roles as a contributory element to the achievement of WLB rather than an outcome. Thirdly, they suggested, citing Friedman and Lobel (2003), that results will be said to have yielded a proven feeling of balance if they align personal convictions about values instead of those values that are prescribed by forceful societal customs and requirements. Fourthly, they went on to suggest that a person has to be on the verge of the level of experience acceptable to them personally with respect to efficiency and fulfilment when they are performing a role of lesser importance for it to be said that they have achieved balance.

This definition of balance hinges on the interface between efficiency and fulfilment with the two life domains of work and family. It excluded other aspects of life like personal development, friendship, and support and community interaction that could impact on the achievement of balance. Though the definition considers work and family salience, it does not take into account, the stressors present in each domain and the resources available to confront the stressors available at work and at home. This researcher will adopt satisfaction with work and family situations as outcomes of balance in the study.

According to Lyness and Judiesch (2008), Kirchmeyer (2000, p. 81) suggested a definition for WLB as *achieving satisfying experiences in all life domains and to do so requires personal resources such as energy, time, and commitment to be well distributed across domains*. This definition highlights satisfaction and involvement as key components of WLB while the availability of personal resources to ensure that WLB could be achieved if they (energy, time and commitment) are *well distributed*. The present study sees the phrase *well distributed* as a bone of contention needing clarity in the definition as well as lending credence to the study's argument that WLB is not a point on a continuum or assigned weight (of energy, time and commitment) on the measuring scale distributed among life domains. This study postulates that WLB is rather a journey which an individual undertakes to arrive at a place where he/she feels satisfied that he/she has distributed his/her personal resources reasonably well among his/her work and family needs/roles; and does so consistently over a substantial period of time.

However, Crooker, Smith, and Tabak (2002, p. 389) proposed definition for the concept is:

Work-life balance is the stability characterised by the balancing of an individual's life complexity and dynamism with environmental and personal resources such as family, community, employer, profession, geography, information, economics, personality, or values. Stability in this definition is paramount to a key that opens the discussion of the WLB concept in another dimension which seeks to establish constancy in the achievement of WLB. Crooker et al. (2002) suggest that resources available in the individual's internal and external environments aid the individual to achieve balance. These resources may have been acquired from upbringing and nurturing. This is in line with Hofstede (2010) position that people possess in themselves deep-rooted mannerisms that inform behaviour due to the upbringing that they received. This researcher therefore assumes that these patterns of acquired behaviour can give stability to the achievement of balance or imbalance in work-life domains. Although stability is seen by Crooker et al. (2002) as the meaning of WLB, this researcher views stability as constancy in the achievement of satisfaction and efficiency in the work and family domains as a result of the resources available to the individual at the workplace (WLBS) and from childhood through adolescence.

The comprehensive review of the literature on the definition of WLB indeed confirmed that a globally acceptable definition has yet to be formulated for the concept. This has further created the need to provide a definition that should provide clearer understanding on what, why, how and when balance is achieved. It is in this context that this study explores the connection between WLB and SOC from behavioural and cognitive perspectives, using WLBS and work and family stressors as independent variables. It seeks to give answers to those questions raised in the review of literature on the one hand, and those raised by assessing the influence of WLBS on stressors, SOC and achievement of WLB. This researcher proposed a definition for the WLB construct from the review of the literature.

5.3.1 Present study definition of work-life balance

The researcher through the review of literature proposes a definition of WLB. The scholars (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Voydanoff, 2005; Crooker et al., 2002) have defined WLB from the satisfaction and efficiency, involvement and stability perspectives respectively. It could not be seen that they took into consideration, other variables that could affect the achievement of satisfaction, involvement and stability. Generally, it is assumed that the individual involved in the middle of work and family dynamics is influenced by personality differences (individual differences), cultural orientation, SOC, gender, education, national and personal experiences

as well as social support. But this study examines the influence of work and family stressors and the strategies implemented to assist employees in achieving WLB in a workplace on SOC and the achievement of WLB.

In this context, the researcher suggests that WLB be defined as;

An outcome of the effective use of work-life balance strategies available at the workplace to address work and family stressors and enhance and/or improve an individual's SOC in order to effectively manage work and family stressors, resulting in satisfaction with work and family situations.

In addition, this study views WLB as a destination that anyone who undertakes the journey by consistently taking consolidated steps will arrive at despite work and family stressors so long as he/she is backed up by workplace strategies. This implies that WLB is a journey that an individual takes walking on 'two feet' (work and life), by taking one step (work) at a time, and not forgetting to take the other step (family), which results in arriving at the desired destination (satisfaction). Consistency in the journey leads to stability which the researcher views as the constancy of ease experienced in performing the roles (Marks & MacDermid, 1996) required by work and family. This is in line with Marks' (1977, 1979) postulation that when individuals assign a group of equally optimistic dedication to their usual roles, it will result in beneficial outcomes of wellness and Marks and MacDermid (1996) suggestion that individuals who habitually give total commitment to whatever they do experience the disappearance of role management challenges upon the achievement of a stable rhyme. They surmise that this category of people may experience as others, emergencies and disruptions in their routines but these exigencies do not become protracted. It is said that "people do what they think", therefore, the decision to assign energy and time and be involved with work and/or life could be a result of thoughts taken in that dimension. This researcher suggests that once an individual cultivates the habit of 'journeying towards balance', he/she will arrive at the destination where he/she achieves satisfaction with work and home situations. This is based on an observation by Hofstede et al (2010) and Clark (2000) that the fundamental linkage between work and family organisations is the person and not emotion, as well as Crooker et al.'s (2002) definition of the concept of WLB notion that, naturally, continuity is embedded in the way of life. This implies also that even if the individual takes a break from the 'journey', he/she can commence again and go on to arrive at the desired destination - WLB. Therefore, based on the definition, an individual can define, reclaim, achieve and maintain WLB. The elements of WLB are presented for further clarification of the construct.

5.4 Elements of balance: satisfaction and involvement

In the literature, scholars have defined WLB from different perspectives, but the key components of the construct pertinent to this study are satisfaction and involvement. Resources like energy, money and time are limited, therefore an individual has to find ways of satisfactorily distributing these scarce resources among the demands of work and the family domains. The satisfactory outcome derived from involvement and time in performing roles across domains determines the achievement of balance. This is in line with a report by Lyness and Judiesch (2008) and Kirchmeyer (2000), that an individual needs to be able to distribute the limited personal resources well in order to have satisfying experiences across life's domains.

5.4.1 Satisfaction balance

In their definition of WLB, Greenhaus and Allen (2006) state that WLB is the degree of compatibility between a person's efficiency and satisfaction in the performance of work and family roles to the things that matter most to him/her. The definition focuses on the individual and his/her priorities in line with the fulfilment and efficiency achieved in performing work-life roles. Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) criticised Greenhaus, Allen, and Spector (2006) definition of WLB; suggesting that their definition laid too much emphasis on satisfaction in both domains (family and work). They claim that defining the concept in this perspective (satisfaction) seems to have shut out the individual from the domains of work and family (where the activities are performed); and entraps him/her in role performance at work and at home. They queried if WLB is a mental or behavioural construct. They however suggested that seeing the concept from the view of the individual makes it a psychological construct in line with (Greenhaus et al., 2006). Despite the criticisms of these scholars (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007), the present study adopts the satisfaction balance as the measure for WLB but integrates the strategies in place to assist employees address work and family stressors. This way, the study removes the entrapment issue that the scholars (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007) were concerned about.

According to Grzywacz and Carlson (2007), it is problematic to define WLB from the satisfaction standpoint as it poses realistic challenges in terms of advancing useful and viable interventions to augment satisfaction in the two domains of work and life. They further assert that satisfaction like similar assumptions which can only be meaningful to the individual, is by

nature, reflective and continuously in a state of flux due to the emergence of new events (Gergen, 1973; Spence, 1944).

The analysis and criticisms of Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) are important although they are not entirely correct. Their observation regarding isolating the individual from the domains where he performs activities (work and family) seems to be exaggerated because satisfaction is not a stand-alone variable. It is dependent on the goings-on at work and at home, therefore, if the partners in role performance are unhappy with the satisfaction that an individual has achieved at work/home, it cannot be truly said that the individual has achieved satisfaction balance. Therefore, the issue of isolation has been addressed by the present study in integrating the issue of WLBS and stressors (work and family) into the work-life equation. Although they (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007) agree that WLB is fashioned by personal and relative variables; they deduce that the construct is not purely psychological. Their definition of WLB is: the achievement of expectations associated with roles which are distributed between individuals and their role-partners at work and at home (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007, p. 458). Their definition does not seem to have considered that the expectations of role-partners are subjective and may be difficult to measure and are therefore empirically challenging. However, their identifying their role-partners' input into the satisfaction and achievement equation has been acknowledged and integrated into the present study.

In this study, the researcher is of the opinion that satisfaction balance is achieved when the individual employee feels satisfied with the work and family situation. This satisfaction is based on the time (expressed in number of hours) he/she spends at work and with his/her family as well as the degree of involvement with work and family roles respectively irrespective of the number of such hours (time) or the size of involvement. It excludes all elements of guilt and conceit that could be associated with neglecting one role for the other as a result of an attempt to compensate the shortcomings in one domain with the benefits of another domain. In this context, this researcher agrees with the report by Darcy et al. (2012) that WLB is not a *one size fits all* concept; rather, it is a subjective concept that should be designed by the individual to suit his/her objectives of achieving satisfaction, with regard to involvement and time. Therefore, the researcher suggests that the peculiarity and dynamism of each individual's situation at work and home defines their satisfaction at any given time. For example, if an individual employee allocates a total sum of one hundred percent (100%) to all of his/her work and life needs as follows:

TABLE A	Satisfaction	Involvement	Time
a) Work	satisfied	35%	35%
b) Family	satisfied	25%	25%
c) Self-development	satisfied	30%	30%
d) Friends	satisfied	5%	5%
e) Leisure/community work	satisfied	<u>5%</u>	<u>5%</u>
Total	100%	100%	100%

And another individual decides to share his/her 100% time to work-life domain as follows:

TABLE B	Satisfaction	Involvement	Time
a) Work	satisfied	25%	25%
b) Family	satisfied	35%	35%
c) Self-development	satisfied	25%	25%
d) Friends	satisfied	5%	5%
e) Leisure/community work	satisfied	<u>5%</u>	<u>5%</u>
Total	100%	100%	100%

If the individual in Table A is satisfied with allocating his/her personal resources to the various entities (needs) in his/her work-life domain as stated, and consistently achieves these marks in his/her daily endeavours, he/she could be said to have achieved WLB. This seems to be in agreement with Kofodimos (1993) definition of WLB as *a satisfying, healthy and productive life that includes work, play and love; that integrates a range of activities with attention to self and to personal and spiritual development; and that expresses a person's unique wishes, interests and values. It contrasts with imbalance of a life dominated by work, focussed on satisfying external requirements at the expense of inner development, and in conflict with a person's true desires.* The concept of satisfaction balance should be viewed as being dynamic as reported by Darcy et al. (2012), since what constitutes balance for an individual is peculiar to him/her.

The subjective feeling of satisfaction by an individual concerning his/her time and involvement with work and family could be contrary to the satisfaction of his family members and employer/colleagues or possibly his/her health. Burke (2009) is of the opinion that most workers would rather work for a shorter period of time, even though only a few of them really

understand what they prefer. Although this study is not examining the details of the effect of long hours of work and work addiction on employees' work and/or family domain, it concerns itself with the satisfaction that the individual derives from distributing his/her time and energy, highlighted by the level of involvement among the various work and family demands and roles.

According to Burke (2009), the lower level employees work for a lesser number of hours than the professional level employees as evidently proven in the developed nations. The same scenario is also the case in South Africa where professional level employees' work often interferes with their family domain as a result of increased responsibility at work, need to achieve targets and meet deadlines, as well as the need to prove oneself. Hochschild (1997) reports that the reason for increase in the number of hours that professional level employees are required to put into work could include: increased competition, rationalisation and cost reduction leading to heightened workloads/or fewer employees; impact of evolving technologies that makes it possible for workers to work from anywhere at any time; need to prove oneself as being qualified for the next available promotion at work, higher targets, perceived incentives, and the perception by a few employees that work life gives more satisfaction than family life (Burke, 2009).

Some organisations including the municipality in review have given certain categories of employees in their employment technological gadgets like smart phones, android tablets and personal computers (laptops) to make their job easier and the employees themselves more accessible. The 24/7 accessibility to employees through internet and cell phones also increases the interference of work with family and vice versa. Some employees may be happy and feel satisfied with the use of technology both at work and at home irrespective of the purpose for the use, while others may not. Lawler and Hall (1970) presume that individuals whose job features include autonomy and much influence as well as increased levels of challenges may record better satisfaction as a result of the feeling of achievement and development (DeConinck & Bachmann, 2011; Dik & Hansen, 2010). This is supported by a report by Hulin and Blood (1968), that the way that a job is designed affects the degree of satisfaction by employees (Aloysius, 2011; Pierce, Jussila, & Cummings, 2009).

The present study postulates that an employee who feels that he/she has fairly and reasonably distributed his/her time and energy (involvement) between work and family, and is satisfied with the outcome of such distribution, could be said to have WLB, while an employee who feels guilty (not satisfied) about his/her distribution of such resources despite an excellent

outcome of effectiveness and performance could be said to have work-life imbalance. For instance, if an employee on vacation decides to attend to official calls and e-mails and does not feel dissatisfied with such work being done while on vacation as well as the effect (whether negative or positive) that such has on his/her family, it could be said that the employee has WLB. This deduction is made from an instance where the inability to attend to a pile-up of mails and incessant calls from the office becomes a stressor to the employee on vacation; resulting in disturbing thoughts and irritability.

The result could be a scenario where this individual is deprived of the benefits of a vacation. It is therefore suggested that if by attending to the calls and replying to the work mails the employee will find peace and rest, it may be better to do so while on vacation. This does not imply in any way that by consistently working in a family domain or vice versa, a person will have WLB, but that what constitutes balance at any point in time may not constitute balance at another point in time. Burke (2009) is of the opinion that the advantages derived from leave (vacation) on degrees of stress by employees have a tendency to be short-lived. He further reports that “leisure sickness,” emotive and physiological signs are experienced by some individuals during weekends and or leave. Therefore, the workplace could be said to exist not only in a place called the “office” or workplace but also in the mind of individuals.

In support of this claim, Goodman (2012) reports that balance is different for everybody and is altered throughout life by the phases and stages a person goes through. She also suggests that the issue of harnessing the inspiration and force of work with care for self and the realisation of self, have to originate from an individual’s internal elements (resources). Furthermore, she postulates that *the power of a medical career with both its pressures and rewards makes our work also very intimately the essence of our lives* (Goodman, 2012, p. 26). This author seems to have accepted the medical practice work and all its attendant stressors and satisfiers to have ultimately come to the conclusion that their work (as medical doctors) assumes the important position of being equal to their lives. The question that begs for an answer here is: does Goodman speak of a balance or satisfaction?

According to Darcy et al. (2012), various factors assume different salience to individuals based on the stage of a person’s life and career. This is in line with the assumption of the present study that a person’s WLB today may not be seen or appreciated by the same person in probably two or three years’ time as a result of the improvement that he/she may have recorded in his/her career as well as age, gender, and other demographic variables. This is one of the reasons why

the present study suggests that WLB is a journey that has different rest-stops and destinations; and that as individuals consistently take steps one at a time via the instrument of a strong SOC and relevant WLBS and support, they will arrive there (WLB) no matter the intensity of stressors from work and family domains. The assumption should allay the fears attributed to the myth that employees who are highly involved with their jobs have the tendency to give less attention and care to their families (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). This is in opposition to the position of Darcy et al. (2012) that increased degree of involvement with work will heighten the probability that a person will face work-life imbalance.

To Adams, King and King (1996), associations between job and family spheres may have imperative impact on satisfaction with work and life, also, the degree of a worker's involvement with family and job functions connects to the association (King, Taft, King, Hammond, & Stone, 2006). Supporting the argument, Burke (1988) reports that increased job interference with family associates closely with mental exhaustion and reduced satisfaction with work (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Higgins and his cohorts in their studies report that work with interference with family (WIF) significantly associates with family-connected results (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Higgins & Duxbury, 1992; Higgins, Duxbury, & Irving, 1992). From literature, there is observed contention among scholars that the family and work spheres could originate stress which impacts vital mental and physiological results (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Ahmad, 2008; Bacharach, Bamberger, & Conley, 1991; Day & Chamberlain, 2006; Frone et al., 1992).

The stress originating from family could interfere with the performance of work and vice versa. A study conducted among a sample of 220 professional persons discovered that work interfering with family (WIF) resulted in lesser satisfaction among employees. Strong evidence from literature supports the assumption that work-family conflict is related to a decrease in the degree of satisfaction with family (Bedeian, Burke, & Moffett, 1988; Beutell & O'hare, 1987; Bhowon, 2013; Coverman, 1989; Dierdorff & Ellington, 2008; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Holahan & Gilbert, 1979). Scholars who examined work involvement and work satisfaction are of the opinion that both relate clearly and negatively (Lee, 2015; Lin, 2013; Rabinowitz & Hall, 1977; Sekaran, 1989; Wiener, Muczyk, & Gable, 1987; Wiener & Vardi, 1980). Sekaran (1989) reports that individuals who are highly involved with their work demonstrate well sculpted excellence in their work as a result of the great impact that factors present in the environment and within the individual may have on their outcomes.

Although there are myriads of studies on WLB (Greenhaus et al., 2006; Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Guest, 2002; Burke, 2009), there is a scarcity of studies examining the impact of work and family stressors on SOC, as well as the connection of WLB and SOC. The intention of the researcher was to glean from the abundant literature on WLB, SOC and WLBS as well as work and family stressors to advance knowledge of the connection between WLB and SOC. This is in order to assist HR practitioners in the workplace formulate WLBS that are salient and focused in addressing work and family stressors and assisting employees achieve, reclaim and/or maintain WLB.

5.4.2 Involvement balance

WLB can also be attained from the involvement standpoint. Various definitions have been given to job involvement by scholars. Vroom (1962), in his work known as ego involvement, attributed involvement to an individual's feelings of value which is raised by high performance and reduced by poor performance (Azeem, 2010). Involvement has been associated with mental identification with work, or the salience of work in a person's overall self-image (Chughtai, 2008; Hallberg, 2006; Hallberg & Schaufeli, 2006; Rotenberry & Moberg, 2007). Lawler and Hall (1970) cited and agreed with Lodahl and Kejner's (1965) definition of involvement and also viewed the concept from its association with self-assessed input. According to Lawler and Hall (1970), evidence from prior studies suggests that job involvement could be attributed to individual dissimilarities that may not be easily affected by circumstantial elements, and therefore, may not have substantial impact on work conduct.

But Rotenberry and Moberg (2007) define job involvement as the degree of cognitive preoccupation with and engagement in an individual's current work (Paullay, Alliger, & Stone-Romero, 1994). It is generally agreed upon that employees who are highly involved with their jobs define themselves by the job they perform (Rotenberry & Moberg, 2007). In line with the foregoing, Darcy et al. (2012) report that involvement with work could be defined as the mental connection with one's job and the level of significance that the individual ascribes to work as being in the centre of the individual's identity. This study appropriates this definition for family involvement by substituting work with family, although Johnson, Zabriskie, and Hill (2006) describe family involvement as the combined input in uncommon activities in an infrequent and extraordinary manner by couples. According to the authors, these events (Johnson et al., 2006) could include holidays, children's school programmes, retreats, concerts, operas, hiking, and watching live sporting events like rugby and soccer. More investment in limited resources

like time, money and energy may be required. According to Zabriskie (2000), these activities do not happen suddenly and therefore, they may need extra planning, and can be accommodated by annual leave. Therefore, this study adopts the definition by Darcy et al. (2012) for job and family involvement.

Both work and family are very important to individuals; therefore performance of roles associated with these domains is very imperative to existence. The salience of work and life could be psychological in nature thereby requiring a level of involvement in performing roles associated with each domain. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), for instance, contend that increase in mental involvement levels could relate positively to the rise in the extent to which time and energy are committed to a function by an individual. This may lead to difficulty in fulfilling the demands of another function. Secondly, an increased degree of mental involvement with a particular role could result in a person's mental preoccupation while trying to physically meet the needs of another role (Frone et al., 1992).

Involvement in a given domain (for instance, work), could be discerned by examining the amount of time and energy dispelled in the performance of roles associated to the given domain. Time, money and energy are limited resources available to an individual which require that the individual finds ways of distributing them in order to satisfy the demands of work and family. Many scholars report that there is a positive association between involvement with work and work-life imbalance (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Higgins et al., 1992). There are various reasons for job involvement. For instance, Lodahl and Kejnar (1965) suggest that the extent to which work is seen to be meaningful and the availability of sufficient supervision may influence job involvement. They also suggest that the more social networking there is at work, the higher the level of involvement.

Though scholars have written some literature on job involvement, little has been written on the effect of job involvement on an individual employee's WLB. The present study in examining the connection between WLB and SOC, also explores the implication of work involvement in the achievement of satisfaction (WLB) with work and family situations by individual employees at a municipality in the South African public sector.

5.5 Paradigms of work-life balance

There are many paradigms through which WLB have been viewed by scholars. It is imperative to appraise these paradigms in this study to clarify understanding in the literature about what WLB is and is not. The paradigms are: conflict, control, time and equilibrium.

5.5.1 Conflict paradigm

Conflict between work and family has been variously examined in the work-life literature. Greenhaus and Powell (2003) report that almost all the studies on work-family linkage mainly concentrated on the conflict paradigm. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) in their seminal article defined work/non-work conflict and formulated the components of the concept. The seminal work of Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), which was authored almost thirty years ago, constitutes the foundation upon which the work-family conflict literature is rooted and progressed from (Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007). The reason why the clash paradigm dominates work-lifestyle writings (Guest, 2002) has its origin in the scarcity-insufficiency concept that presumes that individual endowments like time, vitality, money and care are limited, therefore, if a person dedicates much of his/her endowments to a function or role in an area of life, smaller amount of these endowments will be available for the performance of another role in another given area of life (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974). WLB involves managing life's endowments and workplace benefits to address stressors and achieve meaningful WLB (satisfaction).

Greenhaus and Allen (2011) are of the opinion that work-family conflict is said to have happened if the strains arising from work and family become reciprocally discordant as long as actively participating in a role makes participation in another too hard (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). In addition, Byron (2005) proposes that elements present at work, for example, work strain, have the inclination of forecasting family interference with work (FIW). The conflict paradigm explores all aspects of work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW) (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).

Research findings to this present time (Rantanen, Kinnunen, Feldt & Pulkkinen, 2008; Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1997) suggest that the contributory connections of work-life relationships plus the transient factor of WFC requires to be better understood. Scholars have reported that the work-life literature is often criticised for the fact that it relies on cross-sectional studies (Casper, Eby, Bordeaux, Lockwood & Lambert, 2007) and report that scholars in the area of

work-life have addressed this criticism as shown by the increased number of longitudinal researches recently. They confirm that data collected through longitudinal studies are complex due to varying time structure, though sometimes their result supports the outcome of cross-sectional studies and other times negates the results.

This suggests that the variables involved in the empirical analysis of the work-family interface, and the fact the work-family conflicts are subject to change within a short period of time, could be reasons why more empirical analysis is needed. This study is not examining the connection between WLB and SOC by appraising the conflict paradigm; rather, it explores the influence of stressors on SOC and the implication of WLBS on the achievement of WLB vis-a-viz SOC.

The problem with discussing WLB from the conflict perspective is that it over-simplifies work-life conflict to those conflicts that show up as a result of the performance of work and family roles, thus implying that a person experiencing conflict in the area of work or family is experiencing imbalance. This is line with the report by Netemeyer et al. (1996) that the variation in operationalising work-family conflict by many scholars in different studies, limits the generalisation of the impact of work-family conflict. The WFC paradigm does not explore if truly, conflict connotes imbalance and absence of conflict connotes balance, and it does not explore the relationship between conflict and balance. The perspective does not bother itself with coping abilities of the person in the midst of WFC but concentrates on the regularity of reported feeling of being troubled by various issues associated with work and family respectively (Lyons, 1971; Ram, Khoso, Shah, Chandio, & Shaikih, 2011), which may be underlying signs of weak SOC.

Summarily, exploring WLB from the context of conflict does not investigate the resources that are available to the individual from family and work to address these conflicts (Holmberg et al., 2004). This study acknowledges that there are factors that constitute WFC and therefore result in and/or FIW, though the present study is not based on conflicts and interferences, but on stressors at work and at home which can cause work-life imbalance. The study also appraises the resources available to the individual personally and at work which could assist the individual in managing work-family stressors and achieving WLB. Thus, the present study aims to explore the connection that WLB has to the SOC, in order to ascertain among other things, the extent to which a SOC influences the achievement of WLB.

5.5.2 Control paradigm

Some writers investigated WLB from the control paradigm. To Chauhan (2010), WLB involves granting some sort of control to individuals in the areas of how work is done, as well as where and when to work. He stated that: *Work-life balance is about people having a measure of control over when, where, and how they work* (Chauhan, 2010, p. 184). According to the scholar, registering WLB is not about simply aligning work and the family, but a balance of psychological and socio-cultural standing, at the same time harmonising the individual emotive aptitude seen as the disposition to oversee one's self and supervise others.

The question here is, does having control result to balance? When control over how work is done and where and when work is to be done is given to an individual who lacks the resources, skill and capacity to manage the freedom to make profitable decisions with respect to work and life; this could negatively affect work performance and possibly satisfaction with family. Chauhan (2010) based his study on 70 Indian women working in the corporate sector and did not specify how the individual woman could use control over how work is done, or where and when to work to achieve satisfaction with work and family situations. The result was gender based and cannot be generalised. Achievement of targets (performance) does not isolate the fact that an employee is faced with work and family stressors. An achiever may be stressed, and might have gone through family stressors although she had more control at work. This present study suggests that the way an individual comprehends, sees meaning and manages stressors present with her/his work-family domain, plus the resources available to him /her at home and at the workplace, will shape the extent to which the individual will achieve balance (satisfaction). This study recognises that having a measure of autonomy (control) over where and how work is done could enhance an individual's ability to cope with work-family stressors and ability to achieve meaningful WLB.

5.5. 3 Time paradigm

There are some propositions by scholars that tend to hinge on time required to perform roles in describing WLB. For instance Maxwell (2005) reports that the UK's Department of Trade and Industry defined WLB as:

Being about adjusting working patterns regardless of age, race, or gender (so) everyone can find a rhythm to help them combine work with their other responsibilities or aspirations (G. Maxwell, 2005, p. 179).

His article was based on the tourism, retailing and finance industries in the UK, noted for working long hours and the roles that managers play in promoting WLB practices in the organisations. The definition by the Department of Trade and Industry was basically focused on working patterns and flexibility so that employees can harmonise their work-life roles. The scholar (Maxwell, 2005) reported various EU legislations backing WLB in Europe as well as government legislations by Great Britain. This means that the government in Europe and Britain regulate time and period of work in those nations so that workers can find a working rhythm at work and at home.

But the present study is based on professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector where the employees in this category are noted for working long hours towards making efficient service delivery. Some of these employees work during weekends to ensure that services rendered by the municipality are delivered to the communities when people are at home. Their offices also require them to attend meetings with politicians and community leaders whenever they are needed. The question therefore is, with this kind of ad hoc arrangement of working patterns, are the professional level employees in the municipality able to achieve WLB? Moreover, is the definition by the UK Department of Trade and Industry relevant and able to be practiced in the municipality? Also, are the employees able to cope with the obvious insufficiency of time at work and at home?

In the context of the foregoing, time could be termed a ‘stressor’ which could impair ability to achieve WLB. The task of calculating the number of hours to allocate to different demands in the work and family domains is in itself a stressor. For instance, about a third of the day (8 hours) is officially spent at work, depending on the workplace. An individual is then left with about sixteen hours to distribute between sleep, personal development, and family and community life. Therefore, ascertaining WLB based on the premise of time may be daunting. This study notes the significance that time and its management may have on an individual employee’s balance but does not examine WLB from the time paradigm. This study explores the relationship that WLB has with a SOC; by determining if individual employees at a municipality in the South African public sector were satisfied with their work and family situations. WLB in this study is based on the satisfaction paradigm.

5.5.4 Equilibrium paradigm

There are other researchers who have also defined WLB in ways akin to Marks and MacDermid’s (year) positive functioning idea. They include Kofodimos (1993), who defines

balance as: *A satisfying, healthy and productive life that includes work, play, and love ...*” (Kofodimos, 1993, p. 13). Similarly, Kirchmeyer (2008) sees balanced living as: an achievement of satisfaction in every area of life, the attainment of which depends on individual endowments like time, vitality, and a sense of obligation to ensure equal distribution through all areas of life. Clark (2000, p. 349) likewise refers to WLB as: “Satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home with a minimum role conflict”.

There are common factors across the definitions by Kofodimos (1993), Kirchmeyer (2000) and Clark (2000). One of the denominators is the idea of equilibrium or near-equilibrium among work and family functions and experiences respectively (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Also intrinsic to these definitions are two constituents, namely inputs and results. Inputs describe the individual’s endowments (Kirchmeyer, 2000) used up in performing every duty. The inputs include time and energy which are available to an individual in limited measures. From these definitions, the ability to equally distribute time and energy across role performance leads to the achievement of balance.

Deductively therefore, being balanced means to face every function at work or at home by giving corresponding care, time, sense of obligation and participation. Greenhaus et al. (2003) confirms that giving commensurate time, care, obligation and participation should highlight a positive balance while not giving commensurate time, care, obligation and participation implied negative balance. Inputs highlight the degree to which a person is engaged in performing a function - manifested through mental participation and time dedicated to every function (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

Another constituent of balance denoted the result of performing work and home functions. The result which is often found in the explanations of WLB is fulfilment (Clark, 2000; Kirchmeyer, 2000; Kofodimos, 1993). A negative balance highlighted a commensurately less degree of fulfilment deriving from any one role while positive balance highlighted a commensurately higher degree of fulfilment derived from performing work and home functions (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

The scholars (Clark, 2000; Kirchmeyer, 2000; Kofodimos, 1993) considered vital issues like time, involvement, sense of obligation and care in the performance of work and family roles but makes no linkage with the resources available. They overlooked the ‘how’ of getting to do

all the required things (care, participate, and give a sense of obligation). ‘How’ a person gets to achieve WLB becomes an empirical question that needs investigation.

Greenhaus et al. (2003, p. 513) further clearly supported the equilibrium paradigm by defining WLB as: “The extent to which an individual is equally engaged in – and equally satisfied with – his or her work role and family role”. They clarified that functional commitment can be expanded into three factors, namely:

1. Time balance - representing equivalent extent of time given to employment and domestic functions.
2. Fulfilment balance - representing equivalent degree of fulfilment derived from performing employment and domestic functions.
3. Involvement balance - which signifies equivalent degree of mental participation at work and home.

Every one of these factors of WLB may signify positive or negative balance based upon degrees of participation and time or fulfilment, and if they are correspondingly high or low. The writers are of the opinion that WLB is a continuum that is held at two end-points; to the one end an all-encompassing level of imbalance favouring a given role (say work) via a measure of balance along the continuum to another all-encompassing level of imbalance in the other role (say work). They view balance as being autonomous of a person’s wishes or beliefs, therefore they are of the belief that a person that prefers to perform one function to another is comparatively un-balanced though the way he/she shares his/her obligation to work and home aligns with the expectations (desires) of the person or his/her beliefs (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

This researcher is in agreement with Caproni (1997) opinion that such a balance which is measured off the continuum (Greenhaus et al., 2003) is unrealistic and unattainable. It has the capacity to send people on an errand ‘to look for what is not missing’. All things in life are not equal and this scholar perceives that the point of balance on the continuum may not be realistic. Life is unpredictable and often throws problems on individuals which sometimes are too big for a person to control, thereby deleting plans made even before they are executed (Caproni, 1997). Demographics change, time changes, environment changes, therefore studies in the area of WLB should be dynamic and not static. According to Darcy, McCarthy, Hill and Grady (2012), studies have not succeeded in sufficiently investigating how WLB matters develop during a person’s working period in life leading to the addressing of WLB issues from a ‘one size fits all’ perspective.

Another challenge posed by defining WLB from the equilibrium paradigm, especially the definition by Greenhaus et al. (2003) is equality of time involvement. It is common knowledge that there are twenty four (24) hours in a day and the official number of acceptable hours of work is eight (8) hours in a working day. This leaves sixteen (16) hours to a person out of which he/she may need a maximum of eight (8) hours to rest. It therefore implies that an individual has a maximum number of eight (8) hours to share between families, friends, community and primarily him/herself. This implies that there is no way a person can equally distribute his/her time daily between work and family

Caproni (1997) contention against the concept of WLB on the premise that most of the discussions on WLB by both scholars and business media practitioners are based on reasoning and language that are rooted on the bureaucratic organisational practices, is noteworthy. She criticised the word 'efficiency', citing her experiences on the journey to achieve a balance. She stated that all her efforts to achieve efficiency yielded other negative results that were not intended, which included a spill over (Kofodimos, 1993) to various areas of her life that did not need efficiency. She emphasised that her efficiency created more problems in those areas. She also rationalised that keeping life's important priorities increased problems, and suggested that family salience increased work salience (Caproni, 1997) because there are no clear-cut lines of division between work and family salience, which accedes to the ranking of one above the other. In her article, Caproni (1997, p. 50) reported that "trying harder, smarter, and faster to balance my life (e.g. learn more time-saving techniques, work harder on my hierarchy of values, make more trade-offs, find a few extra hours in the day) may have been contributing to the problem rather than solving it."

She concludes that the issue was not imbedded within her, but in the way that WLB is conceptualised. Therefore, if the achievement of WLB is unrealistic due to life's dynamics, human dynamics and volatility of life (Caproni, 1997), then it will be hectic and tedious to try achieve WLB. Further research should be based on what can be done to stabilise the person in the middle of work and life situations so that whether changes are favourable or unfavourable, they are able to maintain balance. Balance should signify stability maintained by the individual on a consistent and continuous basis in the face of work and family stressors. Caproni's argument is one of the main reasons why the present study is looking at the use of WLBS to increase a person's SOC in the face of work-life stressors towards achieving WLB at a municipality in the South African public sector.

The gaps in the literature have given rise to the present study's purpose in exploring the relationship between WLB (achievement of satisfaction with work and family situations) and SOC.

5.6 Traditional theories of work-life balance

Numerous studies on WLB have revealed some models that try to describe a linkage between work and life. Some of these theories are listed as following: the spill over theory, instrumental theory, the compensation theory, the segmentation theory, resource drain theory, border crossing theory, conservation of resources theory and work-family conflict theory (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Friedman & Greenhaus, 2000; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999; Guest, 2002; Hobfoll, 1989, 2011a; Lambert, 1990). The major theories pertinent to this study are explained in the sub-sections below.

5.6.1 Spill over theory

The spill over theory assumes that a sphere of life has the ability to impact another optimistically or adversely (Greenglass & Burke, 1988; Leiter & Durup, 1996; Liou, Sylvia, & Brunk, 1990). According to Zedeck (1992), the spill over theory suggests that when an employee is satisfied with his/her work domain, the same feeling of satisfaction will be experienced in the life (family) domain (Sumer & Knight, 2001). On the other hand, Glass and Estes (1997) report that overflow of work duties into the home domain disturbs the home by ruining personal and home effectiveness; thus resulting in poor performance, increased non-appearance at work, and/or more staff turnover. From the perspective of these scholars, satisfaction and adversity in either domain of work and life respectively spill into each other (Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel, & Lee, 2001). For instance, fulfilment with an individual's work could influence fulfilment in the sphere of the home, pleasure, wellness, finance and social life (Bromet, Dew, & Parkinson, 1990; George & Brief, 1990; Leiter & Durup, 1996; Steiner & Truxillo, 1989).

Sirgy et al. (2001) report that there are two dimensions of spill over; horizontal and vertical spill over. They describe horizontal spill over as the effect of change in one sphere of life on another nearby sphere. For instance, fulfilment with work could evoke a reciprocal feeling of fulfilment at home, and vice versa. Vertical spill over is explained from an understanding of domain hierarchies. The domain of life includes work, home pleasure and community. According to Sirgy et al. (2001), these are hierarchically assembled in individuals' minds. They

report also that fulfilment and un-fulfilment in any one of the major life spheres ‘spills over’ to the least important spheres thereby impact satisfaction with life. Although there are studies that support the spill over model, it is still a generalised proposition (Guest, 2002). This could be as a result of definition and measurement challenges associated with the concept.

According to Sumer and Knight (2001), studies on this theory have concentrated on the work place encounters and their resultant effects spilling over into the domestic arena (Rice, McFarlin, Hunt, & Near, 1985). Nevertheless, there is evidence that family experiences spill over to work (Kirchmeyer, 1992; Crouter, 1984). Scholars have also agreed that spill over could be “positive or negative”. When the home domain facilitates or improves the work domain, spill over is positive; whereas if it hampers or poses challenges in the work domain, it is said to be negative (Kirchmeyer, 1992; Lambert, 1990; Crouter, 1984). In this context, scholars on the spill over theory, suggest that it could be beneficial for organisations to assist their workers with the means of handling their work-life issues since neglecting these will be costly in employees’ performance and efficiency (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003; Mulvaney, O’Neill, Cleveland, & Crouter, 2007). This supports the integration of WLBS as practices adopted by workplaces to assist employees cope with work and family stressors into this study’s exploration of the connection between WLB and SOC.

But the theory needs to be tested in line with other variables in order for it to be applied to a study in which the relationship with other variables is considered in exploring WLB. The assumptions of the spill over theory are therefore not sufficient to make realistic deductions in WLB examination. However, its relevance to the present study is in the analysis of the effect of WLBS in the workplace on an individual employee’s ability (SOC in this case) to cope with stressors emanating from the home and work domains. This is based on the assumption that the level of work spilling over to family and family to work is a function of the strength/weakness of a person’s SOC.

5.6.2 Compensation theory

This is a proposition that suggests that the inadequacies of one domain with respect to fulfilment or strains, has the capacity of being met in another (Perry-Jenkins, Repetti, & Crouter, 2000). The theory appraises the tendency of an individual to allow the feelings of satisfaction that he/she may have gained from working long hours and achieving a given target to pay-off for the disappointment he felt for not attending an important family meeting because

of the extra hours at work. It suggests that experiences at work and those at home are contrary to each other; implying that there is an opposing association between the two domains.

According to Lambert (1990), the effect of compensation is always un-intended. Responses that are peculiar to individuals are often manifested in un-fulfilment intervening between objective situations in one sphere, and the unexpected results in another sphere. For instance, the promotion received by an employee may improve the respect he/she feels they should receive at home. Sumer and Knight (2001) suggest that compensation happens when a person who is dissatisfied with the occurrences in one domain decides to become more actively involved in another domain. They further assert that the overall outcome of compensation is highlighted by the discrepancy in the levels of engagement at work and home.

The present study views compensation as a behaviour that could be attributed to a person's coping abilities (such as SOC explained in detail in Chapter four), which could influence an individual to address work and family demands instead of striving to achieve WLB or vice versa. It views compensation as the manifestation associated with inability to objectively assess the situation and make adjustments to constructively balance the two domains of work and family.

Zedeck (1992) is of the view that compensation and spill over theories fail to address major issues in the challenges of WLB (Clark, 2000). For instance Champoux (1978) discovered that compensation and spill over could happen concurrently within a person, thereby leaving no room for predictions or reasons to choose to react in one way and not another (Clark, 2000; Lambert, 1990). Many studies on the work and family interface may have lacked sound theoretical framework, or used basic assumptions to describe the findings of studies as a result of the shortcomings of these theories (Clark, 2000; Zedeck, 1992; Lambert, 1990). Clark (2000) suggests that these theories focus on the emotional interface (fulfilment and conflicts) and do not consider the behavioural, shared, dimensional (spatial) and time-based relationships between work and (home) life.

Studies in the past thirty years (1980s - 1990s) have explored more elements that give additional intricacy to the effect that work and family have on one another. For instance, literature in contemporary times has explored the role of the manager in moderating conflicts (Galinsky & Stein, 1990). Likewise, scholars have investigated the effect of family support and cohesion on work stressors (Felstehausen, 1990); a person's identification with their functions

at work and at home (Lobel, 1991). Thompson and Bunderson (2001) explored the effect of the significance that work has on an individual's family life. Also Carlson and Kacmar (2000) discovered that WFC could be easily understood by looking at the values that a person places on the functions of workers and members of the family.

Clark (2000) suggests that though these included elements have intricately affected the study of work and life, none of them developed a complete theory that describes the manner in which conflict and balance happen. This is the reason why the present study describes stressors and their influence on the work-family interface. It also predicts that an employee using WLBS could be able to cope with stressors, improve his/her SOC and go on to achieve WLB.

5.6.3 Segmentation theory

This theory proposes that work and life constitute dual but mutually exclusive domains which do not impact one another (Guest, 2002; Lambert, 1990; Sumer & Knight, 2001), and asserts that work and non-work spheres are dissimilar and have no relationship with one another (Naithani, 2010; Staines, 1980). The theory suggests that what happens at the individual's work place does not in any way influence what happens at home. This could be contested for the fact that the same person at work is equally the same person at home, the only difference being that, while at work, he/she is guided by rules that are different from those at home in the performance of roles. According to Guest (2002), the theory seems to have been proffered as an assumption that could probably have realistic meaning instead of an idea backed with empirical evidence. Since the border between work and life is somewhat very difficult to define, it then becomes apparent that further insight is needed to clarify segmentation. However, Bulger, Matthews, and Hoffman (2007) report that although empirical studies in the area of WLB abound, only recently have scholars begun to explore the lines bordering work and family. This theory could become relevant in this study in ascertaining the basis upon which WLBS are crafted. It could also assist in formulating, designing and adopting strategies that tactically address work and family-related challenges and stressors.

5.6.4 Instrumental theory

This theory assumes that events taking place in one domain promotes attainment in the other (Frone, 2003; Guest, 2002). An example is the employee who desires to earn more by accepting to work longer hours in order to buy expensive medication for a sick spouse or a house for a fledgling family. The increased income to a family as a result of the promotion of the

breadwinner in the workplace could be instrumental to a family vacation or purchase of a new car. In this study, the provision of WLBS at the workplace could become instrumental to the employee's achievement of relational peace if, for instance, flexible work arrangements are in place. An employee could attend child(ren) programmes at school, have a lunch date with a spouse to celebrate a marriage anniversary on a work day and still work effectively in an organisation that has adopted such work-life practices. In the same context, spousal support could be instrumental to the improved performance at work by an employee.

5.6.5 The conflict theory

Mulvaney et al. (2007) suggest that if involvement in one functional area becomes challenging as a result of involvement in another function, conflicts could arise. These scholars report that conflict can arise as a result of the spill over (explained in sub-section 5.6.1) of work into life and vice versa or through the process explained as resource drain theory (Frone, 2003). The resource drain theory is explained later in this section. The theory proposes that when strain is present in all life's domains, an individual will have to make trying preferences which may lead to clashes, thereby putting stress on the individual (Guest, 2002). For instance, where there is a need for an employee to work extra hours for a given period and it clashes with the funeral of a relative or an important event at the child(ren)'s school, the decision as to what to do could be stressful. In this case, the choice made to favour one event above the other could result in serious consequences at work and/or at home.

The conflict theory resembles the compensation theory because it supposes that a discordant association exists between work and life (family) because of limited resources (Mulvaney et al., 2007). These scarce resources (strength, time and mental assets) are highly contested for by role performance at work and family domains. Scholars report that the stress arising from this contest results in many unwanted consequences in both domains of life and work (Perry-Jenkins et al., 2000). The conflict theory is discussed in the study to highlight the impact that stressful and conflicting situations can have on an employee's ability to achieve balance.

The theories reviewed in the study could be used for different purposes by individuals and organisations. This is supported by the opinion of Mulvaney et al. (2007) that every one of the theories portends differing effects for organisations. But the use of any of the theories could be more effective if supported by empirical analysis. Although empirical support for the spill over model is documented, the operations of most organisations seem to be in favour of the

segmentation model (Milliken, Martins, & Morgan, 1998). This thought could be said to inform the WLBS formulated and adopted by organisations aiming to assist individual workers in achieving balance.

According to Guest (2002), all these models are unable to tackle the issue of balance and what makes up balance; therefore there is a need for them to include a breakdown of their causes and effects for them to be useful. The five models (spill over, segmentation, compensation, instrumental and conflict) above are known as traditional models (Guest, 2002). The usefulness of the traditional theories are limited due to the fact that they lack explanations, predictions and methods of solving the problems which people encounter in trying to achieve WLB (Clark, 2000). Clark further reported that models like spill over and compensation are narrow in their analysis; focusing on emotive connections (fulfilment and depression) and offering scarce or no recognition to place (space), transitory common and interactive linkages between work and family domain. She suggested that the models analysed persons as being responsive, having no capacity to be proactive in shaping their work and domestic domains. Clark reiterated that there has been no all-inclusive model which describes the procedure that should lead to the harmony of conflict and balance and suggested the need for a comprehensive theory that should address human behaviour, means through which a person creates meaning, and the complications of work and family circumstances (Clark, 2000).

To address the shortcomings of the traditional models, contemporary theories were conceptualised such as the border theory, resource drain theory and conservation of resources theory.

5.7 Contemporary theories of WLB

There is a need to have additional understanding of contemporary WLB theories, in order to give perspective to this study. Scholars of work-family study advanced theories that address the inadequacies of the traditional theories. Primarily, the border theory, which clearly postulates the boundary between work and family, is introduced, and in addition, the resource drain and conservation of resources theories are explained. The conservation of resources theory is included among the theories guiding this study; therefore, it is discussed comprehensively in Chapter six of the present research.

5.7.1 Border theory

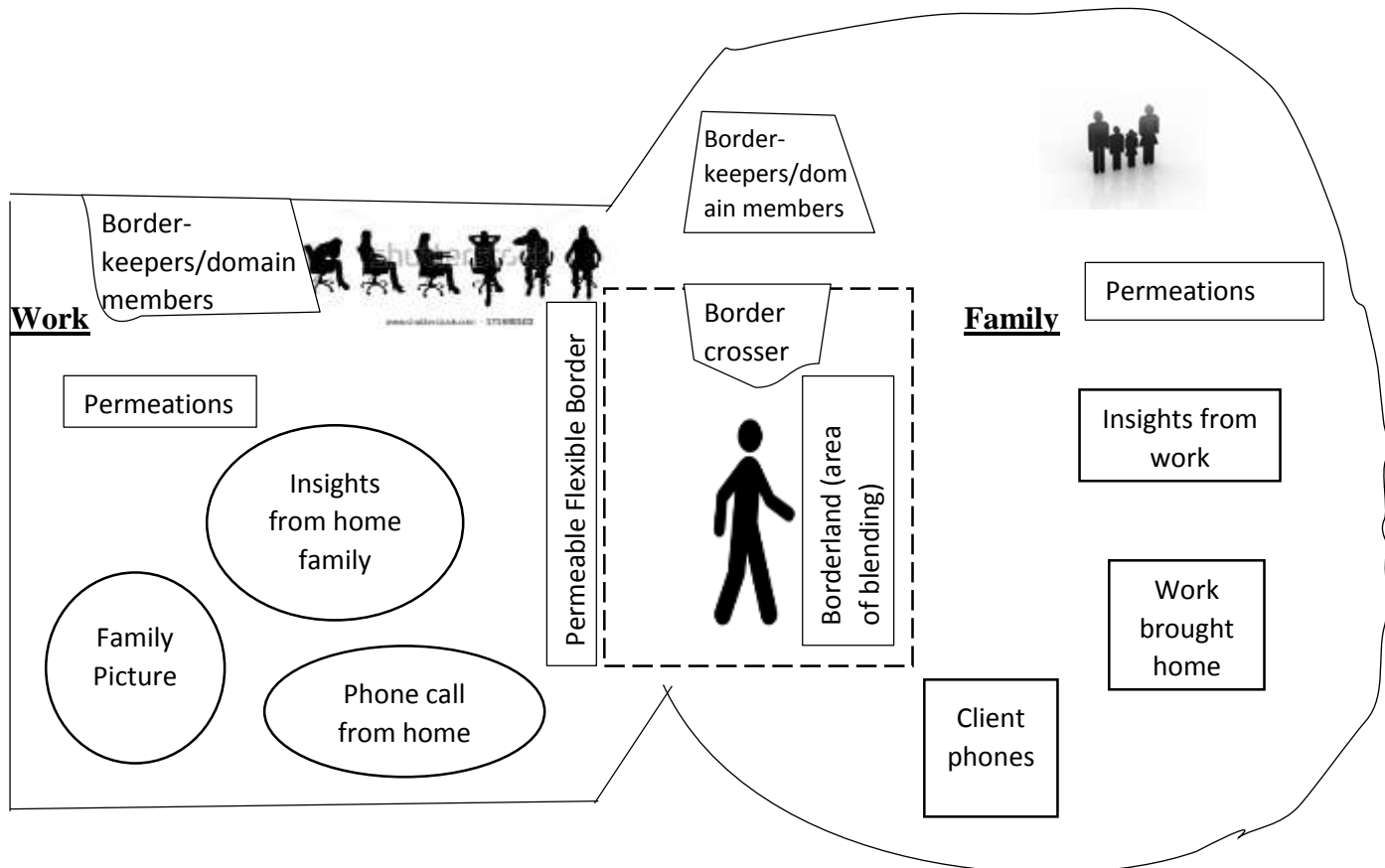
The Border theory suggests that people perform roles within particular spheres of life (Desrochers & Sargent, 2004). It is almost impossible to separate work and family because life is dynamic and the spheres are framed by society, politics and contests (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007). In addition, (L. Cohen, Duberley, & Musson, 2009) report on how individuals build, engage in, and maintain work and family as well as the outcome of the faltering boundaries and ways of reclaiming order. The permeability of the boundary between work and life and its influence on WLB has been of concern to scholars (Beutell, 2013; Kossek & Lautsch, 2012; Lu & Kao, 2013; Qu & Zhao, 2012). Clark (2000) proposed the border theory to assist in investigating the behaviour of individuals with respect to work and the family domain.

According to Clark (2000), borders describe lines of division between spheres that indicate the spot at which the relevance of behaviour to a domain commences or stops. However, Nippert-Eng (1996) suggests that every boundary is socially erected and therefore changeable and artificial (Nippert-Eng, 2008; Zerubavel, 1993). Yet, Clark (2000) reports that life's domains are partitioned by borders which may be psychological, physical or temporal (Clark, 2000). Tangible borders are those walls at home or work that allocate where *domain relevant behaviour* occurs. Transient borders for instance, hours of work, define the time at which work must be performed; while mental borders are referred to as guidelines designed by individuals to prescribe what thoughts, mannerisms and emotive patterns are domain suitable (Clark, 2000). This implies therefore that individuals daily cross these borders in the course of their interactions between work and family.

The insight from border theory provokes thoughts along the line of the nature of the borders. As Frone (2003) succinctly suggested, the question of the flexibility and/or permeability of the border cannot be overlooked. He defined border flexibility as the extent to which the role an individual plays is able to be carried out in places other than the usual space of its performance. Permeability describes the extent to which factors from beyond a sphere of life may enter into that sphere (Frone, 2003). For instance, how can a person who works from home say for instance, a farmer or a proprietor of a Bed & Breakfast (B&B), demarcate the border between work and family? This means that it is difficult to demarcate the border between work and family in certain occupations.

Clark (2000) conceptualised a framework to highlight the central concepts of her theory as shown below:

Figure 5.1: Work/family border theory: a pictorial framework and list of core concepts and their characters



Domains

- Extent of segmentation and integration
- Overlap of values means and ends
- Overlap of cultures

Border crossers

- Peripheral vs central domain membership
- Identification
- Influence

Borders

- Border strength
- Permeability
- Flexibility
- Blending

Border keepers and other domains

- other domain awareness
- commitment to border crosses

Source: Adapted from Clark (2000, p. 754)

In explaining her framework (Fig. 5.10), Clark (2000) defined *work and home* as dual, dissimilar spheres which she called domains. She differentiated between work and home by

classifying their dissimilarities into two categories; dissimilarity in *valued ends* and dissimilarity in *valued means* (Rokeach, 1973). Clark and Farmer (1998) report that some people are of the opinion that work mainly gives satisfaction to the end that it gives them earnings and the feeling of achievement, whereas family life fulfilled the ends of achieving closeness in relationships as well as individual gladness. Clark (2000) suggests that the *means* of achieving objectives in an establishment could give rise to cultures that influence individual thought and behavioural patterns.

In the above context, Hochschild's (1983) study on emotive labour reports on how organisations develop workers on ways of suppressing their real feelings and showcasing false emotions so as to create a customer-friendly ambience (Hochschild, 2003; Kruml & Geddes, 2000; O'Brien, 1994). To these institutions, friendliness and cheerfulness could be assessed as valued means of achieving objective. However, the culture in an individual employee's family could be different, for instance by laying more emphasis on honesty in the manner in which emotions are expressed (Clark, 2000).

Cultures represent a group of *means and rules* with regards to the means that should take pre-eminence (Clark, 2000). She suggests that even though "cultures, means and ends" are not the same for both work and family domains people usually succeed in integrating these two realms to some extent. Nippert-Eng (1996) suggests two standard ways for understanding the work-family interface known as segmentation and integration models as ways of dealing with the differences between work and home domains (Nippert-Eng, 2008). The segmentation model views work and family as two different entities whereby the psychological, physiological and fleeting borders are clarified. The individual practicing segmentation will make meaning of the family and work domains as separate entities; thereby interpreting and behaving accordingly. While an individual practicing integration on the other hand does not see such differentiations, whether they are fleeting, visible, deductive or behavioural (Nippert-Eng, 1996).

According to Cohen et al. (2009), insights into several dispositions of individuals in building and guiding their affairs and experiences at work and home in an orderly manner were suggested by Nippert-Eng (1996). Ashfort, Kreiner and Fugate (2000) analysed the context and content of boundary crossing in terms of role identity and the size of transition from one domain to the other. They observe that the simplicity involved in the dynamics of role identities also connect to the boundaries around the role, i.e. concerning the way the role is described and delineated with respect to time and place. Ashforth et al. (2000) further conceptualised role

borders as hinging on *flexibility*, i.e. the elasticity of the boundary, and *permeability* i.e. the level of being involved with roles in one domain while engaged locationally (physically) in another (D'Abate, 2005; Desrochers, Hilton, & Larwood, 2005). This researcher considers the cognitive aspect of the border as being in the mind and individuals traverse the borders mindfully before physically crossing the borders. Therefore organisational strategies that address consequences of border crossing should inculcate those that may influence the individual's mind positively towards controlling their realms of activity.

In support of the foregoing, Cohen, et al. (2009) contend that WLB issues are not sorted by arrangements around flexibility and permeability only, but should include matters surrounding autonomy, role identity uniqueness and the feelings that underlie real experiences at work and home, plus the borders around them. Additionally, they observe an uncontrollable realm of activities that are random and not predictable in an individual's daily life at work and family and suggest that these are beyond a person's capacity and control. This could be contributory to the present study's appraisal of work and family stressors so as to establish their influence on individual employee's SOC. SOC was proposed as a dispositional mechanism that assists individuals in managing stressors.

In the context of the above, Ashforth et al. (2000), in Cohen et al. (2009), suggest that further studies could be conducted into the problem around the way in which people reduce interruptions and find ways of coping with them when they happen. For instance, effect of absence of autonomy experienced by an employee could be reduced by ensuring that the individual obtains clarification about job performance and also finds ways of mitigating the effect of the same stressor when they arise. Cohen et al. (2009) agree that the emotions attached to the sense of not having control and losing grip (even if it is momentary) are a source of concern to individuals. This study focuses on work stressors by examining absence of autonomy, role ambiguity, role conflict and job stress. This should be able to address the concerns raised by L. Cohen et al. (2009).

The way individuals perceive their work situations as well as family situations could be indicative of their tendency to cross the boundaries between work and family (C. Nippert-Eng, 1996). They posit that the way individuals manage, comprehend and attach meaning to occurrences at work and home are subject to change depending on the time, space and importance that those things hold to the individual. Many other scholars have examined and reported the characteristic ways that people manage their work and family domains. These

include D'Abate (2005), on employee engagement in family activities in the workplace, Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) study on 'work-family enrichment' as well as Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006) examination of work/family conflict. Though most of these studies base their assumptions on the border theory, Cohen et al. (2009) report that there seems to be lack of sufficient attention by research focusing on individual's experiences of chaos and constraints. They also report that there is little or no literature on the mechanism that could enable individuals reclaim orderliness or improve the way in which individuals cope with challenges. This researcher does not envisage that the border theory could contribute to the framework of this study because according to the literature, it does not consider the stressors individuals face, neither does it integrate personal and work-place resources to control border crossing. Therefore, the present study contributes to literature by examining the connection between WLB and SOC with the aim of establishing the influence of SOC on the achievement of WLB.

5.7.2 Resource Drain Theory

This theory suggests that resources required to play, work and perform family roles are finite, and therefore, when an individual makes use of these resources in one sphere, there is a considerable reduction in their availability for use in another (Brotheridge & Lee, 2005). This theory agrees with the definition of WLB by Lyness and Judiesch (2008) and Kirchmeyer (2000). This study suggests that an individual (with strong SOC, as discussed in Chapter four) may acknowledge the presence and effect of stressors as well as the need for balancing work and family by finding ways of managing those stressors toward achieving balance. But the resource drain theory confirms that making resources available for addressing stressors may reduce the resources that might be available for achieving WLB.

Hobfoll (1989) suggests that resource drain is changeable and replenishable by the use of social support made available to the individual from colleagues and family members. According to this theory, therefore an individual through the SOC may redirect the use of their personal and WLBS to achieve balance or address stressors, but not simultaneously. The present study is concerned with exploring the connection between WLB and SOC to establish whether WLBS in place in a municipality assists employees in addressing stressors and achieving WLB. This is in line with Antonovsky's (1987) position that sense of coherence is developmental and Holmberg's (2004) confirmation that SOC can be improved by the resources available to the individual at home and in the workplace. Therefore, the resource drain theory could contribute

to the analysis of the findings of this study especially in the area of allocation of personal resources and use of WLBS.

5.8 Implications of work-life balance

The outlook of the workforce is rapidly changing especially in the area of demographics inclusive of the involvement of women in paid employment (Bachu & O'Connell, 2001; Major et al., 2006), a rising number of working mothers (Fitzgerald & Harmon, 2001) and the increase in the need to take care of elderly relatives (Huang, Hammer, Neal, & Perrin, 2004). Also, globalisation (Hall & Moss, 1999), emergence of the service industry (Patterson & Smith, 2001) as well as the fast growth of information technology (Schneider & Bowen, 1995) play a major role in the changing workforce and work environment. WLB has drawn attention to itself over the years as a result of various reasons. It is deducible that social changes and demographic factors have resulted in the engagement of women in the labour force (Jones et al., 2013). Improvement in technology has also contributed immensely in the interference of work needs and responsibilities among individual employee's private and family life (Duxbury & Smart, 2011). Organisations these days provide employees, especially those in the professional and management cadres, with laptops, tablets, smart phones and 24/7 access to the internet to ensure that these employees are accessible at all times. Globalisation in its own capacity has made significant impact on levels of competition; thereby heightening pressure on all entities to respond commensurably to the change enigma.

The effect of change on the workplace has left both positive and negative marks on individuals and organisations. According to Kinman and Jones (2005), workplaces commonly report increased stress levels and ailments resulting from stress because work environments are increasingly becoming stressful. Reasons for the increase in stress in the organisational environment could be attributed to factors like interference of work with family and family with work respectively, for instance. Jones et al. (2013) suggest that as the problem of handling the boundary between work and family poses more challenges, workers and employees should seek elastic and creative ways of solving these problems; including that of increasing productivity without hurting workers' wellness, relationship with their families as well as the maintenance of competitive advantage in the industry. In addition, the scholars (Jones et al., 2013) report that there is evidence that work-life imbalance impacts destructively on each other by the intermingling of behaviours and emotions across life's domains as well as the manner in which roles in these domains clash with one another.

Some of the undesirable outcomes of engagement with work and family on individual employees and organisations are highlighted by poor performance, regular employee absence from work, less satisfaction in marital and familial relationships, high rate of employee turnover, despair and ill health (Barlow, Allen, & Choate, 2004; Dobson & Smith, 2000), abandonment of high-powered work for family and child care by women (Wallis, 2004), and retraining highly skilled employees in plumbing skills (O'Donnell, 2005). Even though it could be argued that the conflict between work and family often results in adverse situations, Jones et al. (2013) report that there is evidence that not every mental effect of work is negative. For instance, an individual may derive tremendous satisfaction from achieving much at work on a day which translates into the home sphere and influences better relationship and enhances pleasure in leisure activities (Burke, 2009). Otherwise, there seems to be a consensus among scholars that the effect of work demands and the resultant outcome of imbalance in work-life, have impacted adversely on individual employees as well as workplaces.

For instance, Huang et al. (2004) are of the opinion that workers who are saddled with the responsibility of providing care for elderly relatives face more challenges in achieving balance between work and family when compared to their colleagues who have no such responsibilities. This is amplified by Hepburn and Barling (1996) observation that responsibility for providing care for elders could upset work schedules, lead to fractional absenteeism and could also cause disruptions at work. This is because providing such care for elders is more stressful than caring for one's children, because the need of these elders for care is most of the time unplanned for and could increase in intensity with time (Hepburn & Barling, 1996). Keene and Quadagno (2004) report that many employees caring for elders have indicated difficulty in achieving balance between work and family. There are reports that work-life imbalance could challenge a person's health and wellness (Frone, 2000; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1997; Grzywacz & Bass, 2003; Major, Klein, & Ehrhart, 2002), as well as the performance of an organisation (Kossek et al., 2010; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). However, Halpern (2005) reports that academics claim that WLB improves peoples' wellness and also, it is a fulcrum for a society that is vigorous and functional.

Moreover, indicators of balance have been noted to associate with more commitment among employees and satisfaction with work (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999), and citizenship behaviour in the workplace (Bragger, Rodriguez-Srednicki, Kutcher, Indovino, & Rosner, 2005). Intention to leave an organisation has been reported as a result of

the lack of balance (Allen et al., 2000; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999), while Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) are of the opinion that WLB is central to matters concerning the management and improvement of human resources (HRD) and could be a strong tool in the promotion of organisational and individual efficiency.

In the context of the literature, this study suggests that adopting WLBS that succinctly address work and family stressors and assist individual employees in achieving WLB could enhance the benefits of WLB to both the individual and organisation. The present study therefore, seeks to add value to the efforts of organisations and HR practice through the findings of the research.

5.9 Criticisms of WLB

According to definitions (Guest, 2002), the definitions, methodology and analysis of WLB have been variously criticised. There seems to be a consensus among scholars that the usefulness of WLB as an effective HR tool for leveraging effect is diminished as a result of the fact that assumptions and frameworks in studying the construct lag behind the rhythm of attention that the construct has received, as reported by Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) in citing Greenhaus and Allen (2006). The theories that were postulated to aid research into the study struggle to ascertain what or where balance is. Is balance a point on a continuum, or is it an equilibrium in weight attached to the domains?

Access to information regarding the problems associated with mingling paid work with family needs and responsibilities have been fuelled by studies on WLB. There seems to be a consensus opinion in the literature that factors relating to work largely explain the disparity in WLB and they are united in the opinion that measuring WLB is very challenging (Pichler, 2009). This could be because work related factors are easily and succinctly conceptualised in comparison to life (family) factors. What constitutes *life* or *family* continues to challenge scholars as they try to make meaning of the concept since most of them use terms like *home* or *family* responsibilities, and *housework*. Pichler (2009) is of the opinion that scales used in measuring WLB often do not correlate with parameters that are external and very relevant to the construct.

The present study views WLB as a journey that an individual who has strong SOC can undertake and arrive at despite work and family stressors, if he/she is backed with relevant WLBS and support. The study adopted satisfaction with work and family situations as the indication of balance.

5.10 Measuring work-life balance

Though the present study interchanges the use of *life* and *family* at different points of the research, it accommodates factors like personal development, leisure, communal participation and friendship into the life (family) variable. The study aims at providing the resource that HR practitioners can use in tailoring strategy to assist employees in achieving WLB. To be able to do this, it is imperative that valid measures be used in assessing the assumptions of the study for robustness. Practically, highly-rated measures aid the monitoring of efficacy of packages addressing WLB.

For instance, Cohen et al. (2009) report that their research commenced as a result of the dissatisfaction that they felt towards existing literature on WLB. They are of the opinion that literature does not address the inseparable roles at work and home which individuals go through on a daily basis. Some of the scholars that share the same sentiments include Lewis et al. (2007), Guest (2002) and Kossek et al. (2006). Cohen et al. (2009) further queried the components of work and home matters. They asked if chatting with a colleague at work on issues happening at home constituted family interfering with work. Also, they questioned time allocation among work and family; should four hours allocated to work be equalled to four hours allocated to home? They went on to ask if balance should be defined as a type of feeling that a person who has achieved it should have by relaxing and savouring its equilibrium or a system that demands continuous effort.

This study refers to balance as being the result of satisfaction with work and family situations. It is not fundamentally concerned with achievement in work and family domains. This is because of the recognition of the implied assumption that performance of roles at both work and in the family domain which does not result in satisfaction to the individual could become burdensome and stressful. In as much as the study emphasises the individual involved with work and family, it considers the significance that the feeling of satisfaction could have on both work and family. The foregoing has led to the adoption of items previously used in measuring WLB.

A three dimensional scale with 12 items was used in measuring the two dimensions of WLB assessed by this paper, namely satisfaction with family situation and job satisfaction. The scales were: job involvement scale, family involvement scale and job satisfaction scale. Job involvement denotes the extent that an individual holds his/her job as being integral to his/her personality or *sense of identity* (Frone et al., 1992; Kanungo, 1982). To assess this construct,

five items adapted from a scale designed by Kanungo (1982) was used. According to the study conducted by Blau (1985), Kanungo's measure is uni-dimensional and therefore an unadulterated scale used in mental identification when compared to Lodahl and Kejner's (1965) reduced version measure. Response to the items on this scale as used in this study were based on a 5-point likert scale ranging from 1) strongly disagree to 5) strongly agree. The original scale was based on a 6-point agree/disagree likert scale (Frone et al., 1992). The Cronbach alpha coefficient noted for the scale in this study was an acceptable 0.794.

Family involvement was measured by altering the job involvement items to denote the spouse of the respondents (Frone et al., 1992: 69), using Kanungo's (1982a, b) job involvement scale. This technique was successfully utilised in past work-family research (Frone & Rice, 1987). Deephouse's (1996) formula was used to ascertain involvement balance coefficient. Some of the items from the scale include "The major satisfaction in my life comes from my family" and "I am very much involved in my role as a spouse". This scale was not recognised in the exploratory factor analysis as all the items cross-loaded on other variables in the study. To ascertain satisfaction with family situation among respondents, descriptive statistics were engaged. The item "*The major satisfaction in my life comes from my family*" was examined.

Job satisfaction was measured using a two item measure. The measure was adapted from a 5-item scale developed from the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of this study. Response on the two item scale was based on a 5-point likert scale ranging from 1) strongly disagree to 5) strongly agree. Items from the scale include "*I perform tasks that are too easy or boring*". The scale's internal consistency was $\alpha = 0.938$. From the rule of the thumb, this level of internal consistency is acceptable (George & Mallery, 2003; Pallant, 2011).

5.11 Conclusion

The review of literature on WLB in the connection between WLB and SOC was presented in this chapter. This involved the presentation of various definitions of the construct by many scholars and the proposed definition of WLB from the review of the literature in this study. The literature on the two elements of WLB examined in this study was also reviewed. These elements were satisfaction and involvement. WLB in this study was examined based on individual employee satisfaction with work and family situations. Additionally, this study reviewed the paradigms of WLB such as conflict, control, time and equilibrium paradigms. Theories of WLB (traditional and contemporary) were also reviewed. Traditional theories are the spill over, compensation, segmentation, instrumental and conflict. The contemporary

theories reviewed in this chapter are the border and resources drain theories, while conservation of resources theory is discussed in Chapter six. The gaps in the literature led to this study's aim of exploring the relationship between WLB and SOC by examining the influence of work and family stressors on an individual's SOC. It also resulted in the investigation of the WLBS to establish whether they assisted employees in addressing work and family stressors and the influence that the WLBS had on individual employee's SOC. The next chapter will present the theoretical framework guiding this study.

CHAPTER SIX: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK GUIDING THIS STUDY

6.1 Introduction

This chapter showcases the theoretical framework guiding this study on the connection between work-life balance (WLB) and sense of coherence (SOC) at a municipality in the South African public sector. This researcher draws on Hobfoll's (1989, 2001, 2011) conservation of resources (COR) theory, Voydanoff's (2005) demands, resources and strategies (DRS) model and Edwards and Rothbard (1999) person-environment (P-E) fit theory. The researcher is mindful that the connection between WLB and SOC can be influenced by work-life balance strategies (WLBS) and work and family stressors. Hence, this chapter examines the three theories (COR, DRS and P-E fit) as presented below. The appraisal of these theories led to the development of a conceptual framework to guide this study.

6.2 Conservation of Resources (COR) theory

The conservation of resources (COR) theory was suggested as a consolidated stress theory which explores an individual's interior and exterior processes by equally and considerably measuring them (S. E. Hobfoll, 2001). Additionally, Hobfoll (2001, p. 338) reports that the theory incorporates *the individual-nested in family-nested in tribe, and set in a social context*. Hence COR centrally depends on the constructive and socially interpreted characteristics

embedded in the surroundings in ascertaining stress development instead of the individual's peculiar analysis. This implies that the theory considers the individual in conjunction with family, tribe and society. However efforts to separate one of the elements in the set in any analysis without referring to the whole (individual, family, tribe, society), could result in an inadequate forecast (Hobfoll, 2001). He describes *tribes* as the complicated social aggregates commonly known as groups other than the family such as *friends, colleagues, organisations and communities*.

Shore (1996) hypothesises that people look for balance among challenges (strains) and means through the instrument of bringing down the rate of demands (strains) and/or finding ways of increasing resources (means) to be able to manage present strains (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989, 1998, 2011; Grandey et al., 1999). This theory predicts that the major determinant variable in stress development is the loss of resources (Hobfoll, 2001). Hobfoll (2001, p. 337) states that these are "those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued in their own right, or that are valued because they act as conduits to the achievement or protection of valued resources" (Diener, Smith, & Fujita, 1995; Hobfoll, 2001). The prediction of this theory is that stress is inevitable where resources are perceived to be vulnerable, lost, forfeited and uneven, or, if people as individuals or groups are unable to see the way of enhancing and securing their resources either by personal or collaborative efforts (S. E. Hobfoll, 2001).

Individuals perceive the world as a place naturally inherent with threats and therefore demands an arrangement of an individual's abilities, networks and ethnicity for anyone to survive (Hobfoll, 2001; Pyszczynski, Greenberg, Solomon, Arndt, & Schimel, 2004). Hobfoll (2001) reports that stress occurs: a) while a person's resources are under the threat of loss, b) when a person's resource gets lost, or c) if people are unable to gain enough resources from a major outlay.

According to Hobfoll (2011a), COR theory asserts the constructive veracity of the factors of danger and loss as well as the shared evaluations of individuals who are connected biologically, culturally or by workplace. The theory was initially proposed to explore main stress events in life (Freedy, Saladin, Kilpatrick, Resnick, & Saunders, 1994; Hobfoll, Canetti-Nisim, & Johnson, 2006; Norris, Perilla, Riad, Kaniasty, & Lavizzo, 1999). But it has evolved into a major theory in the study of burnout (Brotheridge & Lee, 2002; Buchwald & Hobfoll, 2004; Freedy & Hobfoll, 1994; Freedy, Hobfoll, & Ribbe, 1994; Neveu, 2007) and difficult work

situations (Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Jawahar, Stone, & Kisamore, 2007; Zellars, Perrewé, Hochwarter, & Anderson, 2006). The COR theory is based on various tenets.

6.2.1 Basic tenets of COR theory

Due to the fact that people try to receive, keep, enhance and secure everything that is maximally valuable (Hobfoll, 1988, 1998a), it implies that they will use important resources to manage themselves, their engagements in social relationships as well as the way in which they arrange themselves to behave and align with the larger society (Hobfoll, 2011). Things that constitute primary value according to COR are wellness and health, home, peace of mind, preservation of self and an affirmative *sense of self*. Hobfoll (2011) suggests that organisations have to set their systems to work in harmony with the foregoing motivation. Failing to do this may be effective in the short run, but in the long run, may not be maintained because people will either leave or break down. The tenets of COR as stated in various studies on stress and trauma (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll, 1998, 2001; Hobfoll, Jackson, Lavin, Britton & Shepherd, 1993) are:

6.2.1.1 Tenet 1: The supremacy of the loss of resource

This tenet suggests that the loss of resource is unduly more important than the gain of resource. It considers that the effect of loss of resource is not only disproportionate in the aspect of levels but also rapidity. For instance, the swift manner in which enormous losses resulted from the global recession in 2008 at both work and market places witnessed the immediate crumbling of organisations that were thought to be strong and cohesive. Therefore, if loss takes a focal position in the individual mind, especially if such losses are from investments that were thought through and constructive, the sense of loss will dominate both individuals and the organisation. In the case that the loss surrounds an organisation, then, the cycle of creating and maintaining resources will be difficult (Hobfoll, 2011).

6.2.1.2 Tenet 2: Resource investment

This principle is based on the assumption that individuals make investments in resources so as to secure themselves from the loss of resources, regain what is lost and improve resources. Another angle to this is that individuals with more resources are least threatened by the loss of resources and most capable of reinventing resource gain. In this study, it is assumed that an individual with strong SOC may have a lesser perception of the impact of work and family stressors, as a result of the use of WLBS in place at the municipality.

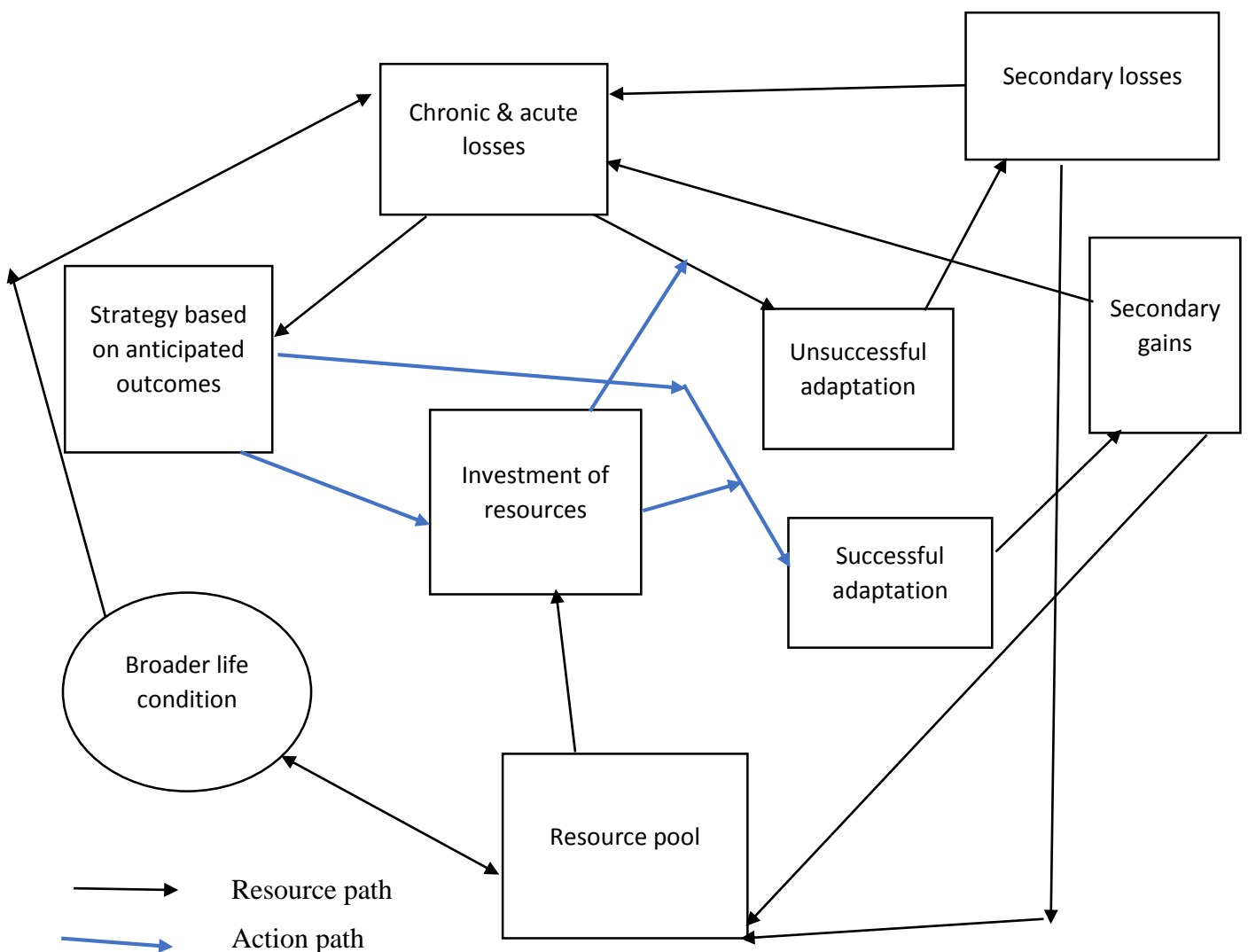
6.2.1.3 Tenets 3 and 4: Resource loss and gain

These tenets posit that the cycle of gaining or losing resource happens in continuously stressful situations, if the organisation and people lack resources, and if a main stressful event happened. These cycles increase with more power and rapidity as people, units, and establishments either gain resources in order to exploit novel challenges or lose the resources required to solve problems. This implies that an individual can lose resources to cope with stressors or achieve WLB. According to Hobfoll (2011), family and work competitively make demands on the resources available to individuals. Additionally, he asserts that the degree to which resources are laid up in one sphere affects the simplification of the other sphere. For instance, motivating individuals for what they stand to gain or the prevention of loss of resource (Hakanem, Peeters & Perhoniemi, 2011) could be used as a mutual plan. Otherwise, investing resources in achieving WLB may affect the management of work and family stressors.

In the workplace setting, investing in resources depends partially on the total resources in the organisation and the capacity of the workers as individuals and/or groups to access and use them. Effective organisations make available for their employees, an array of common resources, and simplify the exchange of those resources towards achieving organisational goals. If an establishment does not make these resources available, it affects employee performance and effectiveness (Hobfoll, 2011). Additionally, he suggests that organisations create what he calls *caravan passageways*. These are conditions associated with the environment of work that supports, enhances, augments and secures individuals', units, or departmental resources or deviates, destabilises, hinders, or bankrupts individuals' or group resource tanks. He further opines that there is a high level of association among resources.

Similarly, Winkel, Wyland, Shaffer and Clason (2011) clarified by Penney, Hunter, and Perry (2011), conceptualised an alignment of resource and time. They particularly outlined the manner in which investment in resource could assist individuals to acquire and secure resources, or meet the need to achieve organisational goals. The COR model is presented in Figure 6.1 below.

Figure 6.1: Conservation of Resources (COR) model



Source: Adapted from Hobfoll (2001, p. 358)

The diagram above is presented in this study to clarify how individuals manage situations around resources. It shows that the total conditions of life and constant and severe loss of resource situations result in the development of resource conservation situations. When the circumstances of resource lack are evident, it tends to create or facilitate the process of resource loss. If there is a loss, people utilise the tactics of conserving resources, through which they make use of available resources to cope successfully in every way possible. For instance, where work stressors are high, individual employees may tend to conserve resources to cope with the stressors and this could lead to the neglect of family stressors or achievement of WLB. By successfully adapting, individuals generate novel resources that conversely store their resource collection and deletes the event that created the severe and constant loss of resources. Adjustments that were not successful, on the other hand, give rise to unwanted emotional and behavioural outcomes as well as reduction in the invested resources. This kind of failed adaptation goes on to create higher level resource losses that multiplies the severe and constant loss situation and reduces the strength of the resource pool (S. E. Hobfoll, 2001).

Therefore, the present study adopts the COR theory in the exploration of the connection between WLB and SOC. The assumption of the study is that individuals will strive (journey) to achieve WLB when they understand the value that it will add to their health, wellbeing, family and workplace relationships, peace and performance. Individuals with strong SOC will look for ways of coping with work and family stressors. Additionally, Hobfoll's (2011) caravan passageways and analysis of the reservoir of resources accessible and available at the workplace support the present study design that WLBS crafted to be relevant in addressing the work and family stressors among employees which will enhance employee SOC and result in the achievement of WLB.

6.3 Demands, resources and strategies model

Employees face myriads of unavoidable challenges in contemporary times regarding WLB (Campione, 2008; Delgado & Canabal, 2006; Mauno & Rantanen, 2013; Minnotte, 2012; Voydanoff, 2005a). The nagging question therefore is, what are employees supposed to do to manage these challenges? This study envisages that employees could derive some benefit from their personal resources such as SOC as well as organisational resources (such as WLBS) to cope with stressors and seek for WLB.

From the literature, prior studies have examined WLB from either the cognitive or the behavioural perspective, and neglected the practical importance of combining both approaches

in the work-family study. Practically, it is important to understand which strategies or combinations of strategies that should assist employees in coping with what work and/or family stressors (or a combination thereof) to positively influence SOC and achieve WLB. This will accordingly assist HR practitioners in the formulation and crafting of WLBS. To address this gap, this study investigated SOC as a predictor of WLB by examining the influence of stressors and WLBS on SOC. The study was particularly interested in finding what types of strategies addressed work and family stressors respectively and assisted employees in achieving WLB.

According to Voydanoff (2005b), work-family balance is a universal consideration which assumes that resources present at work and family are able to help in meeting work and domestic needs in a manner that effective involvement in the two spheres are achieved. She proposed that work-life (family) balance connects to performance in work and family roles and the values attached to such performance. This study adopts in full, Voydanoff's propositions, but will not be able to delve into work-family fit as proposed by the same scholar. Her view is adopted because the elements involved in her approach by examining needs, resources and tactics seem to relate to work-life (family) balance as well as address work and family stressors. Demands, resources and strategies model also known as the *Integrative Model of the Work Family Interface* is reputed as one of the most important theoretical models for WLB (Frone et al., 1992; Frone, Yardley, et al., 1997; Mauno & Rantanen, 2013). This model defined various systematic and psychosocial elements (Minnotte, 2012; Voydanoff, 2004, 2005b; Wayne et al., 2007) as being capable of affecting work-family conflict. The domain specific assumptions of the model has attracted broad empirical support among scholars of the work-family study (Adams et al., 1996; Byron, 2005; Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998; Seiger & Wiese, 2009). But this study is not examining domain-specific conflict or its effect; rather it investigates domain-specific stressors and strategies. Although the model does not integrate work and family stressors and WLBS, this researcher relied on it and expected the domain-specific assumption to equally be applicable to WLB (Mauno & Rantanen, 2013; Voydanoff, 2004, 2005a) and SOC.

Consequently WLBS are expected to improve or enhance an employee's SOC and thereby facilitate the achievement of WLB, while the work strategies are expected to address work stressors, and family strategies address family stressors. Mauno and Rantanen (2013) adopted this model in their study on work-family conflict and enrichment. They report that domain specificity in a meta-analysis of the effects of work-family enrichment was observed (McNall et al., 2010).

Voydanoff's (2005) approach highlights the following elements among many others:

Demand: Comprises of physical or mental entitlements related to responsibility obligations, expectations, plus customs that people should imbibe or comply with through psychological or bodily endeavour.

Resources: Include physical or mental assets which could accelerate an individual's functioning through their use, lessen stresses, or create more resources (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Boundary-spanning strategies: Which are activities undertaken by employees and their families to lessen or remove the inconsistency among work and home needs and supplies. Among these strategies are those that could alter work and home functions in order to lessen the burden, for instance, reducing the number of working hours, lessening job duties, plus involvement in home chores and child and elder care. There are other stratagems that improve supplies (resources), like accepting a job that has more enrichment, employing someone else to help with household duties and dependent relative care, or achieving time elasticity by working for oneself (Voydanoff, 2005b, p. 832).

But in the present study, **demands** include specifically work stressors (job stress, absence of autonomy and function vagueness) and family stressors (parenting and child care, elder care, personal health, finance/debt, non-job duties, time and relational stress). **Resources** are attributed to SOC acquired from the resources from home and present at the work place; while **strategies** are explained as WLB policies adopted by the organisation (municipality) to assist employees in achieving WLB in this case; HIV/AIDS counselling, stress management, financial/debt counselling, domestic relationships counselling and substance abuse counselling.

Voydanoff's (2005) model and definition did not consider organisational strategies in place at the workplace, but rather viewed strategies from the individual's perspective on the assumption that he/she is in a position to strategise on how to manage the work and family interface. She also did not consider the inherent and acquired resources available to the individual from upbringing to the work environment; in this case, SOC. Summarily, Voydanoff's (2005) definition revolves around involvement balance which is one of the elements of balance that was discussed in the WLB literature review (see Chapter five for details). But in this study, such capacity to strategise is linked to SOC which Antonovsky (1979, 1988, 1993) reports is a

personal dispositional mechanism that facilitates the choice to seek strategies and ways of coping with stressors.

The model precisely suggests that a decrease in resources and increase in demands predicts work-family conflict. Additionally, the model portrays work-family conflict as a phenomenon that goes in two directions as work spills over to family and vice versa, a standpoint that this study does not take into account. And with respect to bi-directionality, the model adopts domain-specific predictors (Mauno & Rantanen, 2013). The model views the predictors of work-based work-family conflict as primarily having its source in the sphere of work while factors relating to the family are viewed as the greatest predictors of family-based work-family conflict (Frone et al., 1992; Frone, Russell, et al., 1997; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Mauno & Rantanen, 2013; Voydanoff, 2005a).

Nevertheless, this study focused on organisational resources (WLBS) and individual SOC as predictors. According to Mauno and Rantanen (2013) report, scholars have called for researchers in the stress area to pay less attention to stressors/challenges and focus on stress-protective elements; that is resources (Hobfoll, 1998; Hobfoll, 1989; Wheaton, 1983). According to scholars these resources are available in an individual before the occurrence of stress (Antonovsky, 1993; Taylor & Stanton, 2007; Wheaton, 1983). The present study followed this suggestion.

6.4 Person-Environment (P-E) Fit theory

According to Edwards, Caplan, and Van Harrison (1998), theories of stress acknowledge the significance of the individual (person) and environment in the bid to grasp the characteristics and influence of stress. This double barrel approach that focuses on the individual and environment in the study of stress represents a shared viewpoint in psychology (Endler & Magnusson, 1977; Lewin, 1951; Pervin, 1989) that suggests that wellness, mannerisms and conduct are jointly influenced by the environment and the individual. The theory is core to studies on workplace behaviour, industrial psychology and management of human resources (Edwards, Cable, Williamson, Lambert, & Shipp, 2006; Edwards et al., 1998; Holland, 1997; Kristof, 1996; Walsh, Craik, & Price, 2000). Person and environment fit has been investigated alongside different P-E constructs like personnel needs and rewards associated with work (Dawis, 1992; Edwards & Van Harrison, 1993; Rice, McFarlin, & Bennett, 1989), individual and organisational norms (Adkins, Ravlin, & Meglino, 1996; Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997; Judge & Bretz, 1992), employee capacities and work demands (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1990;

Kristof-Brown, 2000; Westman & Eden, 1992), plus individual differences among other organisational members (Schneider, 1987). Literature reveals that the theory is connected to satisfaction with work, decisions concerning staffing and selection, intention to leave the employment, performance, wellness and loyalty to the organisation (Judge & Kristof-Brown, 2004; Spokane, Meir, & Catalano, 2000; Verquer, Beehr, & Wagner, 2003; Werbel & Gilliland, 1999).

P-E fit is described as the alignment of the individual and the environment (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996; Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987). The way in which an individual views this match is subjective. According to Edwards et al. (2006), although many studies have investigated the causal and resulting effects of P-E fit, not much is known about the way in which individuals integrate their perception of themselves and their environment in the P-E fit analysis. However, Edwards et al. (1998) report that stress is the result of a mismatch between the individual and environment. Additionally, they differentiated between *objective* and *subjective* manifestations in the individual and the environment. The objective individual denotes all the existing traits of the individual while the subjective individual refers to the way an individual perceives his/her personal attributes (i.e. self-uniqueness and self-impression). In the same manner, *objective environment* encompasses all the existing physiological and sociological circumstances and events, separate from the individual's experience and feelings. On the other hand, *subjective environment* points to circumstances and events experienced and felt by the individual. They concluded that there is a causal relationship between the objective individual and environment and subjective individual and environment (Edwards et al., 1998; Harrison, 1985).

However, there exists a flawed association between the objective and subjective factors due to the fact that individuals reason differently (Weick, 1979), have restricted natural abilities to process information (March & Simon, 1958), as well as the organisational systems which restrict individual right to factual information (Caplan, 1987; Harrison, 1978).

According to Caplan (1983), if stressors are too strong, there could be the resultant effect of a kind of disconnection from the objective part of the circumstance or self which could subdue worry and promote adjustment thereby conversely facilitating psychological wellness (Lazarus & DeLongis, 1983; Taylor & Brown, 1988). For example, the effect of overwhelming absence of autonomy in job roles can result in an individual succumbing to the desire to mentally disengage from the resultant role conflicts and inefficiency; this can reduce anxiety and foster

well-being. If there are enabling facilities in the environment to address the needs of the environment and improve the individual abilities, employees may be able to cope with stressors.

Edward et al. (1998) suggest that the alignment of the needs (demands) of the environment plus the capacity (ability) of the individual should be differentiated. Needs (demands) include the measurable and expressible work obligations, functional anticipations, as well as team and workplace norms; while capacity (abilities) comprises talents, time, expertise, education and strength required to satisfy the demands. There is another type of P-E fit that considers the alignment of what a person needs and what the environment can supply that is relevant to the need of the individual. The theory views *needs* in a holistic manner as comprising inborn organic and mental requirements, virtues gained through association and education, plus desires to succeed (Harrison, 1985; French & Kahn, 1962). *Supplies* denote the internal and external resources needed to satisfy an individual's needs such as house, food, financial resources, social engagements and the prospects of achieving desired goals (Harrison, 1985; Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005).

The present study is in no way analysing the person-environment constructs for fitness, rather it is investigating the effect of WLBS on an individual employee's SOC with the intention to observe the influence that the outcome of these have on the achievement of WLB by an individual. Additionally, work and family stressors are examined to establish their influence on employee SOC. Stress, according to Edwards et al. (1998), is a result of the situation where supplies in an environment are not sufficient to address the individual's needs, or the capacity of the individual is unable to measure up to that required to receive what the environment supplies. In their opinion, stress is a subjective phenomenon rather than an objective oddity in the person-environment concepts. They defined stress as "a subjective appraisal indicating that supplies are insufficient to fulfil a person's needs, with the provision that insufficient supplies may occur as a consequence of unmet demands" (Edwards et al., 1998). This means that where an individual's abilities and resources are unable to assist in his/her coping with stressors, he/she will experience stress, but where the resources available in the workplace and/or family are sufficient to assist him/her to cope with the stressors, he/she may be able to cope with challenging demands. For instance, a female employee may not be a great cook even though the husband likes home-made meals. In this case, the stress of not being able to cook at home

can be mitigated if she finds a paid cook or gets support from the husband's retired aunt who is a great cook.

According to Edward et al. (1998), coping involves endeavours to advance objective P-E fit, by either altering the objective individual (i.e. by making adjustments) or the objective environment (by understanding the environment) (French, Rodgers, & Cobb, 1974), cited in Tomer (2013) and Edwards (2008). For instance, an individual experiencing pressure from the family domain with respect to child care could decide to hire a baby minder (nanny) or make use of the crèche provided at the workplace. The P-E fit theory thus provides a good frame that can be used in addressing work-life issues by integrating WLBS and support to enhance an individual's SOC in order to achieve meaningful WLB.

Harrison (1978) reports that stress could also rise when demands are more than the abilities of the individual if the extra demands limit the acceptance of the supplies needed to satisfy them (Edward et al., 1998). What this means is that proficiency in the technical expertise required to perform a given job may not be very useful in meeting the needs or satisfying another work goal. Contrarily, skill in managing workplace assignments may hinder the performance of family roles like parenting and house-keeping. However, extraordinary abilities could cause a reduction on stress by making provisions for needs like achieving the target of completing a given assignment ahead of time, thereby creating more time to read, socialise or engage in leisure activities (Edwards, 2008; Harrison, 1978). Conversely, extraordinary abilities could reduce stress by assisting the individual in conserving their own resources (e.g. strength and time) for future needs. Harrison (1978) further suggests that extraordinary abilities could increase stress if the individual has to excessively use such abilities for inferior motives, for instance, if a highly skilled individual proficient in a given job is given a job with ambiguous description or inferior to the individual's skill. Also, a person having excess abilities may forget how to use them if he/she continuously engages in jobs that do not require the use of the excess skills (Edwards et al., 1998).

The P-E theory signifies the process assumption (Campbell, Dunnette, Lawler, & Weick, 1970) because it specifies the way in which the person and environment concepts work together to affect stress (Harrison, 1985; Edwards et al., 1998). It also shows that the form of association among P-E fit and stress hinges on the salience of the domain from which the individual and environment are assessed. This refers to the ranking that the person gives to the needs from say work or family. Therefore, salience could be seen as a moderator of the association between P-

E and stress. The use of salience as a go-between in the connection between P-E and stress is in sync with philosophies of wellness and satisfaction (Judge, Locke, Durham, & Kluger, 1998; Judge & Watanabe, 1994; Locke, 1976; Naylor, Pritchard, & Ilgen, 1980; Rice et al., 1985). Moreover, the P-E theory has been extended to encompass that of the individual and the workplace. Harrison (1985) reports that in the same way that a person's effectiveness and survival hinges on the satisfaction of needs, organisations' efficiency and survival depends on the satisfaction of the demands placed on workers. Impliedly, workplaces that have the capacity to play the roles that employees see as important in meeting their own needs could record lesser turnover than those that are unable to satisfy these demands (Scott & Meyer, 1994; Wanous, Poland, Premack, & Davis, 1992).

Although this theory is useful in gaining insight into the person and environment constructs and the way in which the combination results in stress, as well as how coping could help solve the problem of mismatch, it has many shortcomings and boundaries (Edwards et al., 1998). It does not specify how the association with stress is predicted; rather it pinpoints groups of possible associations and assumes P-E fit associations for particular domain contents, and views manifestation of stress as an empirical issue (Edwards et al., 1998). Literature reveals that the association between P-E fit and stress could traverse not just domains contents and manifestations of stress only but through occupations (Caplan et al., 1980). The P-E fit theory also does not predict coping strategies. For instance, it does not suggest the standards which an individual could adopt in choosing ways of settling misfit in P-E (Edwards et al., 1998).

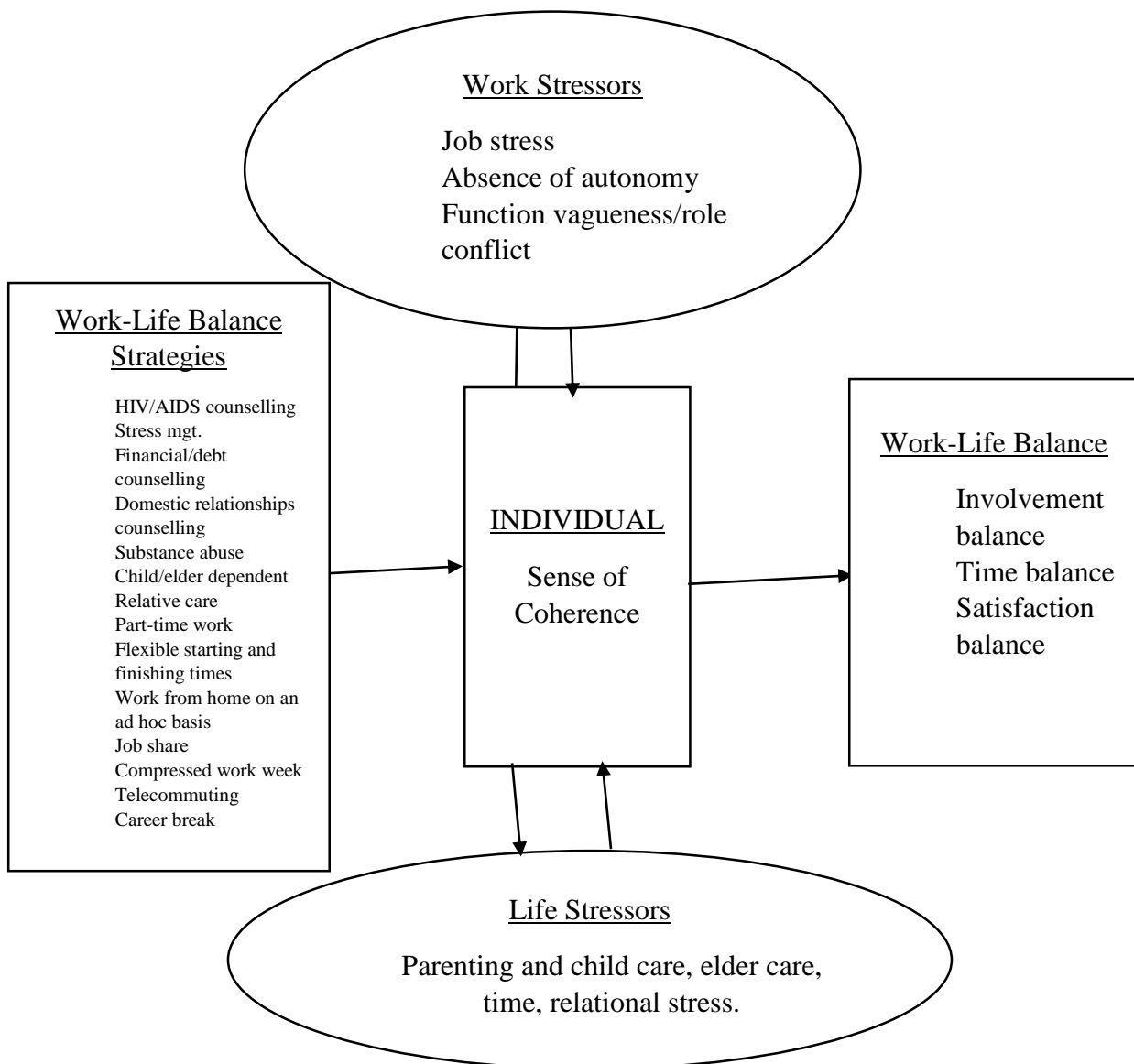
There have been questions raised about the P-E fit theory because of the observed flaws in the meaning of P-E fit and the way it is experienced by individuals. Such questions include the following: If a person reflects on his/her salary and considers that it is more than or less than what he/she expects (Hollenbeck, Williams, & Klein, 1989; Locke, 1969; Sweeney, McFarlin, & Inderrieden, 1990), is there any way that he/she could calculate the disparity between the apparent and desired salary? Where individuals report that their capabilities are more than what is required for them to do their jobs (Acemoglu, Johnson, & Robinson, 2000), are they subtracting their perceived abilities from the demands of the job? (Edwards et al., 2006). Scholars' calls for studies that should answer these questions among others have not been responded to (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998; Kristof, 1996). Edwards et al. (2006) suggest that studies investigating the interface of the individual and the environment to apparent P-E alignment could contribute meaningfully to literature. Therefore, the present study attempts to

examine the linkage between WLB and SOC to ascertain if stressors affect SOC. It also seeks to determine if SOC connects to WLB through the use of WLBS. It identifies SOC as the factor that determines the choice that an individual will make in the face of stressors and the decision to pursue the WLB journey or not.

6.5 Conceptual framework guiding this study

The appraisal of the theories (COR, P-E fit and DRS) have led to the conceptualisation of the following framework to guide this study; bearing in mind that the connection between WLB and SOC could be influenced by WLBS and work and family stressors.

Figure 6.2 Conceptual framework guiding this study



6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the appropriate theories fundamental to the connection between WLBS and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector were presented and discussed. Care was exercised in selecting these theories based on the conceptual framework and objectives formulated for this study.

The conservation of resources (COR) theory proposed by Hobfoll (2001) was selected with respect to WLBS, SOC and stressors. The model proposed an appraisal of what an individual could do in the presence of, and/or the anticipation of stressful events or situations. There are four basic tenets of the COR theory from which individual behaviour are appraised, namely the superiority of loss, resource investment and the cycle of gaining or losing resources. The first basic tenet could underpin the formulation of WLBS to assist employees in managing apparent or anticipated stress which may lead to loss. The second tenet suggests that an individual's SOC will determine whether an individual will invest time and energy in managing stressors or achieving WLBS especially if the individual views resources as not being sufficient. The third and fourth tenets are also significant to the way an individual would attach meaning to, comprehend and/or manage (SOC) the resources available in addressing work and family stressors. The use of the COR theory in this study fills the gap of appraising the individual's cognitive capacity to address stressors with available resources. This study will derive meaningful interpretation of individual behaviour with respect to use of WLBS and management of work and family stressors.

The DRS model (Voydanoff, 2005a) was adopted with respect to appraising WLBS in place at the municipality and the work and family stressors. This theory was considered valuable in achieving study objectives related to WLBS, stressors and the achievement of WLBS. This study considers the model beneficial to the interplay between the stressors, SOC and WLBS by extending the boundaries of knowledge with the explanation of the interface between these variables. Voydanoff (2005a) reported that the positive interface between demands, resources and strategies would result in the achievement of balance. This model will be notable in guiding the decisions as to whether employees at the municipality achieved WLBS or not by using the WLBS in place at the municipality to address their work and family stressors.

The P-E fit theory was utilised to accommodate and explain the effect that the environment (in this case, work and family stressors) have on an individual's SOC. Though previous studies have acknowledged the benefits of using this theory in appraising the interface between work

and family, many others noted the shortfalls of the theory. This study observes some of the shortfalls of the theory (P-E fit) and recommends ways of addressing those limitations. The next chapter focuses on the methodology adopted by this study to examine the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher describes the methodology adopted in the study to pragmatically examine the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. It is imperative to critically choose the research methodology that is relevant and best suits the present research. This is because the selected study design, population, sampling methods, survey instruments and methods of data analysis using statistical tools, bear significant consequences on the outcomes of the research.

A review of the literature with respect to research methodology is conducted in order to keep the researcher abreast of the merits and demerits of various research techniques in order to make an informed decision about the suitable research methods pertinent to the present study. A proper fitness of the research objectives and questions to the selected research methods is necessary. Therefore, this research methodology chapter describes a reiteration of the study objectives and research questions.

7.2 Research objectives

Primarily, this study aims to examine the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. The secondary objectives that this research seeks to achieve are stated as follows:

1. To examine what work-life balance strategies (WLBS) are in place at the municipality.
2. To ascertain the contributions of WLBS to the wellness programme.
3. To investigate the effect of work and family stressors on sense of coherence (SHRM.).
4. To examine the influence of WLBS on work and family stressors.
5. To determine the extent to which WLBS affect WLB.
6. To establish if a relationship exists between WLB and SOC.

7.3 Research question

As a result of the objectives stated above, the following research questions were generated:

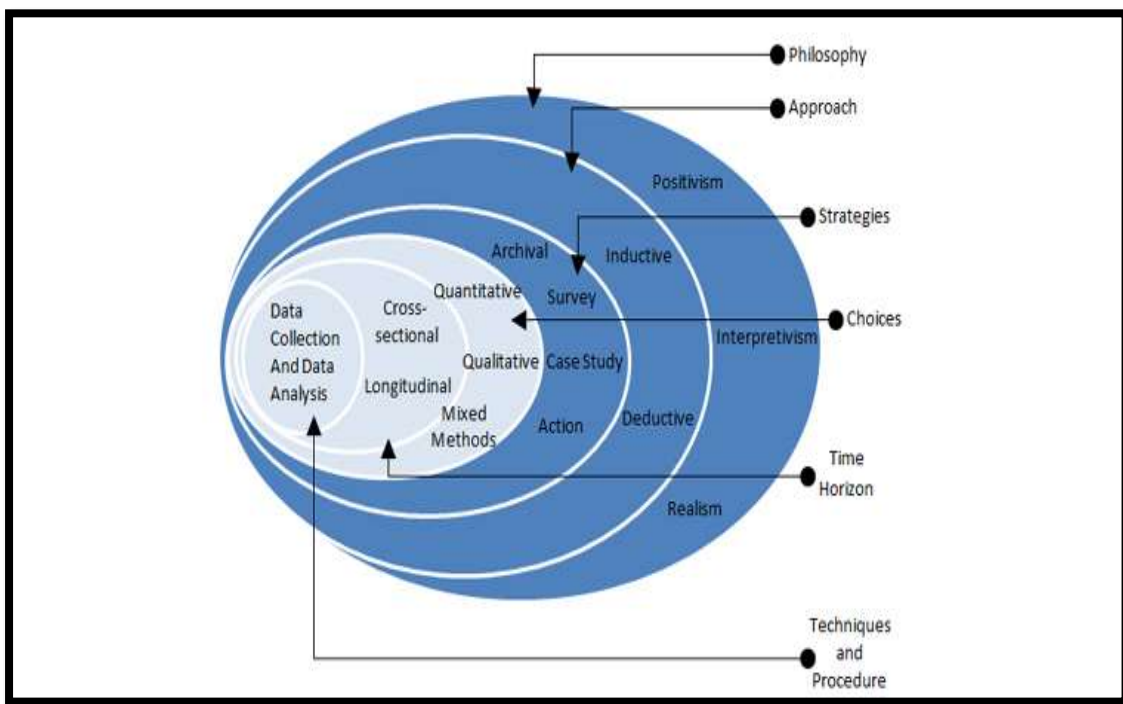
1. What WLBS are in place at the municipality?
2. To what extent do WLBS contribute to the wellness programme?

3. How do work and family stressors affect SOC?
4. How do WLBS affect work and family stressors?
5. To what extent do WLBS affect WLB?
6. What type of relationship exists between WLB and SOC?

7.4 Research philosophy

Research philosophies according to Saunders, Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2011) are basically concerned with the improvement of knowledge, as well as the character of the developed knowledge. There are various viewpoints and philosophies about a selected research that informs the way that a study is designed and the choice of the methods and tactics necessary for investigating or re-examining the characteristics of the concept or object it is made on. When the enquiry is of a natural or scientific nature, objects are used while the term phenomenon or concept is used in the social sciences, including management science researches (Creswell, 2009). The research ‘onion’ designed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2009) is adopted in explaining research viewpoints in the present study as presented in the following diagram.

Figure 7.1 The research “Onion”



Source: Modified from Saunders et al. (2009, p. 108).

This study recognises additional research philosophies, namely positivism, realism, interpretivism and pragmatism.

7.4.1 Positivism

Positivism is a type of theoretical realism observing narrowly the hypothetic-deductive approach (Cacioppo, Semin, & Berntson, 2004; McGrath & Johnson, 2003). According to Ponterotto (2005), by depending on the hypothetic-deductive approach, positivism concentrates on confirming a priori suppositions, often found in quantitative suggestions, convertible to statistical equations that articulate functional linkages (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; McGrath & Johnson, 2003). To Saunders et al. (2009) positivism is that research philosophy that has its roots in natural sciences and is commonly known as an objective strategy to research. According to Bryman (2012), subjects being examined and the significance of the subjects of investigation distinctly exist from the researcher's sphere of existence. This observation is clearly manifest in scientific inquiries involving natural and absolute sciences which show that the experiences of the objects under investigation are extraneous to those of the investigators. This viewpoint will not be adopted in the study since the interpretations and perceptions of the researcher and the respondents are subjective.

7.4.2 Realism

Realism and positivism are epistemologically similar because both assume a method that is scientific in nature in the expansion of information (Creswell & Clark, 2007). This assumption underlies data gathering and grasping of the meaning of information collected (Saunders et al., 2011). This is supported by Bryman and Bell (2011) position that there are two common features among realism and positivism: the principle that agrees that the social and scientific sciences might and should adopt a similar method in collecting and explaining data, as well as the dedication to the standpoint that extraneous reality exists other than those described by researchers. Saunders et al. (2011) report that the principle underlying realism is that what is perceived by human senses as reality is factual; implying that matters exist independently without human cognisance.

According to Farquhar (2012), realists generally believe that all data rests on theory. This assumption does not take into account the underlying factors that explain phenomena and actions, and may not be altogether suitable for social studies; nevertheless it could be useful in studies on experimental and natural sciences. Critical realism establishes the integration of

some of the thoughts of positivist and interpretivist scholars in its removal of rigidity from a research method since it recognises the existence of social phenomena as being consequential whether noted or not (Farquhar, 2012). Therefore, management and organisational behaviour researchers are more likely to adopt the critical realism approach in their studies since society is in a state of flux and human behaviour is dynamic. Aspects of critical realism underpin the use of open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews to deduce answers to matters that are not apparently deducible through questionnaires in this study.

7.4.3 Interpretivism

Interpretivism promotes the necessity for a researcher to grasp the dissimilarities among individuals in their roles as *social actors* and accentuates the distinction in studying humans and objects (Saunders et al., 2009) like cars and cell phones. Interpretivism sought to understand an individual's own perspective of how they lived. It simply is involved with examining the personal significance that individuals attribute to their experiences instead of concentrating on proof as is considered in positivism. Snape and Spencer (2003) report that scholars conducting qualitative studies pursue an understanding of personal significant experiences and the reason behind social actions from the perspective of individual experiences. Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey (2011) surmise that interpretivism therefore stresses the significance of understanding phenomena through observing and interpreting the social environment. Generally speaking, the approach views data as being constructed from the interaction between researchers and participants in a study. Hay (2011) reports that epistemologically, interpretivist researchers infer that all knowledge about social and political realities is mediated, and that data is socially constructed and therefore subjective.

Although critics discharge interpretivism as being fundamentally a type of idealism which leads to inevitable relativism (Dowding, 2004), in Hay (2011), Hay (2011) dismisses this standpoint as false on the basis that the criticism contradicts interpretivism's epistemology. Whereas interpretivism has been deduced as being useful in its provision of profound context, critics query its findings with respect to validity, dependability and generalisability (Kelliher, 2011).

The present study examined the connection between WLB and SOC by looking at the implication of the environment of upbringing and national history among others, on an individual's SOC. Although the approach (interpretivism) acknowledges the significance of the wider context on individuals' lives (Snape & Spencer, 2003), it is not adopted as the major

research paradigm for this study. This is because interpretivism solely focuses on qualitative data collection and analysis while the present study integrates the use of both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. Additionally, it is impossible to avoid the issue of biases in research and the interpretivist researcher discourses biases unswervingly (Ross, Narayanan, Hendrix, & Myneni, 2011). Therefore, in the present study, the researcher recognises that interpretivism may be useful in providing content rich data, and a pragmatic standpoint was adopted for the study.

7.4.4 Pragmatic viewpoint

Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) agree that pragmatism is a research approach that proposes that different methods could be integrated inside one study (Creswell & Garrett, 2008). This is amplified by Hesse-Biber (2008) report that inherent in both the quantitative and qualitative methods are strengths and weaknesses which could be beneficial in making understanding available to researchers of social trends (Yin, 2006). Impliedly, integrating both methods could enhance the quality of research and yield information that may be generalisable across the population. The pragmatic approach gives researchers room to be flexible in adopting analytical techniques in addressing the variety of questions that arise in the research process (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005).

On the basis of Benz and Newman (2008) report, pragmatists could be said to have more likelihood of viewing research as a holistic effort needing extended commitment, relentless examination and triangulation (Lincoln, Lynham, & Guba, 2011). Morgan (2007) suggests that pragmatism does not in any way overlook the importance of the conceptions of epistemology and philosophical knowledge, rather it discards the privileged top-down ontological theories postulated earlier by theorists (Hacking, 1983, p. 2000; Zammito, 2004) as being too constricted to address issues around philosophical knowledge.

To a pragmatist researcher, matters around language and significance are key; inclusive of the real interactions between actors involved in resolving these matters. According to Morgan (2007), it will be deceitful to assume that people all over the world will ultimately come to the point where everyone has absolute understanding of others; however, the pragmatist focuses on basically the amount of understanding that could be achieved and the boundaries of behaviour that may be mutually acceptable.

Pragmatist researchers could exhibit fair dispositions to both qualitative and quantitative methods. This aptitude, according to Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005), places the researcher in

an ample position to better employ qualitative research to update the quantitative aspect of a study and in the same manner update quantitative aspect with qualitative research. For instance, in the present study, quantitative data compensated the un-generalisability of qualitative data. While the adoption of qualitative data assisted the researcher in making explanations concerning connections observed in the quantitative information collected in the study. Pragmatism gives researchers the flexibility to hone in on the efficiency of empirical studies and clarity of descriptive research (Onwuegbuzie, 2003) to achieve full-grained study outcome.

Researchers using both qualitative and quantitative research designs (pragmatist researchers) can easily conceptualise a framework to substantiate the outcomes of quantitative data with the qualitative aspect of the research and at the same time use the indices present in qualitative research to explain quantitative data (Powell, Mihalas, Onwuegbuzie, Suldo, & Daley, 2008). Even though a pragmatic researcher is free to choose any method(s) that he/she judges appropriate (Freshwater & Cahill, 2013; Creswell, 2009), Saunders et al. (2009) are of the opinion that the problems to be solved by the study should form the basis of the ontological, epistemological and axiological decisions. This could be as a result of the pragmatist view that the world is entirely diverse, therefore different methods are needed to solve its problems (Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Creswell, 2009).

The pragmatic approach to research although not new to the behavioural sciences, has many outstanding reviews as an overall principle for behavioural sciences (Maxcy, 2003) and a particular validation for mixing quantitative and qualitative research techniques (Onwuegbuzie & Johnson, 2006). Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009) are of the opinion that pragmatism is the most suitable approach for a mixed methods study.

Morgan (2007) proposed an organised Table (see Table 7.1) to make the understanding of what pragmatism brings into the behavioural science research procedures clearer. This researcher adopted the Table for the sole purpose of clarifying understanding of pragmatism in the present study and how it will aid in data analysis and interpretation in comparison to the qualitative and quantitative approaches to research.

In the view of Saunders et al. (2009), a particular approach could be appropriate and adequate in solving a research problem or answering the research question, yet the mixing of the three viewpoints might be more appropriate in solving a problem under investigation. For instance,

the integration of theory and data mixed with the benefits of objectivity and subjectivity could result in a reliable outcome that may be generalizable. Pragmatism precluded the advent of what is called the mixed method technique to evaluating social phenomena (Hay, 2011).

Table 7.1 Appraising the four research viewpoints in behavioural research

Research philosophies	Positivism	Realism	Interpretivism	Pragmatism
Epistemology: The researcher's views of what comprises acceptable knowledge.	Just observable objects have the capacity to provide reliable information and facts. Focus is on <i>cause, effect, impact and law to make generalisations</i> . It reduces constructs to the simplest elements.	Observable objects give dependable information and facts. Insufficient data implies inaccuracies in feelings (direct realism) while objects provide feelings which are vulnerable to misconceptions (critical realism). Emphasis is on discussions within the framework.	Concentrates on perceptual connotations and social constructs. Focus is on the information surrounding the situation, the background of the information, perceptual values and rationale behind the actions.	Any or combinations of observable constructs and perceptual values can lead to acceptable knowledge. This is dependent on the nature of the research questions at hand. Emphasis is on applied research, adopting multiple techniques for data collection and interpretation of results.
Ontology: The investigator's perceptions of what constitutes the nature of reality.	Objects are seen as external and possess a reality that is different from that of the investigator.	Objective in nature, its existence is completely different from the thoughts and beliefs of social actors (realist); its interpretation comes from social circumstances (critical realist).	Social constructs built into social interactions and actions of others. Subjectivity and variation is inevitable	Emphasis is on better ways to provide answers (solutions) to the research questions (problem). The decision on the suitable techniques is dependent on the research questions.
Axiology: The investigator's perceptions of the role of values in investigation.	The investigation is carried out in a value-free way; the investigator is alienated and upholds an objective mind set.	Investigation is value loaded; the investigator's point of view is subjective based on their social experiences and background which often impact the outcomes of the study.	Investigation is value assured; the investigator is part of the investigation, not possible to be indifferent; this makes the whole exercise sometimes subjective.	Values play a significant role in interpretation of results; the investigator adopts both objective and subjective perspectives.
Main methods of data collection.	Very organised, big samples, measurement, quantitative and permitted to use qualitative when necessary.	Techniques adopted must be aligned with the research questions, qualitative or quantitative.	Takes small samples with deeper examination, more qualitative.	Takes mixed or multiple approaches, that is, qualitative and quantitative.

Source: Adopted from Saunders et al. (2009, p. 119).

Based on Table 7.1, this researcher's epistemological, ontological and axiological stance is rooted in the pragmatic research approach.

7.4.5 Research viewpoint adopted in the present study

The review of the significant research viewpoints led the researcher to adopt the pragmatic approach in this study. Burke (2007) claims that although every one of the research approaches seem to be relevant and useful in various backgrounds upon review, the interpretivist approach was most beneficial in that it yielded the richest outcomes. But Saunders et al. (2009) opine that mixed methods of both numeric and non-numeric nature can possibly be used in a study. Likewise, Creswell (2009) reports that the pragmatic viewpoint provides the option to integrate various methods, insights and assumptions, resulting in better data collection, assessment and explanation leading to the production of excellent research results. These informed the need to adopt the pragmatic approach in exploring the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality.

The adoption of the pragmatic worldview is among the best ways to justify the mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches of investigation in a research in the field of management and social sciences (Morgan, 2007). According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004), the use of both quantitative and qualitative data sources and analytical methods in one study makes way for paradigm shifts resulting in dependable outcomes that could realistically be achieved by adopting the pragmatic standpoint. Conceptual frameworks of a necessity need to be used in social science studies adopting mixed methods (Evans, Coon & Ume, 2011). This means that the framework guiding a study using mixed methods should be capable of accommodating such a choice. In this study therefore, the conceptual framework supported the combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis processes.

Therefore, pragmatism was the approach used in the present study to efficiently examine the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. The reason was that the study adopted the mixed methods approach by engaging the quantitative and qualitative techniques of data collection and analysis. By using the mixed methods research approach, pragmatist researchers could holistically appraise a dataset for meaning and better clarification of understanding, by using one technique to confirm the outcomes of another technique (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007). Triangulation, which is a process that seeks to converge and validate findings of a study about the same issue or problem, was therefore carried out (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989).

From Creswell's (2009) observation, there is a liberty of choice available to pragmatist researchers, in that they may adopt processes, means and methods of research that are most

suitable in achieving the goals and objectives of their study. Powell et al. (2008) posit that pragmatism offers justification for researchers to propose conceptual frameworks by using mixed methods in behavioural sciences. This is supported by Evans, Coon and Ume's (2011) suggestion that using theoretical framework is justifiable in the social science research that adopts a mixed method. Moreover, it is imperative that the framework so adopted aligns with the decision to use mixed methods in a research study. Therefore, the integrated conceptual framework suggested in this study aligns with the choice to integrate quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods. It is based on a mixed study research design.

The present study examines the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. Pragmatism viewpoint was adopted in order to achieve findings that are both dependable and excellent. Based on the evidence of the scholarly argument above, the pragmatic approach is the reasonable validation for mixed methods of collecting and analysing data on the basis of the needs of the statement of the problem, research objectives and research questions of the study (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004; Creswell, 2009; Evans et al., 2011). The choice of this viewpoint was made after thorough search of the literature (Morgan, 2007; Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007; Snape & Spencer, 2008; Creswell, 2009; Saunders et al., 2009) as seen in the texts above.

7.5 Research methods

There are three types of research methods, namely deduction, induction and abduction (integration) methods as suggested by Morgan (2007). Bryman and Bell (2011) agree that deduction is viewed as a universal inclination that connects philosophy and a study. While Hennink et al. (2011) suggest that in using the deduction method, an in-depth appraisal of the existing knowledge and theories guide the development of a framework that directs the process of gathering data. Inductive reasoning proceeds from the deductive reasoning. Management and behavioural science researchers identify the induction method as being capable of yielding results that could verify causal relationships among variables through rigorous interviews, in their bid to formulate hypotheses. These three methods are often combined in the formulation of philosophical assumptions. This study adopted the abduction method (integration method explained in the following sub-section).

7.5.1 The abduction or integration method (combination of research methods)

The major differences between the deduction and induction methods are notable in the literature as one of the core factors of distinction between quantitative and qualitative studies (Morgan, 2007). He asserts further the importance of noting that in reality, the process of navigating from hypotheses to data does not take a linear direction, since in actual research design, data gathering and analysis, there is serious difficulty in using one theory or allowing data to drive the process. This difficulty has given rise to the pragmatic approach of abduction or integration; a process that allows flexible movement between induction (qualitative) and deduction (quantitative) approaches in one research (Creswell, 2009). However, Morgan (2007) insists that his perspective of the abduction (integration) method extends further than the traditional pragmatic view which treats abduction as simply adopting theories to justify what is observed, which is another way of looking at inferences from the induction method. This implies therefore that from the pragmatic standpoint, the singular way to evaluate these inferences is by acts. Therefore, the usual basic usage of the abductive (integrative) method in reasoning pragmatically is to extend the procedure of making inquiries assessing the outcomes of earlier inductions by their capacity to forecast potential behavioural patterns (Morgan, 2007).

This type of the abduction (integration) method is similar to those used by scholars who mix the quantitative and qualitative designs of research (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick, 2006; Morgan, 1998, 2007), in this case, the outcomes of induction in a qualitative method contribute to the objectives of the deduction approach in the quantitative method, and vice versa (Morgan, 2007). According to Charmaz (2008), the abductive perspective seeks to take care of emergent and irregular problems that could arise in the process of collecting data. By this, a researcher's imagination is proactively engaged in early interpretations as he/she thinks of every probable theoretical justification for the experiential data and drafts assumptions prior to reasonable analysis of the data (Charmaz, 2006; Reichertz, 2004, 2007; Rosenthal, 2004). This study adopted the abduction (integration) method because the study is a pragmatic research that utilises the qualitative and quantitative (mixed) methods of data collection and analysis. The manner in which this applies to the present study is presented in Table 7.2. However, integrating the deduction and induction methods into research appears to be reasonable in social science and management studies because of the peculiarities of business actions that revolve around social performers, concepts and objects. Ali and Birley (1999) suggested a comparative table of these methods as presented below.

Table 7.2 Comparative analysis of the deduction, induction and integration methods

Stage	Deduction	Induction	Integration method
1	Development of theoretical framework.	Areas of enquiry are identified, but no theoretical framework.	Development of theoretical framework based on constructs.
2	Variables are identified for relevant constructs.	Respondents identify constructs and explain the relationship between them.	Some variables are identified for relevant constructs-others can be identified by respondents.
3	Development of research instruments.	Identification of broad themes for discussion.	Researcher converts the a priori theoretical framework into theoretical questions.
4	Data is collected from respondents	Respondents discuss general terms of interest.	Respondents discuss the seemingly general questions and identify constructs which are meaningful to them and explain the relationships between the constructs.
5	Data is analysed in terms of prior theoretical framework.	Researcher develops theory on a purely inductive basis.	Data collected from respondents is analysed according to existing theory, or theory is developed on an inductive basis-without regard for the existing theory.
6	Outcome; theory tested based on decision whether to accept or reject the formulated hypotheses.	Outcome; theory developed.	Outcome; either theory is adapted or alternative theoretical framework is presented.

Source: Adopted from Ali and Birley (1999, p. 106).

7.5.2 Method adopted for the present research

The critical review of the literature on the merits and demerits of the induction and deduction methods, as well as the abduction or integration method, has led to the adoption of the abduction (integration) method by the researcher for this study. The integration method has been found most appropriate in examining the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. The integration method aligns to pragmatic assumptions and interpretivist beliefs underpinning this study. The two major variables in the study are WLB and SOC, and according to Edmonds and Kennedy (2012), the integration method strongly yields superior descriptive explanations of cause-and-outcome linkages among double or more variables. The gaps observed by examining the connection between WLB and SOC were resolved through the use of the integration method in the design of the conceptual framework guiding this study.

In achieving the conceptual framework on the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector, the researcher used the integration method,

and integrated the Person-Environment (P-E) fit theory propounded by Edwards et al. (1998), the demands, resources and strategies (DRS) model by Voydanof (2005), and the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989). The qualitative and quantitative data collected was analysed through dependable techniques (Evans, Coon, & Ume, 2011), using IBM SPSS software (for quantitative data analysis) and NVivo (for qualitative data analysis).

The P-E fit theory focuses on examining the alignment of the individual and the environment (Chatman, 1989; Kristof, 1996; Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987) in the study about individual stress. This study considered work and family stressors in the work and family environment of individual employees at a municipality. On the other hand, the DRS model predicts that where the resources and strategies available to the individual are more than the challenges facing an individual, such an individual may achieve WLB (Voydanoff, 2005). The COR is concerned with the way an individual allocates resources to address stressors (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001, 2011). The interplay of the way that the integration method is used with respect to the gathering and analysis of data are discussed in the data analysis chapter (Chapter eight) of this study. Literature reveals that the use of integrated frameworks yield excellent results in the social science and management studies; particularly on the connection between SOC and other variables (Morgan, 2007; Franz, 2013; Diraz et al., 2003).

7.6 Research approach

According to Creswell (2009), research methodology aims at ascertaining the way that realistic data from a study could be gathered, examined and deciphered, based on the research questions (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Three broad categories of studies have been identified by Sekaran and Bougie (2009), they are the exploratory, descriptive and explanatory studies, although other classes like the experimental studies are also reported on and discussed in the following sections.

7.6.1 Exploratory research

Exploratory studies according to Sekaran and Bougie (2009) are carried out when there is need to clarify the meaning of a problem or phenomenon of indeterminate nature. This implies that, this study strategy is adopted when little or insufficient investigation has been carried out on the subject or object of investigation. Prior to the development of major questions in the study, Sekaran and Bougie (2009) suggest that a researcher ought to familiarise him or herself with the issue or object of inquiry to obtain more information with respect to their cause and/or

outcome, and the generation of a by hypothesis Kotler and Armstrong (2012). On the basis of this, it could be inferred that qualitative researches that concentrate on in-depth interviews, observations and focus groups for the generation of new information are exploratory in nature. Also, investigators can make use of the exploratory design to conceptualise ideas, obtain understanding and possibly reduce big issues into lesser problems (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Likewise, Churchill, Brown, and Suter (2004) opine that it could involve an extensive study since it allows flexibility in framing research questions.

Three fundamental stages of carrying out an exploratory study have been identified by Saunders et al. (2009), they are: the critical study of literature, gaining direct information from main actors and specialists through interviews, and finally, gathering information from focus groups. As observed by these scholars, the initial step in this process assists researchers to be abreast of the object or issue and acquire informed general opinion which later narrows down in the course of the study. From this, valuable information that should contribute meaningfully to the body of knowledge is gathered through an exploratory research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009).

This researcher initially conducted a literature review of the subject area which highlighted a gap that most scholars had overlooked in their analysis of WLB (Greenhaus et al., 2003, 2011; Guest, 2002). A gap was found in the connection between WLB and SOC in assessing WLB from an individual level. Through the use of an in-depth interview among eleven heads of departments/units and open-ended questions sections “C, F5 and G5” of the questionnaire disseminated among respondents, qualitative data was collected. Summarily the present study followed the steps of an exploratory research (Saunders et al., 2009), thereby demonstrating that it has adopted and fulfilled the fundamental assumptions of an exploratory qualitative research.

7.6.2 Descriptive research

From its name, it could be easily inferred that a descriptive research entails a broad discourse on the subject under examination. A descriptive research method is adopted when it is the researcher’s intention to describe in clear terms, the nature and features of the phenomenon or object being investigated (Ruggunan, 2013). In a descriptive study, the regularity of the occurrence of a variable and the extent of covariance between two variables are highlighted (Churchill et al., 2004). It aids researchers in arranging logically and systematically, the elements of variables or groups while providing thoughts that could trigger further studies

(Sekaran & Bougie, 2009a). It offers expanded opinions or discussions from the outcomes of exploratory research and could help in making particular predictions. Summarily, descriptive research is usually used when information is required concerning the features of events, people or circumstances (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009).

In the present study, this researcher adopts the descriptive study strategy in describing the position of WLBS as HR policy in influencing the development of an individual employee's SOC and the effect of work and family stressors on SOC among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector. It further provides a descriptive breakdown of the linkage between WLBS and the achievement of WLB on the basis of the gap discovered in the connection between WLB and SOC.

7.6.3 Explanatory research

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009), many explanatory researches need hypothesis testing to be able to give practical clarification of modifications noted with the dependent variables or on the other hand, forecast results of organisational efforts and policies. They further assert that the main feature of explanatory research therefore, is primarily the use of hypothesis testing to determine or clarify the characteristics of the relationship or dissimilarity among two or additional variables engrained in a research. The techniques of collecting and analysing data adopted in an explanatory research may include the numerical, non-numerical or mixed methods based on the type of questions asked in the study (Creswell, 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009).

The present study adopts the pragmatic approach (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2009) by using mixed methods technique in the gathering and analysis of data in others to ascertain the connection between WLB and SOC; it does adopt in its entirety all the assumptions of explanatory approach, but hypotheses were neither formulated nor tested as required by the explanatory research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). However, constructive research questions were asked on the basis of the gap discovered through the review of literature leading to the formulation of a contextual structure (framework) 6 to answer the observed questions arising from the gap observed. Nevertheless, the linkage between WLBS and SOC as well as the interplay of work and family stressors on SOC is highlighted through multiple regression models. It explicates the way in which work and family stressors and SOC offer the answer to the gap between WLBS and WLB at a municipality in the South African public sector. The

models from regression analysis presented in the next chapter highlight the extent of associations.

7.6.4 Experimental research

According to Farquhar (2012), experimental design in research is most suitable when attempting to find the relationship between an autonomous and dependent variables while keeping all other things under control. It strives to ascertain if a particular intervening variable affects the result. In conducting experiments, researchers could classify a sample and apply the findings across the board to all the population, nevertheless, the motive behind an experimental research design is to assess the effect that an intervention has on the results, when the variables that could influence the result are controlled (Collis & Hussey, 2009; Farquhar, 2012 ; Creswell, 2009). Proper experimental research is not common in sociology but is seen quite regularly in associate fields of enquiry like behavioural psychology and management, though they are sometimes used by investigators in the field of social policy to ascertain the effect of novel strategies or policies (Bryman, 2008). The essence of introducing experimental design in the setting of a social study is that a proper experiment often serves as the benchmark for assessing a non-experimental study. Substantial assurance is reposed on experimental research designs because the outcomes of cause and effect relationships are often seen as robust and trustworthy (Bryman, 2008). In the present study, experimental research design was not used as the researcher had no intention to manipulate the autonomous variables.

7.6.5 Survey research design

Particularly, a survey explains a population by counting and giving a description of ‘what is out there’ (Sapsford, 2007). He further reports that surveys enquire for answers to questions that researchers want answered through standardised formats that ensure that consistent responses are obtained from consistent queries. Moreover, questions are not always asked in all surveys because there are cases where the observation of the population sample by skilful observers using standardised criteria generates the required data. This is supported by Berg (2009) who is of the opinion that surveys include interviews and questionnaires (Bryman, 2008). Every survey research must show relevant validity as is required of all studies, by proving that the survey is designed in the specific manner suitable for survey research (Sapsford, 2007).

Similarly, Creswell (2009) suggests that a survey research design could use a numerical approach of gathering data by adopting the probability sampling method in determining a sample size that is suitable for a study so as to offer statistical analysis and presentation of behaviours, mannerisms and trends (Maylor & Blackmon, 2005). Surveys use large sample sizes and therefore generate large quantities of data through structured research questionnaires. Data collected in surveys is then analysed statistically through inferential and descriptive techniques and subsequently, interpretations and deductions are reached from the results. Finally, constructive recommendations are offered. In the present study, the researcher adopted a survey design in investigating the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. The departments of the municipality that participated in the study were drawn through a plain random sampling method. This is because the study aims to achieve a result from the sample that can be generalised to the population in making inferences from the outcome (Creswell, 2009).

Edmonds and Kennedy (2012) propose that survey designs could also be categorised into longitudinal and cross-sectional studies.

7.6.5.1 Longitudinal study

This is a peculiar form of research design which is relatively more expensive than the cross-sectional study because it is time consuming as well as cost ineffective. It is not frequently used in the social science studies because of the cost implication (Bryman, 2008). Data collection in a longitudinal study spreads over a period of time in order to provide answers to the questions that a study intends to be answered (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009; Saunders et al., 2009). The implication of this is that the data is collected on a more than one point basis, meaning that it could be spread over a period of years. Data will therefore be collected from the same participants more than once or twice, depending on the study requirements.

Despite the high costs associated with longitudinal studies, they have been appraised as being better in treating the issues around vagueness in the direction of cause and effect relationships that are peculiar to cross-sectional studies. Although it does not holistically treat these problems of vagueness, nevertheless, it helps in knowing the variable that significantly made a difference (Bryman & Cramer, 2009). The present study is not in any way designed along the longitudinal perspective. Even though WLB researches have been criticised for not using longitudinal designs (Guest, 2002), this researcher has adopted the cross-sectional study design to avoid the

cost and time challenges associated with longitudinal studies. In addition, this study is constrained by the time frame required for the award of a doctoral degree, hence, data was prioritised to be collected sequentially by using an alternative method (cross-sectional approach).

7.6.5.2 Cross-sectional study

Jonathan Wilson (2014) confirms that data in cross-sectional studies is gathered from participants who responded to the questions asked in a study at a specific time. Moreover, Bryman (2008) suggests that particular variables in a cross-sectional study can be regarded as given thereby offering guidance as to the way to deduce cause and effect associations. He further reports that the use of a cross-sectional design can assist in investigating the effect that things from childhood days of an individual are reflective of the individual's past and present behaviour.

In an earlier writing, Wilson (2010) had also reported that the majority of studies conducted by researchers for the award of management degrees utilised the cross-sectional design in their studies as a result of its need for lesser time and cost effectiveness. The cross-sectional study design is appropriate and used in the present study to explore the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in South Africa. SOC is connected to the outcomes of the environment in which an individual is raised, therefore the use of the cross-sectional design in the study is in line with Bryman's (2008) views on particular variables in a cross-sectional study. Furthermore, there was no need to collect data at several points in time in the study as the independent variables in the study were controlled. In the present study, both the quantitative and qualitative data collected concurrently (through the survey questionnaire) and sequentially (by in-depth interviews) are unequally prioritised (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003; Hanson et al., 2005). This is because the data collected from one-on-one interviews and open-ended questions was expected to disprove, validate or augment the data collected from the survey questionnaires. Therefore, the quantitative and qualitative data collected and analysed in the study is based on the assumptions of Hanson et al.'s (2005) sequential transformative mixed methods.

7.6.6 Case study

Case studies are practical inquiries that holistically examine existing phenomena in their actual context, particularly where the line between the phenomena and context are blurred (Farquhar,

2012 ; Yin, 2009). This implies that data concerning the phenomenon is collected in its actual place of occurrence, for instance in an organisation, geographical location or an institution. Researchers in management, behavioural sciences and law make inferences from past or present conditions to predict future events using case study research (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). In case study research, the qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection are usually adopted (Saunders et al., 2009), but most of the time, the qualitative method is used. Case study can also be used in examining one or multiple units of research using interviews, observation and examination of documents (public and private) as the means of gathering data (Wilson, 2010).

Case study is appropriate in answering research queries that begin with why, who and how. Its main strength lies in the fact that it gives a researcher specific insight into the subject or phenomenon under examination. Furthermore, the fact that the investigation of the phenomenon takes place in its context of occurrence strengthens case study research (Farquhar, 2012). In restricting the boundary of a research to a fewer number of units, a researcher is enabled to acquire in-depth information about the phenomenon under investigation. Flyvbjerg (2006) suggests that the quality of management and human behaviour science researches could be improved by properly examining some excellent past and present case studies in forecasting prospective events/phenomenon. There are five basic misconceptions about case studies (Flyvbjerg, 2006) that have been disproved by the same author. These misconceptions are as follows:

1. General, theoretical (context-independent) knowledge is more valuable than concrete, practical (context-dependent) knowledge.
2. One cannot generalise on the basis of an individual case; therefore, the case study cannot contribute to scientific development.
3. The case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, that is, in the first stage of a total research process, while other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building.
4. The case study contains a bias towards verification, that is, a tendency to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions.
5. It is often difficult to summarise and develop general propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies.

The five misconceptions show that what is at question here is philosophy, consistency, and validity therefore, the essence of case study as a systematic (scientific) technique

(Flyvbjerg, 2006). Although the foregoing have been viewed as being misunderstandings of case study research (Flyvbjerg, 2006), it is important that researchers take heed to them in order to avoid validating these misconceptions. The avoidance of the weaknesses of case study by a researcher should result in the provision of reliable results that should assist with the predictions of the occurrence of phenomenon in the future. Nevertheless, Flyvbjerg's (2006) justification and clarification of these misconceptions suffices to justify the reason why the present study shares some of the principles of case study in examining the WLBS adopted by the municipality under study against best practices. However, this study is not designed to match the results obtained from the research with other municipalities in the South African public sector. The outcomes of this study can therefore be generalised in the description of the linkage between WLB and SOC in a municipality in South Africa.

7.6.7 Grounded research theory

Suddaby (2006) suggests that grounded theory is better grasped by looking at history. It was advanced by Glaser and Strauss (1967) in response to the excesses of the positivist paradigm that pervaded social science research. He further reports that the method was propounded as a concrete approach for carrying out inquiries that concentrate on the interpretative procedure through the examination of the *actual production of meanings and concepts used by social actors in real settings* (Gephart, 2004). The grounded theory was classically identified with sociology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Glaser, 1978, 1992, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), the medical profession (Morse, 1999; Sandelowski, 1995), and management studies (Brown, 1995; Hunt & Ropo, 1995; Martin & Turner, 1986; Parry, 1998), but in the contemporary times, the theory is being used in marketing researches (Goulding, 1998, 1999, 2000; Pettigrew, 2000).

Fundamentally, grounded theory is founded on figurative interactionism, a philosophy that believes that people participate in a system that demands spontaneous relation as opposed to conversational interaction (Goulding, 2005). Grounded theory follows a process in identifying the correlation between variables in order to generate a conceptual framework (Hallberg, 2006; Nick Lee, Saunders, & Goulding, 2005). According to Charmaz (2008), grounded theory simplifies methods through its open-ended features leading to the expansion of nascent conceptual analysis. The strategies of grounded theory provoke rapid thinking and helps researchers to be abreast and in touch with their data as they proactively analyse data (Charmaz, 2006).

Theory is built on grounded theory via the induction method thereby promoting the prediction and explanation of interactive phenomena or human behaviours (Saunders et al., 2009). This way, attention is given to the generation of novel assumptions or confirmation of present theories that could be useful in solving social issues or management enigmas. Data collection and analysis in grounded theory goes beyond particular methods and therefore allows for multiple sources of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009; Goulding, 2005). Therefore, theories are constructed out of data that is generated from an iterative procedure needing that sampling to be repeated, as well as data gathering and examination till the point where no new theories can be developed (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). The grounded theory developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) rivets on two major notions: “constant comparison,” where data is gathered and evaluated concurrently, and “theoretical sampling,” where choices about the information to be gathered next rests on the theory that is being developed (Suddaby, 2006).

As a result of the complexities involved in the process of theory development, data collection and analysis using the grounded theory, some misconceptions have arisen about the grounded theory. Suddaby (2006) offers detailed discourse on six main misconceptions about the grounded theory. The initial suggestion is that the grounded theory must never be used as a basis for overlooking existing literature and not conducting a review of same. Therefore, a grounded researcher is not expected to go into the field ignorant of existing research. Secondly, grounded theory should not be viewed as a mere display of unprocessed data. This is because grounded theory is not like the phenomenological study which takes an in-depth analysis of responses from interviewed participants as the basis of probing personal experiences without corrupting the data. Meanwhile, the basis of interviewing in a grounded research may be phenomenological in desiring to grasp participants’ peculiar understanding but the main aim may not be in participants’ stories. However, grounded research is a way of stimulating information in the social phenomena being investigated and may not rely on interviews as the only method of gathering data.

Thirdly, grounded theory should not be conceived as theory testing, content analysis, or word counts. Fourthly, grounded theory should not be misconceived as a rigid application of formulas and rules to data but as a creative tool that leads to exemplary research through interpretive processes. Fifthly, it is a misconception to presume that grounded theory is perfect. This calls for researchers to be apt in their use of the strategy by discerning the feud between pure methodologists and expert practitioners. In conclusion, the idea that

grounded theory is not tedious is misleading and therefore a misconception. The task of conducting a grounded research is arduous and requires relative knowledge and resilience in order to achieve anticipated results.

In the present study, some assumptions of the grounded theory were adopted. However, Martin and Turner (1986) in Suddaby (2006) report that the grounded theory is mostly used where there is no expressed need to test hypothesis. Hypotheses were neither formulated nor tested in this study. However, explanations about how professional level employees understood WLB and the WLBS in place at the municipality were given. In addition, data was collected sequentially in the study, backed by an assumption of grounded research that suggests that data collected iteratively through simultaneous analysis and collection are often presented sequentially (Charmaz, 2008; Suddaby, 2006). Suddaby (2006) clarified that the purpose of grounded theory is to primarily assist researchers to stimulate new understandings concerning designed associations and not to make statements of fact concerning reality. The present study also adopted an integrated method in forecasting and describing the gap observed in the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. The researcher’s use of sequential transformative mixed method for the collection of data in the study is hereby justified.

7.6.8 Ethnographic study

Ethnography originated from cultural anthropology, and basically concentrates on small-scale groups by focusing on the characteristics, structures and the way in which cultures are maintained (Goulding, 2005). He further reports that ethnography is majorly known with the intensive labour that accompanies the study and the lengthy contact with study group members in order to collect robust and whole data that should give realistic explanations about the phenomenon under study. Ethnography is a type of qualitative study where researchers investigate cultural groups in the contextual background for a period of time in order to gather information through interviews and individual or participant observations (Creswell, 2009). Therefore, it could be implied that it is a research that is very open-ended in its approach to obtaining understanding instead of the basic measurement of the phenomenon as done in scientific methods. Maylor and Blackmon (2005) summarise the systematic and ethnographic approaches as shown in the table below.

Table 7.3 Comparing scientific and ethnographic approaches: a summary

Characteristics	Scientific approach	Ethnographic approach
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Research philosophy	Philosophy of science	Philosophy of social science
Research perspectives	Positivism Relativism Empiricism	Interpretivism Constructivism Subjectivism
Archetype	Laboratory experiment	Participating in the field of interest
Questions that can be answered	What, how much	Why, how
Starting point	Structure for data - you know what you need to collect as led by theory	Unstructured - what you need to do emerges as led by data
World-view	Objective- the research is independent	Subjective - the researcher is part of what is being researched
Objective of the study	To find general patterns or laws - generality as well as statistically significant results	To understand meaning in one specific situation - depth and valuable, transferable results
Underlying logic	Deduction	Induction
Who uses	Commonly used in economics, finance, operations research, management science and marketing	Commonly utilised in human resource management, organisational behaviour, organisational science
Role of theory	Testing theory through development of hypotheses, collection of data, verification	Generation of theory through pattern analysis
Process	Predominantly linear, sequential, ordered	Predominantly iterative, overlapping, messy
Associated methods	Scientific method of which surveys are as an example. Modelled on closed-system experiments, minimising bias but limiting the possibility of discovery	Video diaries. Recognises social systems, and tries to acknowledge personal biases and tries to keep an open mind
Data type	Predominantly quantitative, predetermined	Predominantly qualitative, for example a series of statements or impressions
Finding	Measure	Meaning
Data analysis	Statistical through rules and procedures	Thematic through intuition
Quality	Validity, reliability, generalisability	Makes good use of a recognised method, neutrality and transparency

Source: Adapted from Maylor and Blackmon (2005, p. 161).

Table 7.3 summarised dissimilarities among ethnographic and scientific approaches to research which were presented through the use of fundamental characteristics of basic investigation as a standard of comparison.

The municipality under study is a political organisation which required that care be demonstrated in the type of information sought. As a result of this, permission to study how policies are formulated and implemented through the structures of the organisation was neither sought nor granted. Therefore, use was not made of pictures or video journals as those were not permissible. However, semi-structured interviews were conducted and use was made of semi-structured open-ended questions in gathering qualitative data so as to draw information that is unadulterated and generate written transcripts and verbal words directly from respondents and interviewees.

7.6.9 Archival study

To Saunders et al. (2009), archival research strategy is one that involves the use of documents belonging to an organisation as main source of gathering data. Denzin (1978) in Berg (2009), reports that archival documents are of two types, namely private and public archival records. Public records are usually prepared for the sole aim of assessment by others although access to some of them may be restricted, e.g. credit records, some law enforcement documents, and school documents. On the other hand, private records of an archival nature are classically for personal or private viewers (Berg, 2009). Moreover, archival records are secondary sources of data that help researchers in answering the questions asked in a study particularly those that have to do with history and the phases through which the phenomenon being investigated passed through. Therefore, to conduct an archival research, a researcher needs to be sure that data will be made available to him/her by the authorities concerned before embarking on the study.

In addition, Maylor and Blackmon (2007) have suggested four core subjects that archival researchers need to address upon commencing their studies. They are: will the researcher be required to pay for the availability of the data? Has the required data been proceed or is it still in a raw state? Is the data correct? How focused is the data about the phenomenon or the organisation?

Addressing these issues correctly makes an archival researcher and the outcome of the study very excellent, nevertheless this does not excuse an archival research from flaws that other research approaches that make use of secondary data sources are faced with. In Table 5.6 below is a summary of the flaws and merits of studies that collect and analyse data from secondary sources in the three core research areas: analysis, contribution and effort.

Table 7.4 Flaws and merits of secondary data analysis

Key areas in research	Strengths	Weaknesses
Effort	Less costly and time consuming data collection, allowing more time for data analysis.	Researchers need to familiarise themselves with the data. Ability to manage large and complex data set.

		It may be expensive if payment is required.
Analysis	Access to high quality data, comparing subgroups or subsets within the data sample. Comparing subgroups or subsets in other countries.	Researchers lack control of the quality of the data as the data has already been collected. The data may be biased in unobservable ways. The data may lack the ability to answer key research questions.
Contribution	Re-interpretation of original findings by providing adequate analysis of the data set.	Lack of rigorous and purposeful data collection from primary sources; does not build as many research skills as direct methods.

Source: Adopted from Maylor and Blackmon (2005, p. 173).

To obtain data regarding the employee health and wellness programme adopted by the municipality investigated, archival research strategy was engaged. The Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service document published by the Department of Public Service were perused for information about the wellness programme. Such information like the reason for the adoption of the wellness programme and details of its implementation were accessed. Also, the Municipality's HR Department furnished the researcher with relevant information regarding the type of strategies embedded in the wellness programmes.

7.6.10 Research design adopted in the present study

A critical assessment of the theories, flaws and merits of the several research tactics examined so far, bearing in mind the main research questions of the study, has led to the adoption of the appropriate strategy by the researcher to answer these questions. In this study, the researcher had no intention of manipulating the recognised independent variables, therefore, a non-experimental research design (Kumar, 2011) of simple ex post facto (Leedy, 2014) type was adopted. Although Leedy (2005) suggests that this design can be misunderstood for experimental or correlational design due to similarities among them, yet, ex post facto design like the experimental design identifies both the dependent and independent variables with clarity. Similar to correlational research, it also examines pre-existing conditions. To back the decision to adopt the ex post facto design, a correlational method that used progressive descriptive design was used.

From a select number of professional level employees, data was collected in a cross-sectional manner (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2012) to ascertain the course of how the variables examined in the study affected each other (Walker & Greene, 2009). This method allowed for regression analysis in order to infer the extent of associations between variables. It also provided an opening for the researcher to determine the role of work and family stressors on individual employee's SOC, as well as the association between SOC and WLB. The linkage between WLBS and SOC was also examined. The researcher therefore thought this study design was most suitable in the exploration of the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South Africa public sector; having drawn insight from comparable empirical studies as strong justification (Albertsen et al., 2001; Casper & Harris, 2008; Feldt, 1997; Feldt, Kinnunen, et al., 2000; Höge & Büssing, 2004). As a result, the options or choices presented for use to the researcher were selected in formulating research formats and designs as discussed in the sections below.

7.7 Research choices

Research choices refer to several methods used in gathering and analysing information. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 151) report that there are three techniques, namely *mono method*, *multiple methods* and *mixed methods*. Mono method involves the use of one method of collecting data with a conforming technique of analysing the data. Using this method, data could be collected and analysed in a qualitative (non-numerical) or quantitative (numerical) mode and processed by using complicated statistical techniques so as to present the results in a quantitative mode (Saunders et al., 2009). In a multiple methods study, two or more data gathering and analysing techniques are adopted (Saunders et al., 2009). Multiple methods are classified into by Saunders et al. (2009) as follows: multi-methods quantitative research, multi-methods qualitative research, and mixed methods design. This study adopted the mixed methods design as explained below.

7.7.1 Mixed methods design approach

According to Castro, Kellison, Boyd, and Kopak (2010), there has been notable division among behavioural and social science researchers with respect to the schism between quantitative and qualitative conventions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). The emergence of mixed methods seems to have provided a linkage across the two conventions (Haverkamp, Morrow, & Ponterotto, 2005). The mixed methods approach mixes qualitative and quantitative methods of gathering data and procedures of analysing them simultaneously

or data analysis processes either concurrently or sequentially in one study (Saunders et al., 2009; Burke & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Castro et al. (2010) report that there are three types of mixed methods tactics as categorised by Creswell (2009, p. 14). They are discussed below.

7.7.1.1 Sequential mixed methods design

Quantitative or qualitative data is primarily collected in a sequential design while the other type of data is subsequently collected after the collection of the first data set (Castro et al., 2010). This implies that the approaches in a sequential mixed method are alternately used (Cameron, 2009). The factors that significantly predict the design of a study include the weight assigned to the quantitative or qualitative data, procedure of integrating and analysing data as well as the nature of the theory underpinning the research, i.e. to say, is the study an advocacy or is it intended to add social value by bringing change (Creswell et al., 2003). There are also three types of sequential mixed methods strategies, namely (a) sequential exploratory, (b) sequential explanatory, and (c) sequential transformative. For example, a researcher adopting explanatory and exploratory research strategies may have to first of all gather, examine and interpret the qualitative data from a sample of a few people towards achieving the exploratory goals of the study. Later on, quantitative data from a larger sample audience could be collected and then analysed through relevant statistical processes in order to satisfy the explanatory goals of the research. Creswell (2009) is of the opinion that the choice to begin with any of the conventions, i.e. qualitative or quantitative, rests solely on the researcher, while Hanson et al. (2005) reiterate that it is imperative that the process of data collection and analysis be done sequentially. This method was adopted for the present study. Quantitative data and some qualitative data were collected by integrating some open-ended questions into the survey instrument. Thereafter, eleven members of top management were interviewed in semi-structured interviewing sessions from whence additional qualitative data was collected. Sequential transformative mixed methods were used in this study and equal priority was given to both the quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was analysed first before the qualitative data analysis.

7.7. 1.2 Concurrent mixed methods design

Creswell et al. (2003) identified these three concurrent mixed method strategies: (a) concurrent triangulation, (b) concurrent nested, and (c) concurrent transformative designs. Both qualitative and quantitative data is collected at once even though one may enjoy higher importance than the other. The inclusion of open-ended questions in a survey questionnaire is a very good

example of the use of a concurrent mixed method in a study (Creswell, 2009; J. Wilson, 2010). It facilitates the immediate collection of qualitative and quantitative data at the same time and allows for concurrent or sequential analysis of collected data.

7.7.1.3 Transformative mixed methods design

Transformative mixed methods is concerned with the collection and analysis of quantitative and non-numerical data in a concurrent or sequential manner, based on the problem, objectives and or hypotheses of the study (Hanson et al., 2005). To Creswell (2009), sometimes one method of gathering and examining data may be prioritised over the other, while at other times, equality in priority may be accorded to both methods. This method provides access to data from many backgrounds, thereby fostering the inclusion of respondents' views about the phenomenon in order to create concepts relative to theory from the perspective of respondents (Hanson et al., 2005).

7.7.1.4 Mixed model study

This is a combination of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques which is integrated in the process of developing questions to be answered by the study (Saunders et al., 2009; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Through the mixed model strategy, a researcher could convert non-numerical data to numerical data and vice versa for statistical and content analysis respectively. This is supported by Sekaran and Bougies's (2009) opinion that descriptive data could be transformed and analysed numerically or statistically.

7.7.1.5 Data gathering methods adopted in this study

A sequential transformative mixed methods research design was adopted for the study in gathering and analysing data through relevant procedures. This method was found by the researcher to be most suitable in efficiently examining the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) justify the point that a researcher using mixed methods design is allowed to be creative and flexible knowing that he/she is not constrained by specific designs; so long as the design successfully answers the questions asked by the study.

The reason for adopting a sequential transformative design is because it allows for numeric data to be collected and examined followed by non-numeric data, or contrariwise, non-numeric data could be gathered and examined followed by numeric data (Hanson et al., 2005). It also

made room for the flaws of non-experimental study design to be addressed (Johnson, 2001). The researcher collected some qualitative data via interviews firstly and some other qualitative data (open-ended questions) alongside quantitative data was collected using the survey instrument. Equal priority was given to the two forms of data in a non-experimental study strategy of ex post facto kind; using correlational method and progressive descriptive design. In analysing data using this approach, data connection and integration happened at the point when data was interpreted, as well as during the discussion of findings (Hanson et al., 2005). Since this method allows data to be collected from a broad spectrum of backgrounds (worldviews), respondents' views contribute to a better conceptualisation of the phenomenon relative to theories. It also gives room to triangulation of data and is suitable in promoting various perspectives, supporting respondents and providing clarity about an emerging phenomenon (Hanson et al., 2005).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted among randomly selected Heads of Departments and Units at the municipality in collecting data using a semi-structured questionnaire. Also, numerical and non-numerical methods like a structured questionnaire with open-ended and closed questions and documents were used to collect data.

7.8 Target population

To Sekaran and Bougie (2010), the population chosen for a study comprises the whole group of individuals targeted by the researcher for examination. Simply put, the population of a study consists of the entire universe peculiarly selected in line with the study objectives. Scholars like Wilson (2010) and Saunders et al. (2009) have also defined population as being the entire group out of which a researcher draws the sample to be investigated, while Struwig and Stead (2013) define population as *the combined total (aggregate) of all the elements you are focusing on*. Sekaran and Bougie's (2010) definition seems to be the most concise and appropriate definition.

The population targeted in the present study consists of all professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector. This includes only fully employed personnel of this category and excluded contract employees at a professional level. At the time the study was proposed in 2013, there were seven clusters from which the researcher thought to sample five (5) clusters by cluster sampling. But at the time of collecting data, it was discovered that the clusters had been increased to eight (8) and using cluster sampling, the researcher collected data from the seven clusters. The population estimated for the study is 7, 000 professional level

employees. The eight clusters of the municipality are: community and emergency services, corporate and human resources, economic and development planning, finance, governance and international relations, office of the city manager, trading services, and human settlement, engineering services and transport. For the purpose of confidentiality, the name of the municipality studied remains anonymous. The main aim of the study is to examine the connection between WLB and SOC at the municipality investigated.

7.8.1 Sampling methods

The process of choosing a subset of the elements of a population (larger group) of people, events and/or events is referred to as sampling (Churchill, Brown & Suter, 2010). Sekaran and Bougie (2010) suggest two major categories of sampling design, i.e. probability and non-probability sampling. They clarify that probability sampling happens where the factors in the population have a recognised chance of being chosen, while non-probability sampling happens where the reverse of the known chance of being selected is the case. Wilson (2010) classifies probability sampling methods into *systematic, simple random, stratified random, multi-stage sampling* and *cluster sampling*. Below, probability and non-probability sampling are discussed in detail.

7.8.1.1 Probability sampling

In a probability sampling, all the elements in the population have a non-zero chance of being chosen as subjects in the sample (Leedy, 2014; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009; Struwig & Stead, 2013; Wiid & Diggines, 2010). Brown (1947) in Wilson (2010) suggests that probability sampling is beneficial because of its statistical characteristics and highly ranked as being free from biases. While Struwig and Stead (2013) report that it may be seen as the most correct method of sampling. It is flawed by the tediousness of its toll on researchers who may have to spend more time and money in conducting a study based on probability sampling. A few of the types of probability design are explained below.

7.8.1.1.a Simple random sampling

As the name implies, simple random sampling refers to that sampling technique that allows each element of the population of the study to have equal chance of being chosen (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The approach according to Leedy and Ormrod (2014, p. 216) could be easily used where the population size is small and the whole members are known. In an illustration of simple random sampling, Wilson (2010) gave an example of a survey designed to sample

125 employees among the total population of 500 employees. To ascertain the probability of inclusion into the study, he arrived at 0.25 chance of each one employee in every four being included from the following:

$$P(\text{inclusion}) = \text{sample}/\text{total population}$$

$$\text{I.e. } 125/500 = 0.25 \text{ (1/4)}$$

Implying that one out of every four employees stands the chance of being selected to be included in the survey. Likewise, if a sample of 200 is to be surveyed among a population of 800 people, the inclusion rate is 0.25 using Wilson's (2010) formula. Therefore, bias levels are low in simple random sampling and in making generalisations about the study; it provides high reliability levels (Bryman & Bell, 2011). Bias as reported by Leedy and Ormrod (2014, p. 223) *is any influence, condition or set of conditions that singly or in a combination distort the data*. It is flawed when larger samples are used and has been described as impractical by Leedy and Ormrod (2014), and sometimes impossible. Sekaran and Bougie (2009) report that the weaknesses of the approach lie in its selection process which is complicated; a possible absence of current comprehensive list of events, people or cases being examined and most of all it is very time consuming.

The researcher adopted a simple random sampling approach in selecting the Heads of Departments and Heads of Units that were interviewed at the municipality. Pseudonyms were used in place of the names of the interviewees to protect their person in line with confidentiality and anonymity clauses of ethical clearance obtained for the study. Initially, sixteen Heads of Departments /Units were scheduled to be interviewed, but after interviewing eleven of the managers and with no new information being provided (information saturation), the researcher decided to stop conducting further interviews. There are about 105 Heads of Departments and Units from 45 Departments/Units at the municipality. Therefore one person each was drawn from sixteen (16) major departments totalling sixteen (16) interviewees thereby giving every head of department/unit on the list equal opportunity of selection. However, only eleven (11) individuals in this category were available to be interviewed for this study. Following the ethical rule of voluntarism, this researcher interviewed 11 members of the top management that agreed to participate in the study. The same semi-structured questions were used in all the interviews in sync with the principles of convenience sampling technique (explained in section 5.8.1.2.4).

Although, as the name implies, the simple random technique may be simple, it is often not appropriate, hence the use of other techniques like systematic sampling, stratified random sampling, cluster sampling, and multi-stage sampling explained below.

7.8.1.1.b Systematic sampling

This involves the selection of persons or sometimes clusters in accordance with a sequence that was prearranged (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014, p. 218). In the process, an initial point is selected and subsequently, every *n*th number listed is then chosen from there (Struwig & Stead, 2013). According to Saunders et al. (2009), the elements could be drawn at constant intervals from the sample frame till the desired sample size is obtained. The sample fraction determines the regularity of the intervals at which the elements are drawn from the sample frame (Wilson, 2011; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Leedy and Ormrod (2014) suggest that the sampling order should *originate by chance*. For example, from a randomly jumbled list of individuals in a population under study, every *fifth* individual on the list could be selected. If, say, a sample of 120 employees is needed for a study of 600 employees, systematically, we can select those to be sampled using the following procedure:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Sampling fraction} &= \text{real sample size}/\text{total population} \\ &= 120/600 \\ &= 1/5\end{aligned}$$

This implies that from the sampling frame, with every first out of five employees, selection of employees will be made and then at every fifth intermission (Wilson, 2011) another selection will be drawn until the desired sample size is attained. This is illustrated thus: 2, 7, 12, 17, 22, 27, 32, 37, 42, 47, 52, 57, 62, and so on. This is done mainly through programmes used by computers (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). This method of sampling was not used in the present study.

7.8.1.1.c Stratified random sampling

The easiest way to understand stratified sampling is by looking at the grades used in the school system like grades 2, 3, 4 etc. (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). It selects a prearranged number of elements from every stratum instead of making selection from the entire population (Struwig & Stead, 2013). Strata might consist of different groups of employees that work in an organisation, for example, directors, senior managers, managers, coordinators and supervisors. Upon categorising universe into many strata, use could be

made of systematic random sampling or simple random sampling in drawing samples from each stratum until the size of the sample required is attained (Wilson, 2011; Bryman & Bell, 2011). The key objective of this technique of sampling is to confirm that every stratum is sufficiently represented in the research. Struwig and Stead (2013) suggest three basic questions that a researcher must answer when using stratified random sampling. They are as follows:

- a. On what basis are you grouping the sample?
- b. How many strata do you wish to construct?
- c. What sample size are you anticipating should make up each group?

7.8.1.1.d Proportional stratified sampling

When considering the simple stratified random sampling, it was observed that every strata of the universe is necessarily of equal size (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). The case of the proportional stratified sampling is different. Here, sample is selected in accordance with the sizes of each group in the universe. For example, if an organisation employs 300 Blacks, 200 Whites and 100 Indians, imagine a survey circumstance where a researcher wants to find out the views of the employees with respect to serving a particular type of meal at organisational events. To be able to achieve the required sample, the researcher will draw his/her sample accordingly with respect to the proportions of each racial group in the organisation. It implies that for every one Indian, there will be two Whites and three Blacks in the sample; meaning that there can be no classification of the selected individuals into strata until the researcher identifies members of each sub-group using random sampling (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014).

7.8.1.1.e Cluster sampling

When the universe to be studied spreads across many locations, it often becomes challenging to compile the list of all the individuals in the area in order to choose a sample to be investigated. Cluster sampling technique assists researchers to split the whole universe under study into clusters (sets). Using random sampling, individuals are randomly drawn from each cluster to make up the sample for a study (Wilson, 2010). It is a cost- and time-effective technique (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Saunders et al. (2009) identified three major phases that should be followed in cluster sampling as stated below:

- a) The sampling frame should be selected on the basis of a combination of clusters.
- b) Every cluster should be given a distinctive number.

- c) In drawing the elements of the samples, simple random sampling is used.

In the present study, the researcher used cluster sampling in drawing the clusters to be studied by randomly selecting five out of the eight municipal clusters.

7.8.1.1.f Multi-stage sampling

This technique is designed to surmount the difficulties of sampling a population that is spread across a large geographical area; especially where person-to-person contact is essential (Saunders et al., 2009). It involves two or more stages of using a combination of some of the probability sampling methods (Struwig & Stead, 2013) discussed above. For instance, through the use of cluster sampling, a researcher can choose four categories of employees from a group of employees in the same organisational cadre. For instance, senior managers in an organisation can be selected from four different departments. Later, stratified sampling could be used to categorise them according to age and gender so as to draw the final sample (Struwig & Stead, 2013). Wilson (2010) reports that multi-stage sampling technique is time- and cost-effective.

7.8.2 Non-probability sampling

This technique does not provide a researcher with the chance of knowing or predicting that any element in the population will be selected into the sample (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014; Struwig & Stead, 2013). It comprises several methods that are subjective and not statistical in choosing samples (Wilson, 2010; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). Some of the management studies that adopt non-probability sampling in selecting samples include market surveys, case studies and qualitative studies (Saunders et al., 2009; Bryman & Bell, 2011). Even though the use of non-probability sample data to generalise to the population may be inappropriate statistically, it could be most appropriate to some research needs (Struwig & Stead, 2013). The discourses on the four types of non-probability sampling methods are presented below.

7.8.2.1 Quota sampling

This technique is not a random sampling method, rather respondents are chosen in the same proportions that they present in the whole universe, e.g. gender, age, status and income (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014; Struwig & Stead, 2013). Barnett, in Saunders et al. (2009), likens quota sampling to a stratified sampling technique in that samples in quota sampling are chosen from different sub-groups (strata) in a manner that is absolutely not random. The main difference on the other hand between quota and stratified sampling technique lies in the fact that stratified sampling adopts a systematic or random sampling method in selecting samples while quota

sampling method does not randomly select a sample from the groups (Wilson, 2010; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). In quota sampling, a researcher decides the manner in which to assign the quotas (Struwig & Stead, 2013) based on the requirement to gather adequate data for suitable statistical analysis.

7.8.2.2 Snowball sampling

According to Heckathorn (2011), snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method used in sampling populations that are difficult to access, equally referred to as concealed populations. In a snowball sampling design, the researcher upon locating an individual who has the needed characteristics, uses such an individual's social connections to select similar others in a multi-stage procedure (Sadler, Lee, Lim, & Fullerton, 2010). To achieve a sample frame from the hidden groups may not be possible where the target population size is small in comparison to the overall population, has wide geographical spread, or where stigmatisation is attributable to membership of the group, or where the group network is exclusively for specific individuals and difficult for outsiders to enter (Heckathorn, 2011; Sudman & Kalton, 1986). Studies conducted on groups like these are often found in public health (e.g. drug users), public policy (e.g. illegal immigrants) and arts and culture (e.g. musicians). Wilson (2010) suggests that in a study on Satanism, a researcher using snowball sampling will need to identify any member of the sect and persuade him or her to partake in the study as well as introduce the researcher to others in the group. Therefore, sample size is built up in snowball sampling through referrals which gives the researcher little or no influence over the individuals in the sample (Kowald & Axhausen, 2012; Sadler et al., 2010).

7.8.2.3 Purposive or judgmental sampling

As the name implies, purposive sampling involves the selection of individuals or subjects for a given *purpose* (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). In order to realise the objectives of a study or answer research questions, the investigator subjectively selects the samples for the research in a non-randomised fashion using his/her judgment (Smith, Colombi, & Wirthlin, 2013). Hence, the purposive sampling technique is also known as judgment sampling because the researcher's judgment as to who is able to give most valuable information to realise the objective of the study is significant (Babbie, 2013; Kumar, 2011; Tongco, 2007).

Purposive sampling is most useful when a researcher wants to build a historical reality, explain a phenomenon or advance a subject that little is known of (R. Kumar, 2011). According to

Sekaran and Bougie (2009), respondents could be drawn on the basis of their knowledge about the subject or phenomenon under study. Kumar (2011) reports that purposive sampling technique is often used in qualitative studies. In the present study, in a random manner, sixteen heads of departments/units were purposively selected from among a total of about one hundred and five in that category for a semi-structured interview. This is because of their knowledge (Babbie, 2013) and status with respect to the subject of WLB and influence in formulating and implementing WLBS respectively, in the organisation under study. The researcher also thought that rich data that will validate data obtained through the questionnaire will be obtained from this sample of heads of departments/units (Struwig & Stead, 2013). Irrespective of its suitability, the generalisation of data from purposive sampling to the entire universe under study could be questioned (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009).

7.8.2.4 Convenience sampling

Another name for convenience sampling is *accidental sampling* (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014; Kumar, 2011). This sampling technique selects individuals or subjects that are most readily available for examination and could be very suitable for certain research problems (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Saunders et al. (2009) report that in adopting convenience sampling, researchers select respondents on the basis of their availability and willingness to partake in the study. Once the required sample size is reached, selection of subjects stops (Kumar, 2011). Leedy and Ormrod (2014) state that it is not all study data that requires carefulness and thoughtfulness in the choice of sampling techniques even though the elimination of such controls may lead to unreliable conclusions.

Furthermore, Wilson (2010) reports that data collected from convenience sampling may not always be free from prejudice (bias). The degree of bias and un-generalisability of the outcomes to the populations of such studies have been recently investigated by scholars. Some of these scholars compared the results of studies that adopted convenience sampling and some other probability sampling methods (Farrokhi & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012; Hedt & Pagano, 2011; Özdemir, Louis, & Topbaş, 2011). The weaknesses of convenience sampling have been discovered to be reducible and may lead to an efficient outcome when the technique is combined with simple random sampling (Hedt & Pagano, 2011). Nevertheless, probability sampling has been found to be a better alternative to convenience sampling with regards to generalising the outcomes across the population (Özdemir et al., 2011).

In line with Leedy and Ormrod (2014), the researcher considered the research objectives and sample of individuals that are ready and willing to provide required information that will assist in achieving the objectives. Moreover, she also appraised the shortcomings of convenience sampling with respect to bias and generalisability. Also noting that the sample of heads of departments/units was initially selected using simple random sampling techniques to reduce some of the elements of un-generalisability of data from convenience sampling (Hedt & Pagano, 2011), and cluster sampling (probability sampling technique) to select the seven clusters out of eight, this researcher adopted convenience sampling as the most suitable technique for collecting data for the present study. Mixed methods of data collection were further adopted to minimise the difficulties connected to convenience sampling, therefore, data triangulation was done with respect to quantitative (closed questions) and qualitative (open-ended questions) data collected and analysed using statistical procedures (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009; Wilson, 2010; Saunders et al., 2009).

It is noteworthy here also, that employees at the level (professional) being examined are opinionated, educated and experienced, and therefore data obtained from them using convenience sampling procedure may be robust and useful. The use of convenience sampling technique in the study is further justifiable because professional level employees at the municipality under study are often busy with meetings with politicians, senior management and conveying decisions to subordinate employees. Therefore, to be able to collect data from the required sample size, convenience sampling proved cheaper, easier and less time consuming. Generalisations of the information gathered were made across the whole population studied on the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector.

The researcher disseminated survey questionnaires seeking numerical and non-numerical responses from professional level employees at the municipality investigated. Using random sampling techniques, 45 out of about 105 heads of departments were selected out of which the researcher purposively selected 11 for semi-structured interviews. Subsequently, 364 questionnaires were distributed among professional level employees at the municipality in the South African public sector, adopting a convenience sampling method. A total number of 307 questionnaires were completed and returned after eight months of distribution and follow-up. This represents approximately 84.34% response rate. Baruch (1999) observed that the specific features of a population could lead to reduction in the rate of response (De Cieri, Abbot, Holmes

& Petit, 2005) and organisational representatives show lesser response rate than workers and professionals. But the effort of this researcher and ultimate cooperation by the respondents in the present study resulted in an appreciable response rate.

7.8.3 Sample size

According to Saunders et al. (2009), most investigators often work to 95% confidence level. This implies that in the event that a sample is drawn 100 times, it should be admissible that not less than 95 of the samples certainly represent the features of the entire universe studied. This researcher examined five out of eight clusters of a municipality in the South African public sector with about 7,000 professional level employees. Data collected after eight months of data collection was only 307 responses further justifying the adoption of convenience sampling. There are little or no justifications for using sample size larger than 500 or less than 30 in behavioural or management researches (Abranovic, 1997; Roscoe, 1975). Therefore, based on Roscoe (1975), in Sekaran and Bougie (2009), the researcher selected the sample size of 364 within the range stipulated. This is in line with the 95% confidence level as suggested in Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of least sample sizes for various population sizes. The processes followed in collecting data for this research are explained in the sections below.

7.9 Data collection techniques

According to Creswell (2009), the procedure for gathering data involves boundary setting for the research, gathering data via planned and un-planned interviews, observations, official papers, pictorial materials and also confirming the proper process for recording evidence. The procedure for gathering data specifies the course that a researcher followed in collecting information for measurement or providing solutions to research problems or achievement of research objectives (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2009). The procedures that align to the research objectives of the present study were followed in this study. A structured questionnaire and data from in-depth semi-structured interviews were the primary sources of data collected for the study. The Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service and business plan of the municipality's wellness programme (documented evidence) were provided literary information for the study. It became imperative to use these documents in order to satisfactorily ascertain the historical perspective of the wellness programme and the basis of its adoption as a strategy to assist employees in addressing work and family challenges.

As required by the data collection procedure adopted in the study, the heads of departments/units at the municipality were approached by the researcher at their places of work

for authorisation to distribute the research questionnaires. The questionnaires were disseminated and picked up when completed on the days approved by the various heads. Appointments were also made by the researcher with the heads of departments/units that were interviewed before the date of actual interview.

7.9.1 Primary sources of data collection

The design of the questionnaire and the semi-structured interview questions was to bridge the gap discovered through the review of relevant literature as well as to achieve the objectives of the study. Additionally, information from secondary data sources (explained below) were integrated in formulating the items in the questionnaire. In this context, the questionnaire designed for this study to collect primary data from participants had closed (126) and open-ended (29) questions. It was used to draw relevant information that assisted in measuring how the WLBS adopted by the municipality helped employees in improving their SOC, addressing their work and family related challenges as well as achieving WLB. Structured open-ended questions were essentially considered needful by the researcher to be added to the questionnaire in order to elicit subjective and concise information from the scripts of respondents with respect to their perceptions of WLBS at the municipality, work and family stressors and their understanding of WLB. Information regarding the WLBS in place at the municipality through the wellness programme was gleaned from the *Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service*, the municipality's *Wellness Policy and Programmes* (2008) as well as the *Employee Wellness Programme Business Plan* (these documents are included in the annexure to the present study). Such information includes the specific strategies like HIV/AIDS counselling, domestic relationship counselling and stress management pertinent to this study. Most of the questions regarding WLBS in place at the municipality were framed from information based on these secondary data sources.

Furthermore, structured in-depth interviews were conducted with 11 heads of departments/units to further elicit pertinent data to augment and validate those collected through the questionnaire. The questions asked (18 in number) were grouped into five categories, namely: Group A (focusing on WLBS) had four questions, Group B - SOC had five questions, Group C (work stressors) had three questions, Group D (family stressors) had two questions and Group E (WLB) had a total of four questions. The questions in each category were asked to verify the responses of participants to the questions asked in the survey instrument.

With respect to the weaknesses of other studies in the area, the researcher addressed the issue of frivolity of data collected from very junior employees who work according to time. It is common knowledge that junior employees have official start and closing times at work, hence the decision to use only professional level employees as the juniors may not have many of the responsibilities that task their SOC and affect WLB. Also, owing to the fact that the information required from the study is very profound needing proper articulation and expression, data was collected from only professional level employees at the municipality unlike other studies in WLB that may have collected data from everyone in an organisation. There could be structured biases relative to the way in which employees are familiar with WLBS, their benefits and use (for instance, professional level employees may be more informed) (Kelly, Kossek, Hammer & Durham, 2008).

Additionally, based on Guest's (2011) report, it is more valuable to collect data from employees who make input to the organisational aims and goals by their mannerisms and behaviours at work. The professional level employees at the municipality fit this description and are most suited for data collection for the study. Therefore eleven of these employees were interviewed and the questionnaires were distributed to full-time employees only in the seven randomly selected clusters of the municipality through the assistance given by a representative of the gatekeeper in the Wellness Unit. The clusters are: 1) Infrastructure, 2) Human Settlement, 3) HR, 4) Governance, 5) Finance and Procurement, 6) Economic development, and 7) other (many respondents were unsure of the name of their units as a result of the change in the municipal clusters that happened in the course of data collection. The researcher had to integrate 'other' to accommodate these respondents).

7.9.1.1 Survey instruments

Research questionnaire and semi-structured interview questions are the main instruments of research used in the study. The study questionnaire contains closely defined options and answers to queries that are prearranged and restricted as well as open-ended questions that require responses that are unrestricted (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). The reason for this is to realise the objectives of the study by answering the research questions using sequential transformative mixed methods design for gathering and examining data. The semi-structured interview questions were designed to yield valuable information with respect to perspectives, behaviours, intentions and yardsticks of behaviours (Green & Silverman, 1993; Leedy, 2014). To avoid loss of any data from the interviews, audio recordings were consented to by

interviewees, and confirmed by their signatures on the informed consent form sent ahead of the interview date.

The research questionnaire for this study was used in collecting instantaneously, non-numerical as well as numerical data (Creswell, 2009) while additional data was collected from the respondents interviewed using semi-structured questions. A research instrument like questionnaires is structured to attract three main kinds of data variables viz. view, qualities (attributes) and behaviour variables (Dillman, 2011; Saunders et al., 2009). Data regarding the variables associated with respondents' views test their thoughts and feelings concerning truth or falsehood associated with the phenomenon being examined, while the data regarding variables associated with qualities collect respondents' peculiar features as seen in the section addressed as 'demographics' in the survey instrument. Behaviour variables are also those that gather data that is based on what organisations or their employees are doing in the present, what they have done in the past or what they will do in time to come. For instance, questions that are structured to provide information about respondents' reactions to organisational policies that they consider positive or unfavourable are typical examples of behaviour variable questions.

In designing the survey instruments adopted in the present study, attention was given to these three core variables and the issues noted in Saunders et al. (2009). Primarily, the researcher aligned the objectives of the study and the research questions to the research questionnaire. Secondly, the wording of the questions was simple, succinct and direct in order that respondents find them easy to understand and answer. Use of technical and tacit languages was avoided. Furthermore, although professional level employees at the municipality are spread across many clusters out of which five were sampled, the questionnaire was designed to elicit similar information from all employees sampled. This is imperative in obtaining sufficient description of the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. The questionnaire had seven sections and contains in all, a total of one hundred and fifty five (155) questions (including open-ended) as explained below.

In section 'A' of the survey instrument, socio-demographic information was requested from the participants. Such questions include those relating to their gender, age, marital status, municipal cluster, educational qualification, number of years in present position, number of children and job title. This data was requested in order to assess the influence that demographic

issues have on the major aspects of this study that explores the connection between WLB and SOC using WLBS as a mediating variable and SOC as a moderating variable.

In section 'B', questions structured to help the researcher in collecting data associated with one of the key variables in the study examining the connection between WLB and SOC are presented. There are numerous WLBS practiced by workplaces (De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott, & Petit, 2007; Felstead et al., 2002; Bardoel et al., 1998). This section is divided into two: 'B1' and 'B2'. Subsection 'B1' asks questions relating to adoption of best practises of WLBS on a nominal scale that assists in data collection in no particular order so as to categorise data (H.R. Nutshell, 2011). This scale was constructed for the study and adapted from a thirteen-item scale developed by De Cieri et al. (2007). It has a 'YES' and 'NO' response requirement.

In Section 'B2' a Likert rating scale was used because of the ease of its construction and interpretation (Hartley, 2014; Treiblmaier & Filzmoser, 2011). 'B2' contains statements about the municipality, in order to determine the perception of employees with respect to the type of WLBS (benefits) that the municipality adopted. A five point Likert-type ratings scale going from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree was adopted. The five-point scale was adopted to allow respondents freedom in answering questions that they are neutral about instead of the four-point scale that does not allow participants to 'sit on the fence' (Saunders et al., 2009). This is in line with the ethical requirement that respondents must be free to respond or decline to answer any questions in the questionnaire. The researcher basically gathered items from existing WLBS instruments and created additional questions to ascertain that ingredients that will assist in collecting data to answer the research questions and achieve the study objectives pertinent to WLBS were represented. These items were passed through careful a content validity test and categorisation procedure that served as a pre-test, allowing that items that were deemed inconsistent with the concept to be removed (Elizabeth Anne Bardoel, Shea, & De Cieri, 2011; DeVellis, Lewis, & Sterba, 2003; Hinkin, 1995). The remaining eleven (11) items in section B2 were worded in ways that were consistent with the study objectives.

Other instruments used for the present research (sections 'D', 'E1', 'E2', 'E3', 'F1', 'F2', 'F3', 'F4', 'G1', 'G2', 'G3' and 'G4') include the *SOC-13 version of Orientation to Life Questionnaire* designed by Antonovsky (1987). The three factors of SOC (comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness) are measured by using the 13-item condensed model of the Orientation to Life Questionnaire. The scale comprises four items measuring meaningfulness, five items assessing comprehensibility and four other items measuring manageability (Feldt et al., 2003).

The Work Stressor Scale measuring job stress, absence of autonomy and function vagueness on a 29-item scale is also used in the study. Two items measuring job stress were adopted. Absence of autonomy was measured using *Factual Autonomy Scale* (FAS), a 10-item scale designed by Spector and Fox (2003) to examine the regularity of perception by the individual of restrictions of their capacity to perform their duties independently and also effect certain decisions on their job. Function vagueness/role conflict was measured by using a 17-item scale adapted from a 30-item scale developed by Rizzo et al. (1970) to assess employees' perception about their jobs, authority, time given to perform duties, association with others, and the clarity of guidelines or policies. A Family Stressor Scale measuring parental workload/relationship tension, absence of spousal support, elder care and level of misconduct by child(ren) on a 48-item scale is also used in the study. Eight (8) items measure parental workload/relationship tension. The items were adapted from Barling, MacEwen, Kelloway, and Higginbottom (1994) and Brestan et al. (2003).

In sections 'C', 'F5' and 'G5', structured open-ended questions eliciting non-numerical information along with the information solicited for and responded to in sections 'B2', 'D', 'E1', 'E2', 'E3', 'F1', 'F2', 'F3' and 'F4' were presented. This section is added in order to assist the researcher to ascertain respondents' views on the connection between WLB and SOC at the municipality. Data collected from the open-ended questions was evaluated using content analysis and the outcome added to the suggestions proffered from the research. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) found that some items cross-loaded on others, therefore the total number of questions used for analysis were 136 in all (102 quantitative and 19 open-ended). Additionally, the total number of questions used in the semi-structured interviews was 18 in number. The quantitative and qualitative data collected from the respondents from all the sections of the questionnaire gave impetus to methodological triangulation.

7.9.1.2 Measurement instrument adapted for the study

A questionnaire was used as a major tool of gathering data in the present study, although semi-structured interviews were conducted with a few heads of departments/units. The questionnaire was based on a Likert rating scale. Measurement in a study consists of the assignment of numerical values or non-numerical characteristics to objects by the use of stated rules (Azika, 2009). Below is a discussion of the various measuring instruments for the constructs in the present research.

7.9.1.2 a Work-life balance

In Chapter two of this thesis, the researcher had indicated that WLB was assessed based on satisfaction with work and family situations. To achieve meaningful results, a three dimensional scale with 12 items was used in measuring WLB. Information needed to ascertain work and family situations was gathered while the measures used are explained below.

Job involvement denotes the extent that an individual holds his/her job as being integral to his/her personality or *sense of identity* (Michael R Frone et al., 1992; Kanungo, 1982; Lodahl & Kejnar, 1965). To assess this construct, five items adapted from a scale designed by Kanungo (1982) were used. According to the study conducted by Blau (1985), Kanungo's measure is uni-dimensional, and therefore an unadulterated scale used in mental identification when compared to Lodahl and Kejner's (1965) reduced version measure. Responses to the items on this scale as used in this study were based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1) strongly disagree to 5) strongly agree. The original scale was based on a 6-point agree/disagree Likert scale (Frone et al., 1992).

Family involvement was measured by altering the job involvement items to denote the spouse of the respondents (Frone et al., 1992, p. 69), using Kanungo's (1982a, b) job involvement scale. This technique was successfully utilised in past work-family research (Frone & Rice, 1987). The five items assessing spousal involvement were particularly used in the study, leaving those other five items assessing parental involvement, because another scale measuring parental workload was used in the study in measuring family stressors. Deephouse's (1996) formula was used to ascertain involvement balance coefficient. Some of the items from the scale include "The major satisfaction in my life comes from my family" and "I am very much involved in my role as a spouse." Family satisfaction was measured with two items measured on a 5-point scale with responses ranging from 1) strongly disagree to 5) strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha of the scale is $\alpha = .78$. Deephouse's (1996) formula was applied to advance an *involvement balance coefficient*. A zero score once again denoted an equal degree of involvement in work and family responsibilities. A positive score indicated work imbalance since it signified more involvement with work than family, while a negative score denoted imbalance in the family domain signifying higher involvement with family than job duties (Greenhaus et al., 2003). Items from job and family involvement cross-loaded on each other during the EFA rendering one of the scales (involvement with family) not found useful in this study.

Satisfaction balance was measured using a two item measure. The measure was adapted from a 5-item scale developed by Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley (1990). Response on the 2-item scale was based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1) strongly disagree to 5) strongly agree. Items from the scale include “I am satisfied with my present family situation” and “I am satisfied with the success I have achieved in my career.” The scale’s internal consistency was $\alpha=.86$ (Greenhaus et al., 2003, p. 519). From the rule of thumb, this level of internal consistency is acceptable (George & Mallery, 2003; Pallant, 2011). As was the case with involvement and time balances, Deephouse’s (1996) formula was used in developing satisfaction coefficient. In this measure, zero score signified balance as it indicated equal levels of satisfaction resulting from the performance of work and family functions. Again, work imbalance was indicated by a positive score, a sign that more satisfaction was derived from work than life (family), while a negative score indicated family imbalance as a result of greater satisfaction being derived from life (family) than work. This scale was found un-useful after EFA because the items cross-loaded on other factors. But from the EFA, a two-item job satisfaction scale was found by the categorisation of two items from the function vagueness/role conflict scale. These items measuring satisfaction with job situation in this study are: “I perform tasks that are too easy” and “I perform tasks that are too boring.” The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the scale was an excellent 0.938.

Time balance was assessed by asking participants about the number of hours during busy period(s) in which they work weekly. This data was used in appraising yearly hours worked and then divided by 52 in order to ascertain average hours worked weekly (Greenhaus et al., 2003). The researcher adopted the *balance coefficient* designed by Janis (1965) and later used by Deephouse (1996) in assessing time balance. As shown in Appendix 1, the *balance coefficient* could range from -1 to $+1$ and possesses an expressive zero point in the instance where a person spends an equal amount of time performing work and family roles (Greenhaus et al., 2003). In this case, a zero score denotes balance since it indicates use of exact amount of time for work and family. Therefore, positive or negative scores represent imbalance at either work or family respectively. But this scale was found irrelevant after EFA because the items were found to have cross-loaded on other factors in the study.

7.9.1.2.b Orientation to lie questionnaire

The OLQ was designed by Antonovsky (1987a) to measure SOC. The first and longer type comprises of 29-items (8 items testing meaningfulness, 11 measuring comprehensibility and

10 measuring manageability). In the present study, SOC was measured by adapting the reduced 13-item version of the OLQ although the 14th item was included to measure manageability because of the nature of the present study. Participants responded on a 7-point *semantic differential scale* with dual anchoring sayings. The OLQ is a three dimensional scale with five items measuring *comprehensibility*. Responses ranged from 1) very often, to 7) very seldom or never. The second dimension measured *manageability* with responses ranging from 1) never happened to 7) always happened. The third dimension of the scale measured *meaningfulness* responses ranging from 1) very seldom or never, to 7) very often (Feldt et al., 2003, p. 1154). One of the items measuring comprehensibility is: “Do you have the feeling that you are in an unfamiliar situation and do not know what to do?” An example of items assessing manageability among others is “How often do you have feelings that you’re not sure you can keep under control?” One of the items measuring meaningfulness is “How often do you have the feelings that there’s little meaning in the things you do in your daily life?” Five items on the scale carry reversed scores in the negative word; the overall sum of the scores could range from 13 (weak SOC) to 91 (strong SOC).

Literature shows that the OLQ is widely used in no fewer than thirty two countries and has at least fifteen dissimilar editions of the questionnaire. Eriksson and Lindström (2005) report that among one hundred and twenty four (124) researches that used the SOC-29 (E. E. Kossek et al.), the alpha coefficient span was between 0.70 to 0.95, while the Cronbach’s alpha from those that used the SOC-13 in one hundred and twenty seven (127) studies, span between 0.70 to 0.92. Test-retest association reveals stability and spans from 0.78 in the first (1st) year through 0.64 in the third (3rd) year and 0.54 in the tenth (10th) year. It is also seen that the means of the SOC-13 is from 35.39 (SD 0.10) to 77.60 (SD 13.80) points (Eriksson & Lindström, 2005).

The researcher adopted the use of the OLQ to measure SOC because of the value it has in being able to ascertain the way an individual’s SOC affects wellbeing, stability and coping with stressors. The construct SOC has been reported as being stable and globally meaningful, cutting across borders of *gender, social class and culture*. SOC has also been linked to individuals’ socio-economic status (Hogh & Mikkelsen, 2005; Lundberg & Peck, 1994; Larsson & Kallenberg, 1996). Overall outcomes of past studies confirm the validity and reliability of the OLQ scale and give primary evidence about the worth of the core concept (Antonovsky, 1993; Feldt et al., 2005; Feldt, Leskinen, et al., 2000; J. F. Pallant & Lae, 2002). Literature shows

that confirmatory factor analysis has been used to test the structure of the shorter version of the OLQ (Feldt et al., 2007). The scholars (Feldt et al., 2007) report that the 13-item SOC scale appears to be capable of standing as a psychometrically valid measuring tool for testing the concept of SOC as proposed by Antonovsky. The findings of these studies strengthen the justification for using the OLQ in the present study. Furthermore, the present study adopts the use of the 13-item SOC scale to measure SOC among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector because the outcome may be useful in recognising and suggesting ways to improve the design and structure and possibly implementation of WLBS to enhance SOC of individual employees towards the achievement of meaningful WLB.

7.9.1.2.c Work stressor scale

The work stressor scale adapted for this study was constructed from 20 items derived from numerous measures from the literature (Spector & Fox, 2003; Frone & Russel, 1992; Rizzo, House & Lirtzman, 1970; Sims, Szilagyi & Keller, 1976; House, McMichael, Wells, Kaplan & Landerman, 1979; Beehr, 1976; Insel & Moos, 1974; Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). To help in achieving the objectives of this study, a three dimensional scale with 29 items was adapted to measure work stressors. The scale assessed job stress, absence of autonomy and function vagueness/role conflict. Job stress (2 items) measured the frequency of tiredness and tension felt by individuals as a result of pressures from their work. An item on the scale is “I frequently feel tired and worn out during a good part of the day.”

Absence of autonomy (10 items) measured the regularity of perceived constraints by individuals to perform their duties independently as well as influence decisions on imperative work structures. According to Spector and Fox (2003), self-report scales that are used in assessing work stressors are usually criticised because of their subjective nature in making associations with *other variables inconclusive*. Therefore they developed the Factual Autonomy Scale (FAS), a 12-item scale to lessen the issue of subjectivity through a careful selection of items that are reality-based. The FAS designed by Spector and Fox (2003) was adapted to assess absence of autonomy in this study. The FAS scale adapted for this study has seven items that began with the phrases: *in your present job, how often do you have to ask permission . . . ?* Respectively, the items offered an aspect of timetabling, for example *to take a rest break* or *to change the hours you work*. Also included in the scale are three other response alternatives ranging from *never* to *everyday* and they began with the prefix: *how often do the*

following events occur in your present job? Every one of these items started with: *Does someone tell you . . . ?* And finished with 'what', 'when', or 'how' the individual needed to work. The alpha coefficient of the scale was found to fall within the acceptable range of 0.73 to 0.94 (Spector & Fox, 2003; Kim & Stoner, 2008).

Rizzo et al. (1970) designed the 30-item function vagueness/role conflict scale where 15 items measured role ambiguity and the other 15 items measured role conflict. Items examining performance and evaluation by superiors are not included in the study since the respondents are superior officers. Therefore, the function vagueness/role conflict scale adapted for this study is a 17-item scale adopted from Rizzo, House and Lirtzman's (1970) scale (Tracy & Johnson, 1981). It assessed the regularity of an individual being confused or uncertain about daily assignments and expectations relating to the goals of the job (Spector & Fox, 2003). The items measuring role conflict highlight authorisations linked to role conduct, therefore they are connected to function vagueness elements involving the forecast of the results of an individual's conduct. However, the root cause of role clashes (for instance, multiple authority) is not particularly included among the items used in this study. Items measuring function vagueness highlight absolute tasks, power and association with other individuals, time allocation and the capacity to forecast authorisations as results of conduct. The scale has been shown in numerous reviews (Jackson & Schuler, 1985) to possess adequate *construct* and *discriminant* validity and is therefore suitable for research. Among the items are those that examine *person-role* clash such as: *I have to do things that should be done in a different way* as well as those exploring inter-sender clash for example, *I receive incompatible requests from two or more people* (Parker, Axtell & Turner, 2001). In coding the items, higher scores were recognised as reflecting more function vagueness/role conflict and were scored on a 7-point regularity response scale ranging from 1) very false to 7) very true. The alpha coefficient of the scale is between 0.78 and 0.88 (Parker et al., 2001; Henle & Blanchard, 2008).

7.9.1.2.d Family stressor scale

The family stressor scale having 48 items was adapted and used in measuring parental workload/relational tension, absence of spousal support, elder care and level of misconduct by child(ren). The items were adapted from Barling et al. (1994) and Brestan et al. (2003). Among the items on the parental workload/relational tension scale are questions testing the level of stress that decision making on different aspects of parenting and relationship has on individuals (Frone et al., 1992). Some of the items are: *how much stress does making decisions on the*

following decisions pose for you?: (1) supporting your child (ren)'s recreational activities versus spending time on your own career development, (2) devoting a large portion of your time to the raising of your family versus devoting a large percentage of your time to work. Response was on a five point frequency based answering scale. Cronbach alpha for the scale is 0.80 (Young, Baltes & Pratt, 2007).

Spousal support was assessed by adapting and using the *social support scale* advanced by Sargent and Terry (2000). It comprises 12 items that measure both contributory and emotional support (Young et al., 2007). Four (4) items out of the 12 items using a five point response scale ranging from 1) strongly disagree to 5) strongly agree were adapted from the original scale to measure absence of spousal support. Items in this scale include: *I can count on my spouse to go out of his/her way to help me in a crisis situation*. Cronbach coefficient for this scale is .85 (Young et al., 2007).

Four items modified out of six items of the spousal support questionnaire developed by Sarason et al. (1983) were modified and used in measuring spousal backing or absence thereof. The items examining absence of spousal support include: 1) *I can count on my spouse to listen to me when I need to talk, and 2) I can really count on my spouse to be dependable when I need help*. Elder care is measured by using a one-item scale taken out of Barling et al. (1994) which they derived from the *inter-role conflict scale* designed by Kopelman, Greenhaus and Connolly (1983). It examined the difficulty an individual employee faces, as a result of taking care of elderly relatives, and response was on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1) strongly disagree to 5) strongly agree. The item is *caring for my parents makes it difficult for me to be the kind of employee I would like to be*.

Level of misconduct by child(ren) is assessed with Eyberg's *Child Behavior Inventory (ECBI)*. *ECBI* is a 36-item dual scale that asks parents to report on the level of disruptive behaviours observed among their child(ren). It comprises two scales: the *Intensity Scale*, measuring the regularity of respective child's(ren's) behaviour issues, with items ranging from 1) never to 7) always (Eyberg & Pincus, 1999), and the *Problem Scale*, assessing the amount of the behaviour of child(ren), issues that they (parents) perceive as problematic to themselves on a *yes/no* response scale. The total of ratings of the items equals the *Intensity score* (Eyberg, Boggs, & Rodriguez, 1993). Brestan et al. (2003) report that both scales (intensity and problem) are assumed to differ notably from one another because the Problem Scale indirectly assesses the level of tolerance that parents exhibit over their child's(ren's) behaviour (Eyberg & Pincus,

1999). In this study, a 35-item scale was adapted from the ECBI to assess the impact that child behaviour may have on an employee's coping ability with self and child(ren). Literature supports the assumption that a child's(ren's) disruptive behaviour often relates to stressors like marital distress (S. M. Johnson & Lobitz, 1974), despair (Wells & Rankin, 1991), and loneliness (Wahler & Fox, 1981). All these stressors could lead to coping challenges and conversely inability to achieve balance amid work and life.

The construct validity of ECBI has been demonstrated in researches (Boggs, Eyberg, & Reynolds, 1990; Webster-Stratton & Eyberg, 1982). Brestan et al. (2008) report that excellent appraisals of the alpha coefficient of both the Intensity Scale and the Problem Scale have been reported at $\alpha = 0.93$ and 0.91 respectively.

7.9.1.2.f Work-life balance strategy measuring scale

To evaluate WLBS implemented at the municipality against best practices nationally and internationally, secondary data information gathered from the municipality's website on WLBS identified HIV/AIDS counselling, stress management, financial debt counselling, domestic relationship counselling and substance abuse counselling among many others as those practices adopted by the municipality in line with Bardoel, De Cieri and Santos (2008) and Felstead et al. (2002). A list of some other best practices elsewhere adapted from De Cieri, Abbot, Petit and Holmes (2005) was also integrated into a group of WLBS and presented for assessment by respondents on Section B1 of the survey instrument used for this study. Participants in this survey were asked to pinpoint WLB practices in place at the municipality by answering questions on a 13-item scale developed by De Cieri et al. (2005) and adapted to this study. Response was on a two-point Yes/No scale. Furthermore, an 11-item scale built for this study was used in assessing the employees' overall perceptions of availability of WLBS at the municipality and the extent to which the benefits assist them in coping with stated work and family-related stressors. Items on the scale include: *I think that the municipality has put in place work-life balance strategies* and *the work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me cope with work-related issues like function vagueness*. Response was based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1) strongly disagree to 5) strongly agree. Likewise, open-ended questions soliciting opinions and suggestions on the WLBS at the municipality were included in the questionnaire.

7.9.2 Secondary sources of collecting data

As a way of gathering secondary data in order to obtain more information to achieve the objectives of the study with respect to the development of theoretical and conceptual

frameworks guiding the research, the researcher also engaged with and reviewed existing literature. Journal articles from the internet, textbooks online conference articles, and published and unpublished doctoral degree dissertations are major secondary sources of data utilised in the study. The Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service, the municipality's *Wellness Policy and Programmes* (2008) as well as the *Employee Wellness Programme Business Plan July 2013 - June 2014* were included among the secondary sources of data used in the study. The documents were contributory in making efficient appraisal of the wellness programmes in line with WLBS practiced elsewhere globally. Therefore, secondary data gathered through this source justifies triangulation, through the comparison of information collected from primary data, and reduces bias levels that would have arisen deliberately or otherwise in the research.

7.9.3 Potencies of the instrument used in the study

The main strengths of the research instrument (Bell, 2014) used in gathering data for this study are as follows:

- i. The consent of the respondents was sought and received in compliance with the Ethical Clearance (EC) (Onwuegbuzie & Leech) obtained from the University of KwaZulu-Natal to conduct the study.
- ii. The identity and confidence of the respondents were considered in designing the questionnaire, therefore the anonymity and confidentiality clause of the EC was also complied with.
- iii. Use of technical language needing interpretation was avoided.
- iv. Straightforward and simple language was used in order to make it easy for respondents to understand and respond to the queries clearly.
- v. Opportunity was provided for respondents to express their subjective opinions through responses to the open-ended questions asked.
- vi. The research questions and objectives were properly aligned with the research instrument.
- vii. The semi-structured interview questions also aligned to the study objectives were sent way ahead of the interview date, and this prepared respondents to provide robust data meaningful to the study.
- viii. Since a large sample size was investigated, the questionnaire proved to be an invaluable method of eliciting and collecting data. The data so collected was presented clearly on

tables, charts and histograms as well as percentages for ease in interpreting the outcomes accurately.

- ix. Data collected through the questionnaires was cost and time-efficient as it permitted most quantitative and qualitative data to be collected simultaneously.

7.9.4 Difficulties of the study instrument

Although the permission to administer the research instrument was easily given by the municipality, the researcher encountered enormous challenges in collecting data from the professional level employees. Most of the employees were often absent from their seats as they attended to busy work schedules that usually entailed that they attend meetings.

Rigorous and consistent attempts were made by the researcher to surmount these difficulties. Therefore, successive meetings with several heads of departments/units and one-on-one meetings yielded some positive fruit. Several presentations were made at different meetings and seminars to reassure individuals of complete confidentiality and anonymity.

7.9.5 Management of research instrument

There is a need to pilot test a research instrument to ensure that the questions are properly aligned to the study objectives as well as ascertain validity and reliability of the instrument (Simkhada, van Teijlingen, & Hundley, 2013). Therefore prior to the commencement of field work, the questionnaire was trial-tested and given full approval by the University of Kwazulu-Natal's (UKZN) Humanities and Social Science Research Committee. The Humanities and Social Science Research Committee communicated the approval to commence the study to the researcher on a document with reference number HSS/0418/014D dated 15 May 2014. From the 20 May 2014 to the end of February 2015, the researcher carried out the field survey. A letter of consent stipulating the voluntary nature of the survey, confidentiality and anonymity clauses and eliciting the signature of the participants to confirm willingness to proceed with the survey was attached to each questionnaire. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to participants and clearly described the reason for the survey to them (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009), as well as gave respondents the opportunity to ask any emerging questions. All questionnaires were administered during working days of the week.

A total number of three hundred and sixty four (364) questionnaires were distributed among respondents, but 307 responses were collected. The convenience sampling technique was adopted in disseminating the questionnaires among professional level employees at seven out

of eight clusters of the municipality in the South African public sector. To reduce the biases of convenience sampling, cluster and random sampling was used to select five out of the eight clusters of the municipality (Hedt & Pagano, 2011). Even though the benefits attributed to collecting data personally are many, among which is to increase response rate, nevertheless, it is an expensive method of data collection especially where a large number of people are to be sampled (Wilson, 2010; Sekaran & Bougie, 2009).

Eleven heads of departments/units were interviewed at different periods between June 2014 and January 2015. Semi-structured questions were used as guides of clarification to avoid the case of obtaining incomparable data from different people which may be confusing (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). This justifies the reason why a sequential transformative mixed method was used in the gathering of data for the study, although some numeric and non-numeric data was gathered concurrently.

7.10 Data analysis techniques

Descriptive statistics was used in analysing data collected from sections 'A' and 'B1' of the survey questionnaire. Mean, standard deviation, simple percentages and frequency counts were descriptive statistics used. To show the results in clear form, these statistics were presented in tabular and graphical modes using pie and bar charts as well as frequency distribution tables. Descriptive statistics were also used in answering the six research questions.

The IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 was used in capturing and analysing all primary numeric data gathered from the relevant sections of the questionnaire as clearly explained in section 5.10 above. Also, inferential statistics like Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analyses were similarly conducted using SPSS. Additionally, the six objectives of the study were tested through regression analysis. For instance, the third objective of this study investigated the influence of work and family stressors on SOC. To achieve this objective, the regression model, which is an inferential statistic used in establishing the level of association among variables, was used.

To analyse all qualitative data obtained from sections 'C', 'F5', 'G5' and interviews, thematic and content analysis were adopted using the NVivo software. Figures representing the analysis of the qualitative data through NVivo were also presented for clarity. In the next section, discourse on the analysis of information collected in all the sections of the questionnaire is presented.

7.10.1 Descriptive statistics

To test the assumptions in this study, it was important to obtain the descriptive statistics of the variables in the study (Julie Pallant, 2013). Descriptive statistics condense the overall characteristics of collected data, for example the way in which particular nature of subjects or objects measured seem to be averaging, the degree of variation among various pieces of information, or the level of association among two or more characteristics examined (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014; Struwig & Stead, 2013). Leedy and Ormrod further report that descriptive statistics functions to describe the appearance of a large quantity of data by showing where the midpoint is or their spread or closeness between two or more variables. It was essential to commence data analysis in the study with descriptive statistics in order to give anyone reading the thesis a coherent and concise synopsis of the information gathered prior to the presentation of the whole analysis (Wilson, 2010). In line with this, the researcher adopted descriptive statistics in the analysis of demographic data collected from section 'A' of the questionnaire. There are many descriptive statistics instruments but some of them are considered in the following paragraphs.

The mean, mode and median make up the measures of central tendency, while the range, standard deviation and variance are included in the measures of dispersion (Struwig & Stead, 2013). The *mean* also known as the *arithmetic average of a frequency distribution* (Bryman, 2008; Wilson, 2010) showing the average or mid-point of data distribution (Saunders et al., 2009; Leedy & Ormrod, 2014) and *standard deviation* are descriptive statistical tools that were used in the present study.

Standard deviation is basically the average of the extent of variation around the mean (Bryman, 2008). This is a generally adopted measure of dispersion and is the tool that measures the degree of variability in the data since it is the square root of variance (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). In this study, the actual values of the mean and standard deviation are shown in tables in the next chapter.

Leedy and Ormrod (2014) suggest that it is important to measure both the central tendency and measures of dispersion of a data set to gain understanding from data. They also noted that these measures are useful when testing a single variable.

7.10.2 Inferential statistics

Struwig and Stead (2013) report that specimens of observation are utilised in inferential statistics to deduce inferences from the observations seen in a population. This is because it is tedious to gather information from a large population, yet it is possible to make inferences about the nature of a population from the sampled audience. Inferential statistics can also refer to the assessment of the value of a population and validating statistically the hypotheses of a study (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). Leedy and Ormrod (2014) state that inferences could be made when a researcher is trying to ascertain the relationship between two or more variables. There are statistical methods used in ascertaining associations between variables some of which are explained in the study as presented below. The inferential statistics involved in the present research were subjected to various statistical analyses programmes (for example, SPSS,) as discussed in section 7.10 above. *Correlation* is the statistical route through which the level of association between two or more variables were discovered and the resultant statistic known as *correlation coefficient (a number between -1 and +1)* highlighted the direction and the strength of such associations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). The most common statistic used in ascertaining correlation is the *Pearson product moment correlation* also known as *Pearson r*, though other correlation statistics exist.

7.10.2.1 Pearson's product moment correlation (PPMC)

Pearson's correlation is engaged when the strength of the association among two continuous variables are to be investigated (Pallant, 2013). It ranges from -1 to +1, indicating the direction (negative or positive) as well as the strength of the association. When a variable increases simultaneously with the other, there is a positive correlation, while the increase in one variable and decrease in the other variable portrays a negative correlation. *The size of the absolute value (ignoring the sign) provides information on the strength of the relationship* (Pallant, 2011, p. 123). Additionally, she reports that when correlation of 1 or -1 is indicated, a perfect correlation is said to exist. This means that the value of a variable could be accurately predicted through the knowledge of the second variable. Conversely, a 0 correlation implies that there is no association among the two variables. This implies that being able to determine the value of one variable does not provide any help in determining the other variable's value.

The association among variables could be visually observed by developing a scatterplot. Scatterplots indicate the paired scores derived from the respondents in the sample. On the horizontal (X) axis of the plot are the first variable scores while the second variable scores are

plotted on the vertical (Y) axis. The scatterplots further display the direction and strength of the association among the variables. Pallant (2013) further reports that a straight-line scatterplot is an indication of a perfect correlation ($r = 1$ or -1), while $r = 0$ would display circular points without any shape.

PPMC is an appropriate parametric statistic used in determining correlation when the two variables comprise continuous data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). By using SPSS version 22 in the study, the researcher tested the strength of the connections among latent variables examined in the study using *Pearson's correlation coefficients*. The researcher will explain the process by which the different independent variables connect with the dependent variable in the study in Chapter eight. Similarly in the next chapter, a more detailed presentation of the regression models demonstrating relationships between the variables is given to promote quick understanding and clearness in the interpretation of the outcomes.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009) and Byrne (2013), correlation coefficients highlight the relationship between *endogenous* and *exogenous* variables, mediating variables and endogenous variables, as well as mediating variables and exogenous variables. In the study, the exogenous variables identified are WLBS and work and family stressors. SOC and WLB are endogenous variables in the context of this study as their values are affected by WLBS and stressors. Use of WLBS could improve SOC which could lead to the achievement of meaningful WLB. Work and family stressors were identified being able to influence SOC in the study. PPMC was used as a parametric statistic in the analysis of the data gathered for the purpose of the study utilising SPSS version 22 (IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences).

7.10.2.2 Multiple regression analysis

Coefficient of multiple determination also known as multiple regression coefficient is used in assessing the strength of the association between one dependent and two or more additional independent variables (Saunders et al., 2009). Wilson (2010) reports that this parametric statistic evaluates the degree of variance highlighted through linear associations in a model where data is paired. Pallant (2013) reports that multiple regression is a better refined improvement of correlation used to determine the capacity of a group of independent variables to predict a *continuous* dependent variable. Generally, various types of multiple regression assist in comparing the ability of specific independent variables. To forecast the influence of the major independent variables in the study on the dependent variable, multiple regression

was utilised. There are complications associated with calculating and interpreting data using multiple regressions. Therefore, Saunders et al. (2009) suggest that use be made of statistical programmes for analysing data or extensive statistical textbooks. However, Wilson (2010) states the formula for manually measuring multiple regressions as shown below:

$$y = a + b_1x_1 + b_2x_2 + b_3x_3 + b_4x_4\dots\dots\dots$$

Where: x = independent variable

y = dependent variable

a = point where the line intersects the y axis

b = gradient of the line

WLB among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector is the dependent variable that was discovered in the study. As a result of this, the researcher examined the influence that WLBS, SOC and work and family stressors (independent variables) had on WLB (dependent variable). Pallant (2011) is of the view that multiple regressions is appropriate in the analysis of variables in management and commercial studies in discordance to scientific experiments conducted in laboratories. Hence, the primary data collected in the study on the connection between WLB and SOC is analysed using multiple regression. The way through which this was done with SPSS version 21 is expressed in details in the next chapter. Moreover, Pallant's (2011) traditions with respect to multiple regressions (for example homoscedasticity and multicollinearity) were duly observed, as also shown in Chapter six.

7.10.2.3 Structural equation modelling (SEM)

SEM is a statistical technique for testing and estimating causal relations. Scholars observe that it is very useful in examining path-analytic models with intervening variables and theoretical constructs with several items (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Byrne, 2013; Katou & Budhwar, 2010; Treiblmaier & Filzmoser, 2011). Furthermore, for every construct in a model, there is an associated measurement model that connects the construct in the model to a group of items. For instance, work stressor comprises three associated items (job stress, absence of autonomy and function vagueness/role conflict). The measurement model involves the associations among detected variables (items) with the constructs being assessed by them (Igbaria, Guimaraes, & Davis, 1995). It also allows for the simultaneous measurement of the relationship between many dependent and independent variables (Ullman, 2006). In a study as this, there is a need to offer the basis for modelling obvious (manifest) and covert (non-manifest) variables.

But SEM was not used in this study, although all the quantitative and some qualitative data collected using the questionnaire was collected concurrently, scholars (Prajogo & Sohal, 2006; Prajogo & McDermott, 2011; Škerlavaj, Štemberger, Škrinjar & Dimovski, 2007) in opposition to the suggestion that SEM allows the concurrent examination of numerous structural linkages becomes significant. The main reason why SEM was not used in this study was because the key variables like SOC and WLB were not correlated. The basic assumption of SEM is that the variables must have intercorrelation with one another (Sekaran & Bougies, 2009).

From the outcome of IBM's SPSS (version 21), used in analysing quantitative data, there was no need for multivariate analysis of data (Duff & Duffy, 2002). Sekaran and Bougie (2009) report that AMOS is structured to assess SEM models, which are complicated statistical models that are related by lines in between variables that are observed and unobserved. There are five constructs used in the measurement model, namely *WLBS*, *SOC*, *work stressors*, *family stressors* and *WLB*. These are unobserved variables in the study while the corresponding factors are known as observed variables. In SEM, the unobserved variables are often shown in circles while the observed variables are shown in rectangles (Byrne, 2013), but in this study, SEM was not used.

7.10.3 Content analysis

According to Struwig and Stead (2013), content analysis involves the collection and analysis of transcripts, while Neuman (2011) suggests that content analysis may involve numeric and non-numeric assessments of text. Other scholars agree that content analysis is used by researchers to assess narrative texts of qualitative nature (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Twycross & Shields, 2008). The content here means communications which could be in words, codes and themes. Content analysis also assesses the context and content of the messages being examined (Ritchie, Spencer, & O'Connor, 2003). Its major concept is to compress many words from the transcript into less content classifications (Struwig & Stead, 2013).

For this study, non-numerical data was coded and grouped around themes, sub-themes and observed patterns. Subsequently, NVIVO, computer software, was used in organising the data, while content analysis was adopted in interpreting the content of the texts. All primary data collected from sections 'C', 'F5', 'G5' and one-on-one interviews with respondents were analysed and interpreted using content analysis exclusive of any prearranged dimension. The reason was to describe the perception of employees about the WLBS in place at the municipality, their appraisal of their orientation to life, work and family stressors as well as

their understanding of WLB. Therefore, the researcher obtained insight on contextual meanings of messages to be able to argue logically about the phenomenon from many dimensions.

The process followed in analysing the qualitative data collected in the relevant sections stated above is described as follows. Initially, all the questionnaires that were returned were numbered serially from 1 to 307 and the data from the interviews was also serially numbered from 1 to 11. But to distinguish the data collected from open-ended response and those collected through the interviews, pseudonyms were used in capturing the interview responses using NVivo. Secondly, since some of the questionnaires were not completely filled in by respondents, especially the non-numerical sections, the questionnaires had to be sorted. In the third stage, the transcript of responses from open-ended questions were extricated and arranged thematically in line with the pre-arranged questions and other emerging sub-themes were noted and extricated. The same was done for texts from the transcript of the interviews conducted with the heads of departments and units. In the next chapter, the presentation and illustration of themes and sub-themes that emerged in the fifth stage are presented. To avoid controversies around the data collected and presented, the researcher's academic promoter (supervisor) was notified and given a preview of the themes, sub-themes and patterns observed for verification. Finally, figures generated by the NVivo software were captured and presented to pictorially assist in clarifying the qualitative data analysis (as presented in Chapter eight).

7.11 Reliability

It is important to report the reliability and validity of the observations/scores used in a quantitative research (Struwig & Stead, 2013). The scholars further report that reliability refers to the degree of accuracy, consistency, or stability of test scores. White and McBurney (2012) agree that the ability of an instrument to consistently give the same outcome given the same circumstances and time is known as reliability. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the internal consistency of the survey instrument for the study to ascertain the degree of consistency of the data set (Matkar, 2012; Pallant, 2011). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2009), Cronbach alpha coefficient measures the reliability of an instrument and the level of positive correlation among the items on the instrument. When the Cronbach alpha coefficient is close to 1, the internal consistency is said to be high (Matkar, 2012). The alpha coefficient that ranges from 0.7 and above are judged acceptable (George & Mallery, 2003; Pallant, 2011). It assists the researcher to ascertain how reliable, stable and consistent items/constructs integrated in the model that are developed in the study for appropriate analysis are. Sekaran

and Bougie (2009) also iterate that any instrument is said to be reliable if it is capable of assessing what it was built to assess.

Qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques helped in achieving methodological triangulation while data triangulation was achieved through the use of many sources of data gathering techniques. The researcher attempted to certify that consistency of items, appropriate sequence of questions and simplicity to assure understanding of the instruments were achieved. There is a connection between reliability and validity.

7.12 Validity

Validity is concerned with the ability of a designed indicator or measuring instrument to measure a concept to actually specify that concept (Bryman, 2008). It includes the association among a construct and its measuring instruments (Wilson, 2010). There are numerous methods of establishing validity, namely, *construct validity*, *face validity*, *predictive validity*, *concurrent validity*, *predictive validity* and *convergent validity*. Content and construct validity are two internal validity types that were recognised in the present study. To ascertain that the instrument actually indicates the content of the concept under study (content validity), opinions of professionals and skills of academic experts in the area of study were sought. The researcher also sought the input of the supervisor prior to the use of the instrument. There was also alignment of the objectives and the constructs of the research to the questionnaire to achieve sampling validity.

Furthermore, instruments designed by professionals in the study area were adapted in order to attain construct validity. Moreover, to achieve data triangulation, data was gathered from numerous sources. Factor analysis was conducted to compress the large set of scale items used in the study to smaller and more manageable factors (Pallant, 2013). Items that cross-loaded on others were trimmed through the exploratory factor analysis (EFA) in this study. This was done to identify the underlying structure of the scales used in the present study.

The qualitative data collected from the relevant sections of the instrument used in this study was tested for reliability and validity. In order to reduce researcher biases that are linked with content analysis, the supervisor twice checked the codes before consenting on the objectivity of the classification. Lastly, a comparison of the results of the present research with relative studies in others nationally and internationally was done to ascertain external validity.

7.13 Methodological limitations

The major research instrument used in this study was administered to only one municipality in the South African public sector. Data collected from the municipality was utilised as a basis for describing the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. The explicatory inquiry was limited to the use of satisfaction with work and family situations as bases for measuring the achievement of WLB.

The study is further limited by the adoption of cross-sectional technique instead of a longitudinal technique of data collection. Scholars have reported that cross-sectional method of data collection does not have the capacity to straightforwardly suggest conclusions through causal deductions (Guest, 2002; Morin et al., 2011; Škerlavaj, Song, & Lee, 2010). Nevertheless, this researcher was constrained to use a cross-sectional approach of data collection due to the fact that professional level employees, as shown in the justification for convenience sampling, are often unavailable to respond to surveys. Secondly, the period of time allocated to conduct this research is limited. The study is further limited methodologically by the use of convenience sampling. A total sample size of respondents was initially targeted at 364 respondents but only 307 (about 83% feedback) responses were received in eight months. Nevertheless the drawbacks of convenience sampling were lessened by the use of random sampling and cluster sampling in selecting the clusters to be sampled and the heads of units/departments that were interviewed. Therefore, the mixture of *probability and non-probability sampling* methods were beneficial in ensuring efficiency (Hedt & Pagano, 2011).

It is reported by Casper, Eby et al. (2007) that self-report data is not rigorous in the analysis of WLB. However, self-report data was used in this study although information collected from heads of departments/units was intended to be used to corroborate data from the self-report of employees. The result of this research is clearly limited to the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the public sector. Another study like this may need to be conducted in vital sectors that are pivotal to the expansion and advancement of the South African economy.

7.14 Ethical requirements

To guarantee the authenticity and integrity of this study, the researcher complied with the guidelines provided by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN) ethical committee. As required, the application for ethical clearance was completed and forwarded with attachments

of the Gatekeeper's letter issued by the municipality investigated along with the study questionnaire. Upon receipt, perusal and approval of the documents, the Humanities and Social Science Research Committee of the UKZN conveyed the approval to commence data collection on a document reference number HSS/0418/014D dated 15 May 2014. Field work commenced in June 2014 until February 2015. The rights of all entities (stakeholders) concerned with the study were duly respected and ethical guidelines regarding such rights were complied with as presented below:

- i. Consent of the organisation to be examined was sought as proven by the Gatekeeper's letter signed by the approving entity.
- i. The municipality examined was kept anonymous and data gathered from respondents was not used for any purposes other than that for which it was collected, basically, there was no misuse of the data collected.
- ii. The questionnaires were disseminated on approved dates set aside by the Gatekeeper's representative assigned to this researcher in league with the HR department.
- iii. Questions that could be termed as violating participants' human rights were avoided as well as all those treatments that could amount to infringement of their personal rights. All information gathered was given utmost confidential treatment and respondents' anonymity was guaranteed.
- iv. Consent of all those that were interviewed was sought evidenced by their signing the consent to interview letter. All individuals interviewed were given pseudonyms to guarantee their anonymity and information collected from interviewees was treated with utmost confidentiality.
- v. The consent of each interviewee to be recorded was sought and received prior to every interview session. All recorded interviews were personally transcribed by the researcher to further guarantee confidentiality.
- vi. The questionnaire was administered by the researcher personally and the goal of the research was explained with clarity to the respondents prior to administering the questionnaire.
- vii. A consent letter was attached to each questionnaire, clearly explaining that participation in the study was voluntary and respondents could withdraw whenever they wanted. A confidentiality clause was also included in the consent letter.
- viii. All the information collected through this study will be kept by the School of Management, IT and Governance at the UKZN for protection.

- ix. To avoid plagiarism, all secondary data sources used in the research were sufficiently cited and acknowledged.

7.15 Conclusion

The research methodology chapter presented here was a detailed discourse on several research viewpoints and their drawbacks, merits and areas where they are mostly used. After the review, the researcher adopted pragmatism as the view point suitable for the study. An elaborate explanation of the methodology and study design employed in this research was given as well as reasons for choosing them. Moreover, the research design justifiably selected for the study is a *non-experimental design of ex post facto* form, adopting an advocacy stand whereby equal priority was given to both qualitative and quantitative data. Using relevant sampling techniques (simple random sampling, cluster and convenience sampling methods), the population for the study was considered, while the sample size for this research was basically drawn based on availability, accessibility and respondents' readiness to participate in the study. The use of both simple random sampling and cluster sampling (probability methods) contribute to the justification of the reason why convenience sampling was adopted for the study. This chapter further described the way in which the questionnaire was structured (closed and open-ended) as well as how its psychometric characteristics were addressed. Additional qualitative data was collected via in-depth semi-structured interviews. Also, the process of administering the research instrument was explained.

In this chapter, the various statistics and statistical software engaged for the statistical analysis of the primary data gathered through every segment of the research instrument, as well as the qualitative data collected through the interviews, was explained and validated. The statement of the methodological limitations was clearly made and the ethical guidelines prescribed by relevant authority as complied with, was explained in detail. The way in which collected data was analysed using the relevant statistical packages was explicitly stated and the outcomes were interpreted and shown in graphical and tabular forms in the next chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT: FINDINGS

8.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the way in which data was analysed and interpreted based on the responses of participants to the survey instrument used in this study that explored the connection between WLB and SOC.

Collected quantitative data was analysed using the *IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences* (SPSS) version 22 statistical software, while QSR NVivo version 10 was used in coding and analysing qualitative data collected through open-ended questions and semi-structured interviews. Primarily, data vetting was carried out on the numeric data by using the IBM SPSS 22 in order to ascertain the veracity of data capturing, omitted data, regularity and outliers. The software was beneficial also in the analysis of descriptive and inferential statistics respectively in this study. Furthermore, descriptive statistics were employed in analysing the collected demographic data through the use of IBM SPSS 22. Moreover, inferential statistics like multiple regressions and correlation were used in testing the objectives formulated for this study.

NVivo was employed in organising the data collected through semi-structured interviews among 11 top management members as well as the responses from the structured questions from sections “C”, “F5” and “G5” in the survey instrument. Content analysis was adopted to achieve data and methodological triangulation in the process of examining the connection between work-life balance (WLB) and sense of coherence (SHRM.).

The demographics of the sample participants is presented in the earlier part of this chapter followed by the descriptive presentation of the findings that provided answers to the research questions in this study. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA), total variance explained, reliability of the factors (Cronbach alpha coefficient), KMO and Bartlett’s Tests were also presented in this chapter. Additionally, inferential statistics (correlation and regression models) that assisted in the achievement of the study objectives were presented. The chapter closes with the presentation of the findings of the qualitative data analysis (descriptive and graphic).

8.2 Response frequency

In compliance with the minimum sample size requirement for the population of studies adopting quantitative technique (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009), 370 questionnaires were disseminated among participants. The researcher received three hundred and seven (307) duly

completed questionnaires and none were discarded. The returned 307 questionnaires indicate a 83% response rate. This response rate is excellent considering Johnson and Wislar (2012) report that response rate of 60% was deemed acceptable and a good measure of the face validity of a study.

8.3 Analysis of demographic data

The survey instrument used in this study was designed to generate seven diverse classes of demographic information from the participants, namely: gender, age, cluster, educational qualification, work experience, number of children and job title. Below is a presentation of the analysis and interpretation of the demographic variables.

8.3.1 Gender

From the frequency distribution of participants based on their gender as shown in Table 8.1, most of the participants were male (218) and the rest out of the total sample of 307 participants that responded to the study were female (89).

Table 8.1 Frequency distribution of respondents by gender

			Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	Male		218	71.0	71.0	71.0
	Female		89	29.0	29.0	100.0
	Total		307	100.0	100.0	

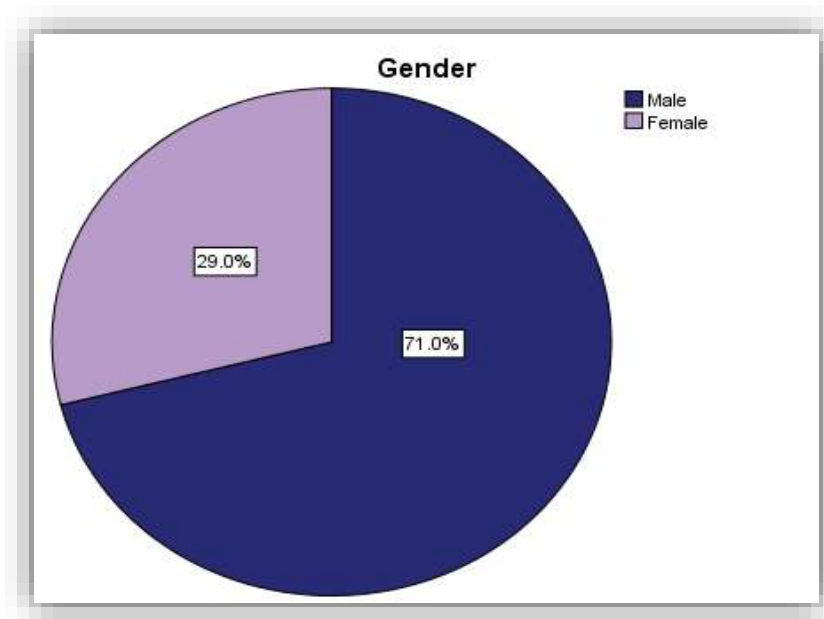
Figure 8.1 shows the estimated percentage distribution of participants on the basis of their gender. A total of 71.0% of the participants in this study were male while the female respondents represent 29.0% of the total sample responses. Hence, most of the responses to this study came from the male population. This could be an indication that more male respondents were reachable to this researcher as supported by the Employment Equity Demographic Profile of Economical Active Population (2012) presented in Table 8.2. The table shows the municipality's workforce profile analysed by occupational level and gender.

Table 8.2 Demographic Profile of Economical Active Population

Grade (Category of employment)	Percentage	
	Male	Female
19 - 25	80%	20%
16 – 18	75%	25%
14 – 15	72%	28%
09 - 13	69%	31%

Source: SA (2012) Employment Equity Demographic Profile of Active Population (Regional).

Figure 8.1 Pie chart presentations of respondents by gender



8.3.2 Age

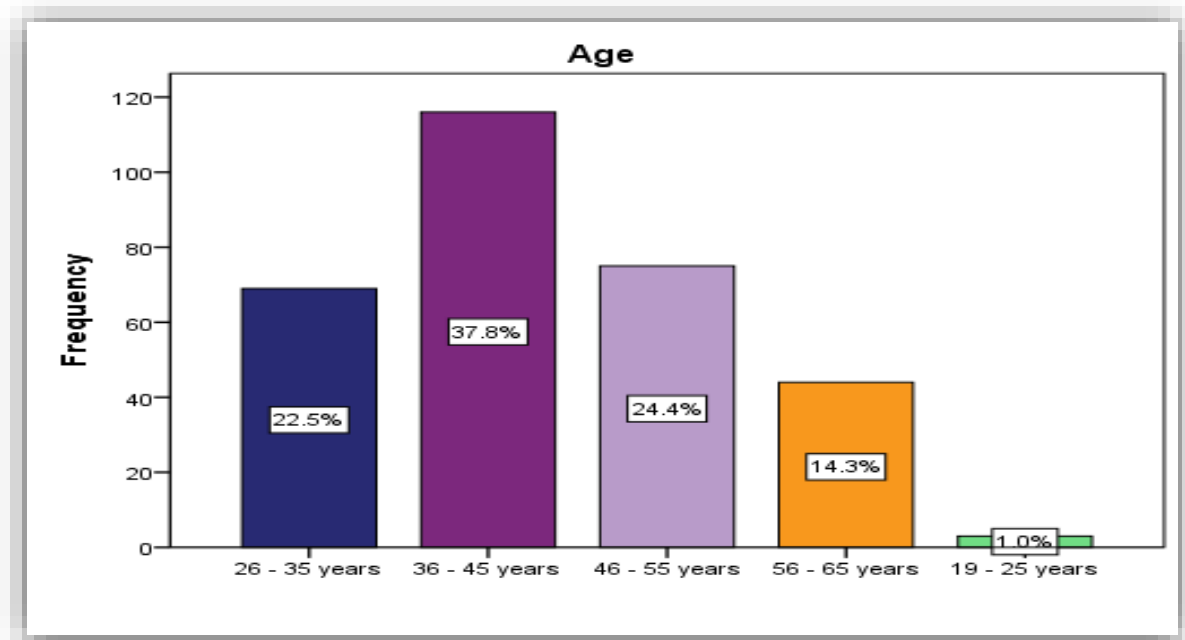
Table 8.3 indicates that 22.5% of the respondents' ages ranged from 26-35 years, 37.8% were of ages ranging from 36-45 years, 24.4% were between 46-55 years, and 14.3% were between 56-65 years, while 1.0% was between 19-25 years old. These results indicate that the majority of the respondents were between 36-45 years (37.8%) followed by those between 46-55 years (24.4%). This shows that most of the respondents were born and raised during the apartheid era, therefore could be beneficial in the examination of SOC in this study.

Table 8.3 Distribution of respondents by age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	26 - 35 years	69	22.5	22.5	22.5
	36 - 45 years	116	37.8	37.8	60.3
	46 - 55 years	75	24.4	24.4	84.7
	56 - 65 years	44	14.3	14.3	99.0
	19 - 25 years	3	1.0	1.0	100.0
	Total	307	100.0	100.0	

To clarify further, the bar chart below (Figure 8.2) is presented to display the percentage distributions of participants by age.

Figure 8.2 Bar chart presentations of respondents by age



8.3.3 Marital status

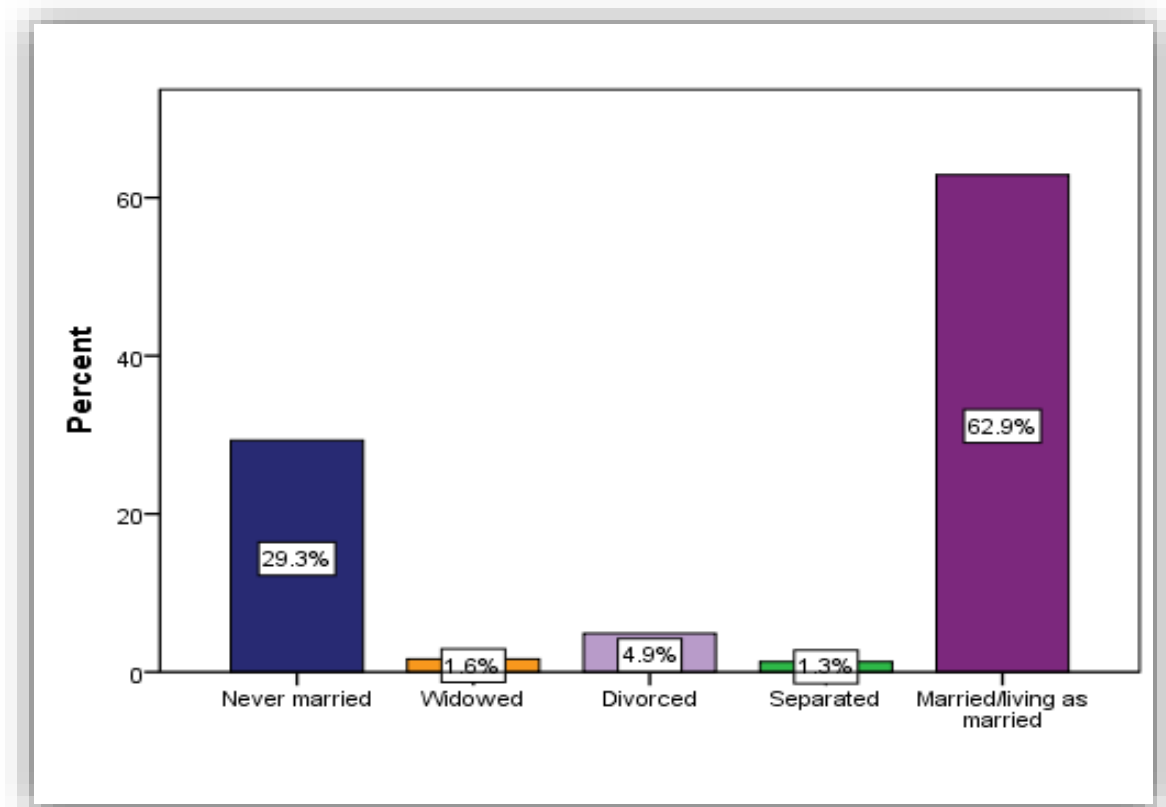
Table 8.4 presents the percentage distribution of respondents by marital status. It shows that 29.3% of the respondents were never married, 5% were widowed, 15% were divorced, 4% were separated and 63% were either married or living as married. The table indicates that the majority of the respondents (63%) were married or living as married.

Table 8.4 Distribution of respondents by marital status

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never married	90	29.3	29.3	29.3
Widowed	5	1.6	1.6	30.9
Divorced	15	4.9	4.9	35.8
Separated	4	1.3	1.3	37.1
Married/living as married	193	62.9	62.9	100.0
Total	307	100.0	100.0	

The bar chart in Figure 8.3 below is presented to provide more clarity to the distribution of participants in percentages.

Figure 8.3 Bar chart presentations of the distributions of respondents by marital status

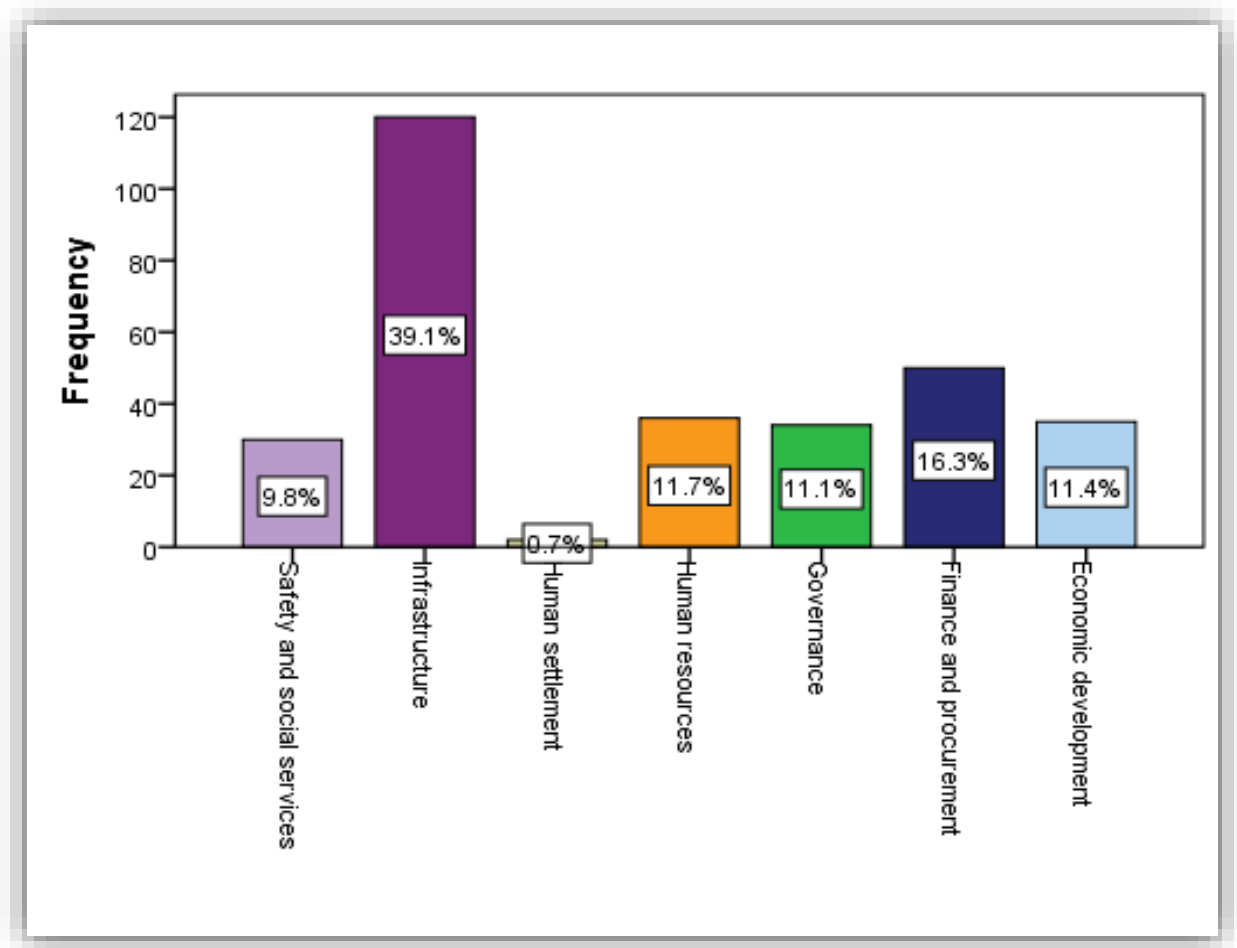


This could be significant in analysing the relational tension and absence of spousal support and their implication of the achievement of satisfaction with family situation in this study.

8.3.4 Clusters

Figure 8.4 shows the presentation of respondents according to the clusters in which they work at the municipality in the South African public sector. Thirty respondents (30) representing 9.8% of all participants worked in the Safety & Social Services cluster, 120 representing 39.1% worked in Infrastructure, two representing 0.7% worked in Human Settlements, 36 representing 11.7%, worked in Human Resources, 34 representing 11.1%, 50 representing 16.3% and 35 representing 11.4% worked in Governance, Finance and Procurement, and Economic Development respectively. This distribution of participants by the clusters wherein they worked indicates that the majority of the respondents were from the Infrastructure cluster while the rest were spread across Finance and Procurement, Human Resources, Economic Development, Governance and Safety and Social Services, presented here in their ranking. The fact that only two respondents indicated Human Settlements may not be surprising due to the fact that the Human Settlements and Infrastructure clusters became merged shortly before the commencement of data collection. This also could account for the reason why the majority of the respondents came from Infrastructure. The municipality is a service delivery arm of the government required to provide services majorly in the area of Infrastructure and Human Settlements, hence it has in its employment many employees in the Infrastructure and Human Settlements cluster. Figure 8.4 displays the frequency distribution of participants in this study according to their clusters as shown below.

Figure 8.4 Distribution of participants by cluster



8.3.5 Educational qualification

Educational qualifications of respondents were broken down into seven levels namely National Certificate, National Diploma, and National 1st Degree, Honours Degree, professional qualification, Master’s Degree and Doctorate Degree. Table 8.4 below presents the frequency distribution of respondents in line with their educational qualifications. Out of the 307 respondents, 84, representing 27.4% of the participants, had National Certificates, 99 of them (32.2%) held National Diploma qualifications, 48 representing 15.6% held National 1st degrees while 33 (10.7%) had Honours Degrees, 23 held a Master’s Degree and three held Doctorate Degrees representing 7.5% and 1.0% respectively. The summation of those that held degrees and professional qualifications was 124 representing 40.39% of the respondents while the

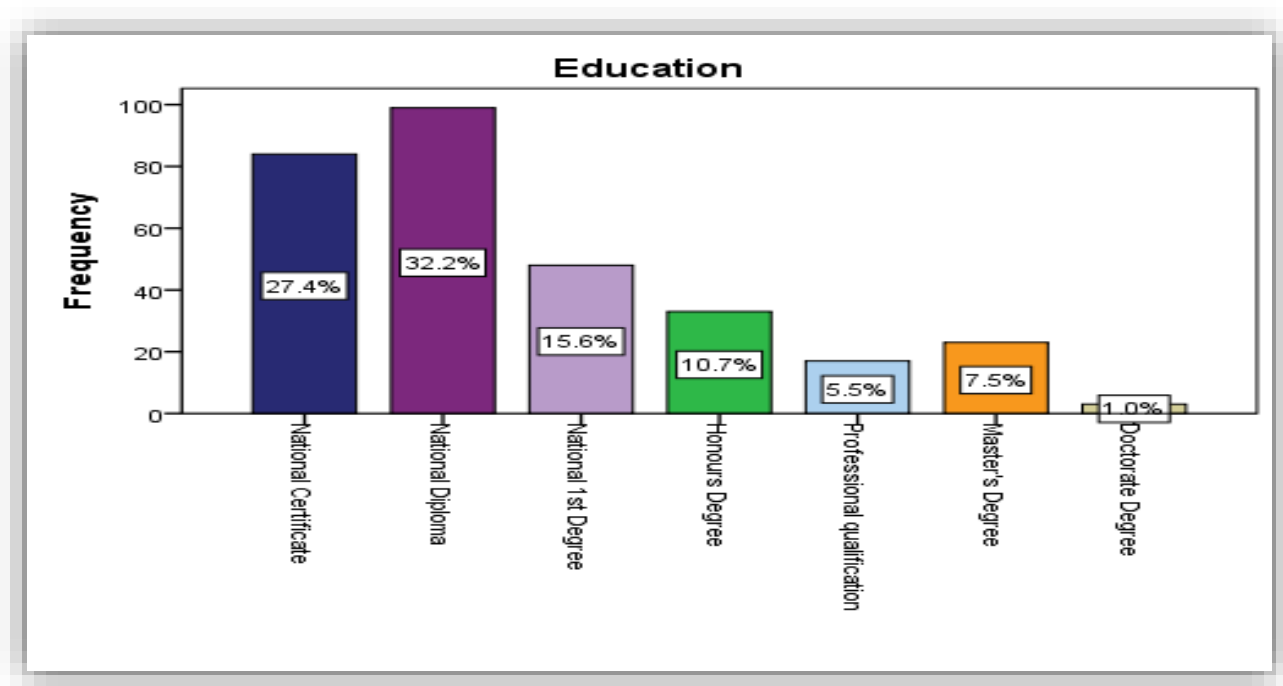
majority of the employees held National Diplomas. This suggests that the municipality engages human skills and proficiency in technical and technological know-how in achieving her objectives. This could also account for the reason why all the questionnaires that were returned were properly completed with no exclusion.

Table 8.5 Distribution of participants by educational qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid National Certificate	84	27.4	27.4	27.4
National Diploma	99	32.2	32.2	59.6
National 1st Degree	48	15.6	15.6	75.2
Honours Degree	33	10.7	10.7	86.0
Professional qualification	17	5.5	5.5	91.5
Master's Degree	23	7.5	7.5	99.0
Doctorate Degree	3	1.0	1.0	100.0
Total	307	100.0	100.0	

Figure 8.5 below is included for the purpose of clarifying and graphically presenting the frequency distribution of participants on the basis of their educational qualifications.

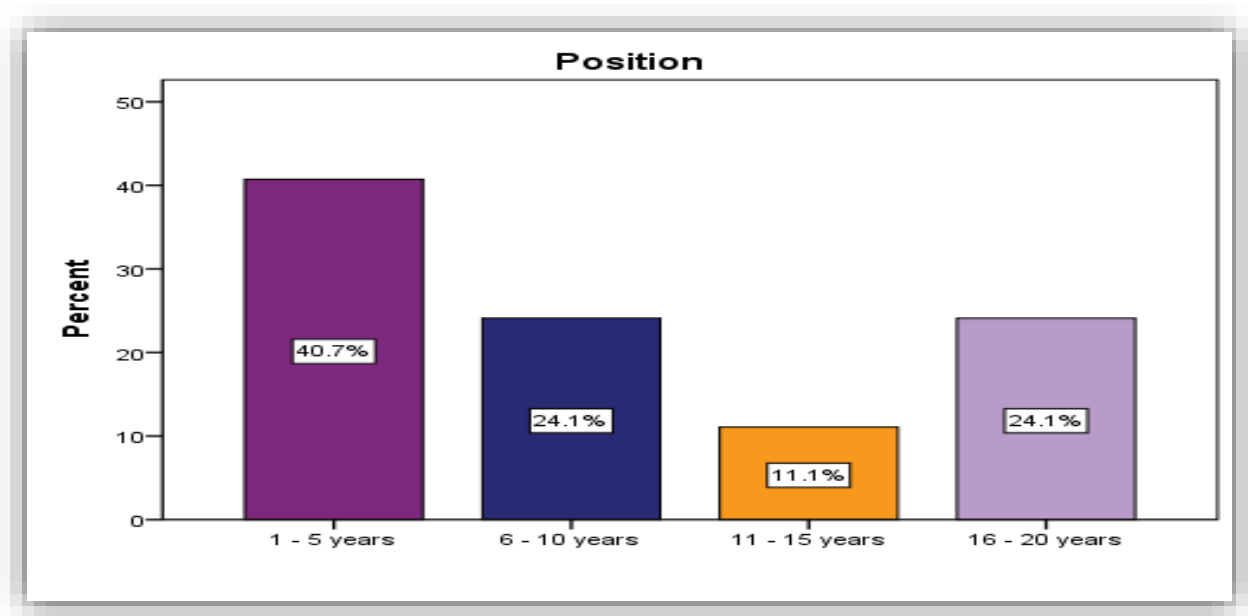
Figure 8.5 Bar chart showing distributions of participants by educational qualification



8.3.6 Number of years in position

As shown in the bar chart in Figure 8.6 presenting the frequency distribution of participants on the basis of the number of years they have been working at the municipality, most of the employees have put in one to five years in their present work at the municipality. It indicates that 125 respondents representing 40.7% of the total responses have been working at the municipality for the period ranging between one and five years. A total of 74 representing 24.1% worked in the municipality for six to 10 years while 34 representing 11.1% had been working for the municipality for a period of 11 to 15 years. A total of 74 others representing 24.1% had been in the municipality's employment for 16 to 20 years. From this outcome, it could be said that a total of 182 out of the 307 had worked for the municipality for periods ranging from six to 20 years representing 59.28%. This could mean that the level of employee turnover at the municipality is low, possibly due to benefits ranging from job security, opportunity to improve professionally and academically or provision of good incentives to encourage employee retention. Below is a graphical representation of the distribution of respondents on the basis of the number of years that they have worked for the municipality.

Figure 8.6 Distribution of participants by number of years in present position

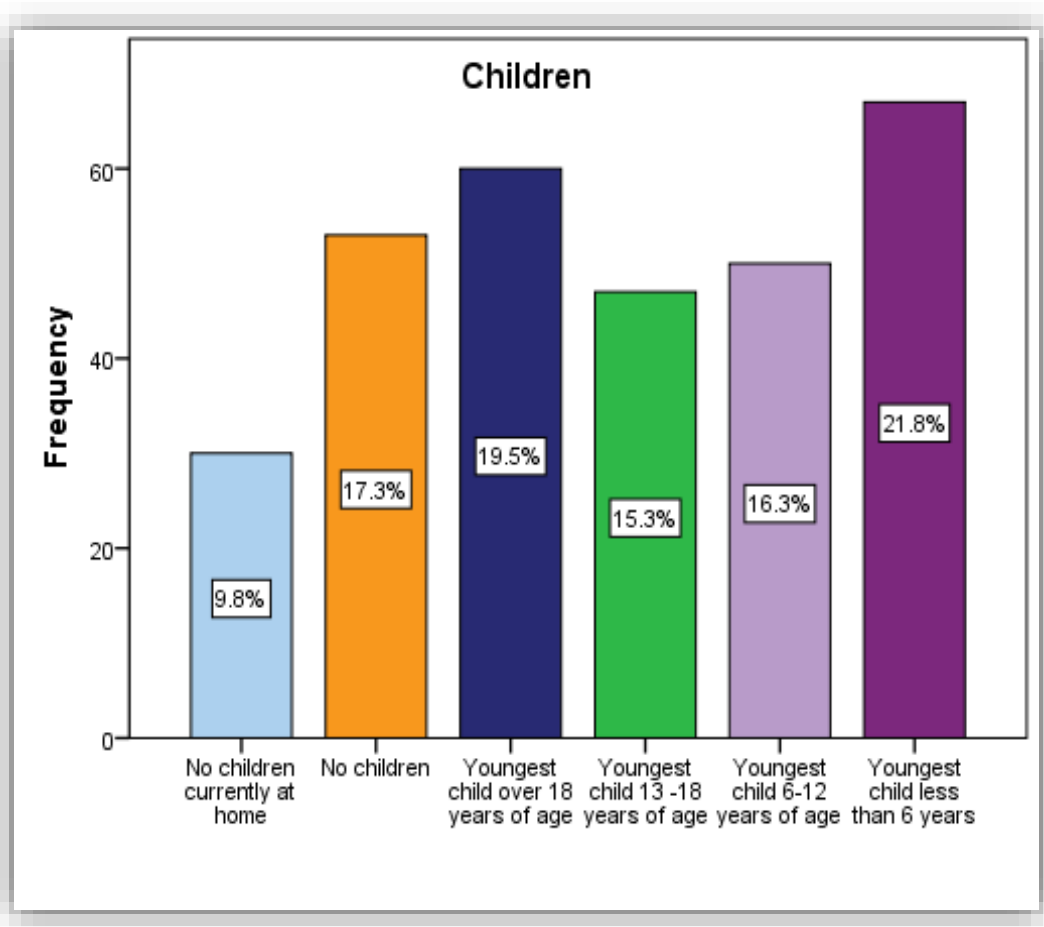


8.3.7 Number of children

The frequency distribution of respondents on the basis of the number of children that they have is presented in Figure 8.7 below. A total of 30 (9.8%) of the respondents had no children currently living at home, while 53 (17.3%) had no children at all. A total of 60 (19.5%) had

youngest children of 18 years and above, 47 (15.3%) had youngest children whose ages were between 13 and 18 years while 50 (16.3%) had youngest children whose ages range from 6 to 12 years. Finally, 67 employees representing 21.8% of the responses had children younger than six years. When the number of respondents whose youngest children were between ages 0 and 12 years were added together, a total of 117 respondents representing 38.1% was recorded. This implies that the majority of the respondents had toddlers and very young children at home which could be stressful. Some of the stresses associated with the children of this age group include sleeping disruptions at night, scattering of house, need to take them to and pick them up from crèche and school, which may disrupt work engagements. These employees may need lots of spousal support as well as management support in coping with challenges at home and the effect of the attendant challenges from home on their work. A graphical representation of the number of children that respondents have is presented below.

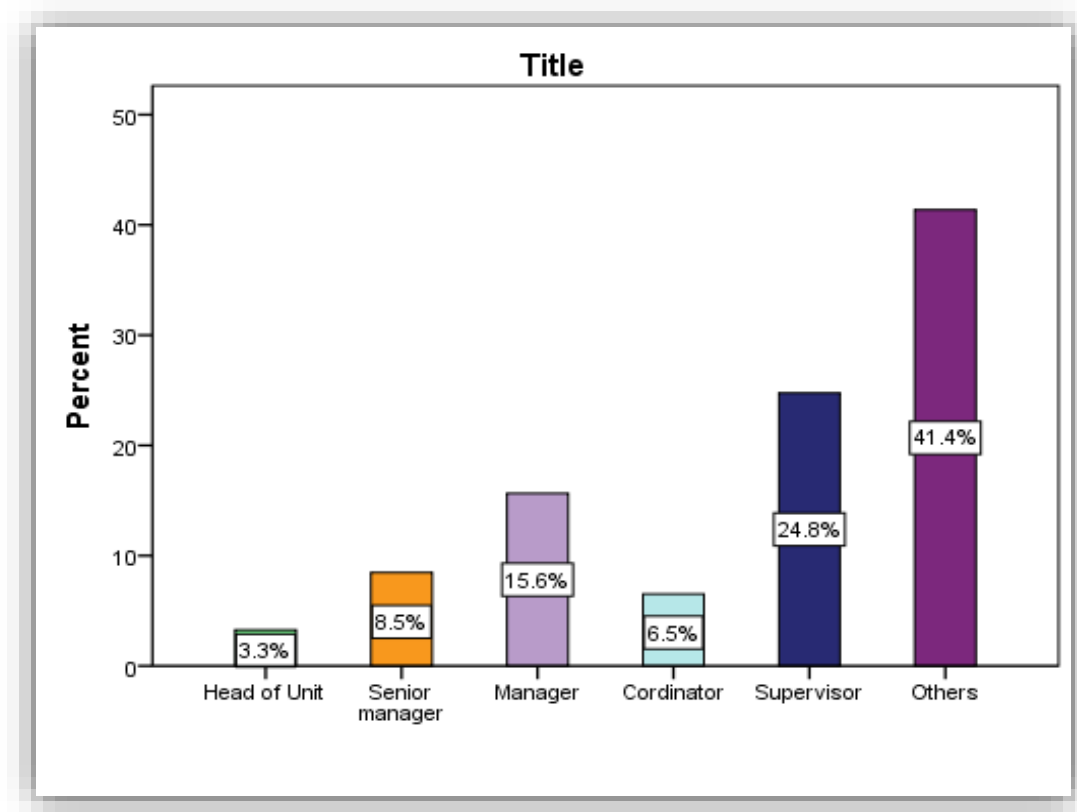
Figure 8.7 Distribution of participants by number of children



8.3.8 Job title

Figure 8.8 presents the frequency distribution of respondents on the basis of their job title at the municipality in the South African public sector. Ten of them representing 3.3% were heads of units, 26 (i.e. 8.5%) were senior managers, 48 (15.6%) were managers, while 20 and 76 others representing 6.5% and 24.8% were coordinators and supervisors respectively. The ‘others’ category which includes artisans, technicians and administrators were 127 in number representing about 41.4% of the total respondents. This suggests that the others category of employees was more accessible to the researcher. The graphical presentation of the distribution of respondents by job title is displayed below.

Figure 8.8 Distribution of respondents by job title



8.4 Examination of research questions

The researcher formulated questions in this study which are consecutively analysed in the following sections. This is essential in providing answers to the stated problems and meeting the main objectives of this study.

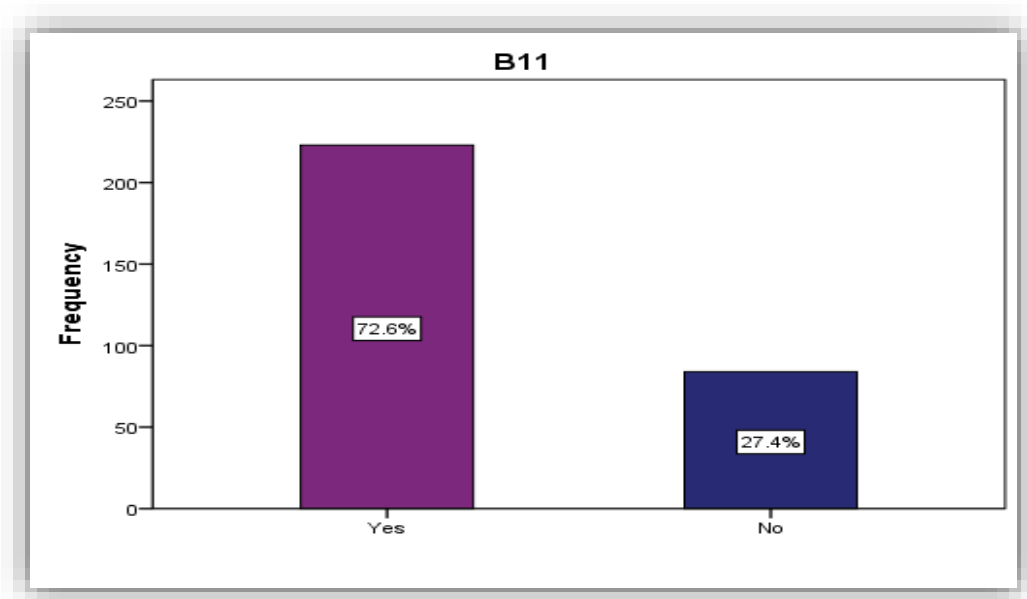
8.4.1 Ascertaining the work-life balance strategies (WLBS) in place at the municipality

This title refers to research question one in the present study. As stated in section 5.10, there is a wide range of WLBS that organisations practice. To verify the WLBS adopted by the municipality, a representation of key WLBS recognised in earlier studies on WLBS were adapted to the purpose of this study. It was an initial 13-item WLBS scale, but three items; B1.6, B1.7 and B1.8 were deleted after Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). The EFA outlined the remaining items in two categories which were classified as Family Strategies (FS) and Work Strategies (WS), each having five items respectively. Participants were asked to respond on a two-response scale (1=Yes, 2 = No) to the two dimensional scales (FS and WS scales). Items on these scales include stress management, domestic relationship counselling, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, career break, job share and telecommuting. The responses from the data collected on the items from FS (B1.1, B1.2, B1.3, B1.4 and B1.5) and WS (B1.9, B1.10, B1.11, B1.12 and B1.13) examining the availability of WLBS at the municipality are presented through Figures 8.9, 8.10, 8.11, 8.12, 8.13, 8.14, 8.15, 8.16, 8.17 and 8.18 below.

Stress management

This sub-head pertains to the first item (B1.1) on the FS scale adapted for this study. It sought to determine if stress management was adopted by the municipality as a WLBS to assist employees cope with work and family stressors. The outcome is presented in Figure 8.9 showing that 223 respondents representing 72.6% of the total responses agree that stress management as a WLBS is available for use to employees at the municipality. Eighty four (84) others representing 27.4% seemingly were of the view that stress management was not a WLBS practiced at the municipality.

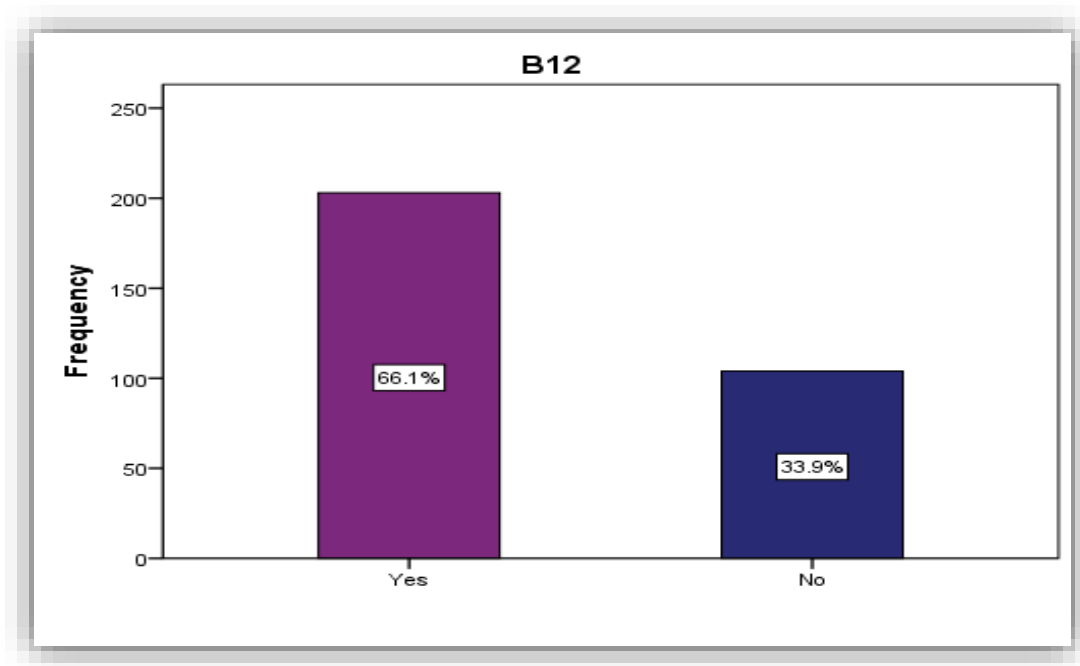
Figure 8.9 Distribution of responses to availability of stress management



Domestic relationship counselling

To ascertain if domestic relationship counselling is available at the municipality to assist employees in coping with their relational challenges, this item (B1.2) was included in the scale. It measured the availability of domestic relationship counselling as a WLBS adopted by the municipality under study. The outcome presented in Figure 8.10 indicates that 203 respondents representing 66.1% of the total responses signified that domestic relationship strategy was adopted as a WLBS at the municipality while 104 (33.9%) others had a contrary opinion. This outcome is presented graphically in the bar chart below.

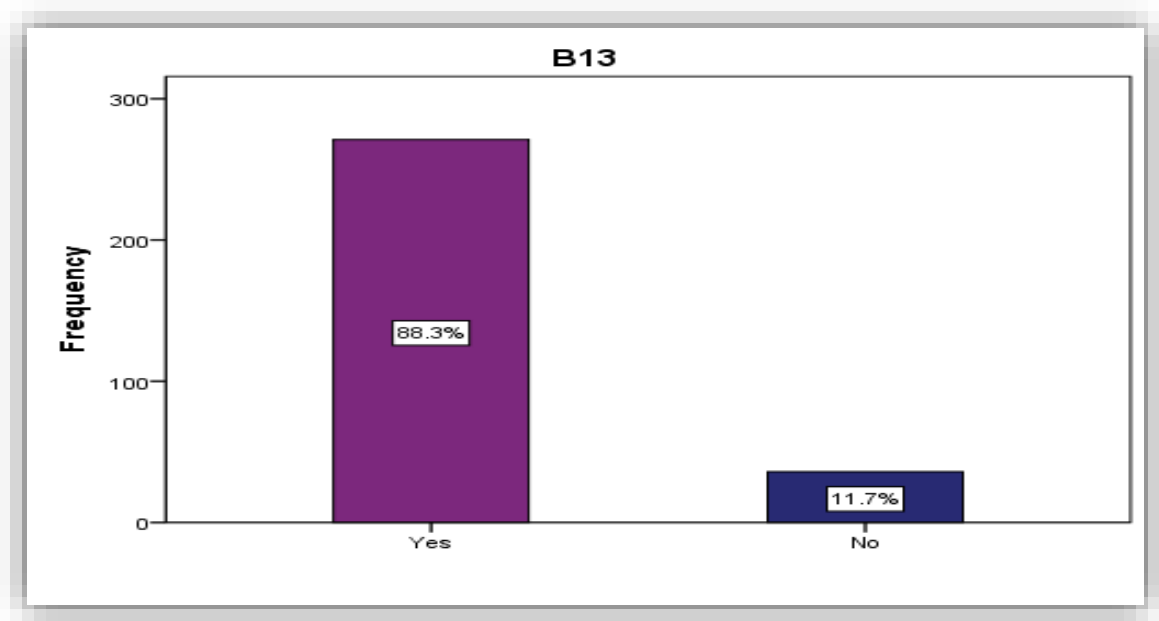
Figure 8.10 Distribution of responses to availability of domestic relationship counselling



Substance/alcohol abuse counselling

In the FS scale, this item is presented as B.13 to ascertain if substance/alcohol abuse counselling is available to employees as a WLBS to assist them in managing relevant issues. The vast majority of 271 respondents representing 88.3% of the total responses indicated that substance/alcohol abuse counselling was adopted by the municipality as a WLBS to assist employees in coping with challenges relating to substance and alcohol abuse. This result is presented pictorially in Figure 8.11 below.

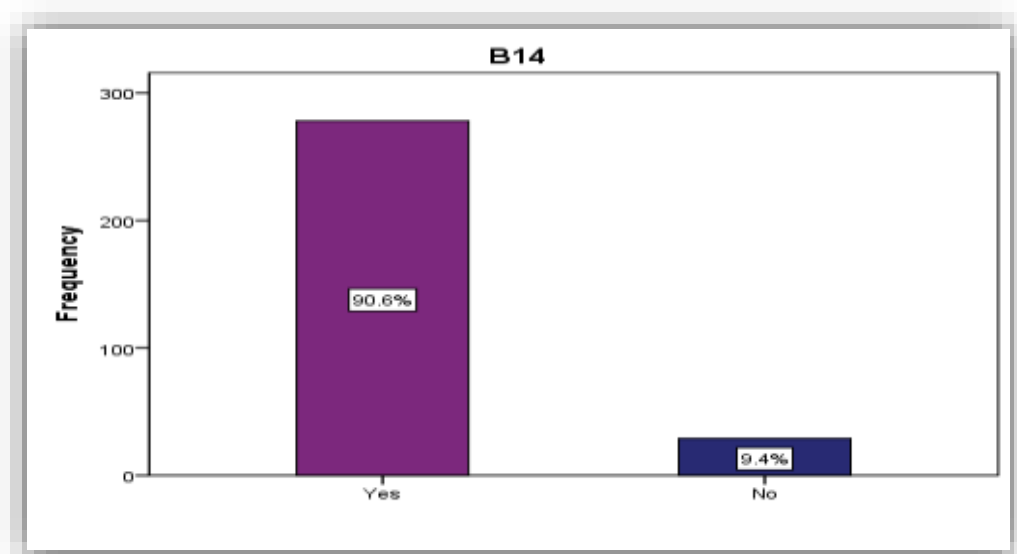
Figure 8.11 Distribution of responses to availability of substance/alcohol abuse counselling



HIV/AIDS counselling

This item is denoted on the FS scale as B13 to determine the availability of HIV/AIDS counselling as a WLBS at the municipality. The vast majority of respondents that coded “yes” totalled 278 which represented 90.6% of the total responses while a mere 9.4% representing 29 respondents coded “no”. This implies that HIV/AIDS counselling was obviously adopted as a WLBS at the municipality. The result is displayed in Figure 8.12 below.

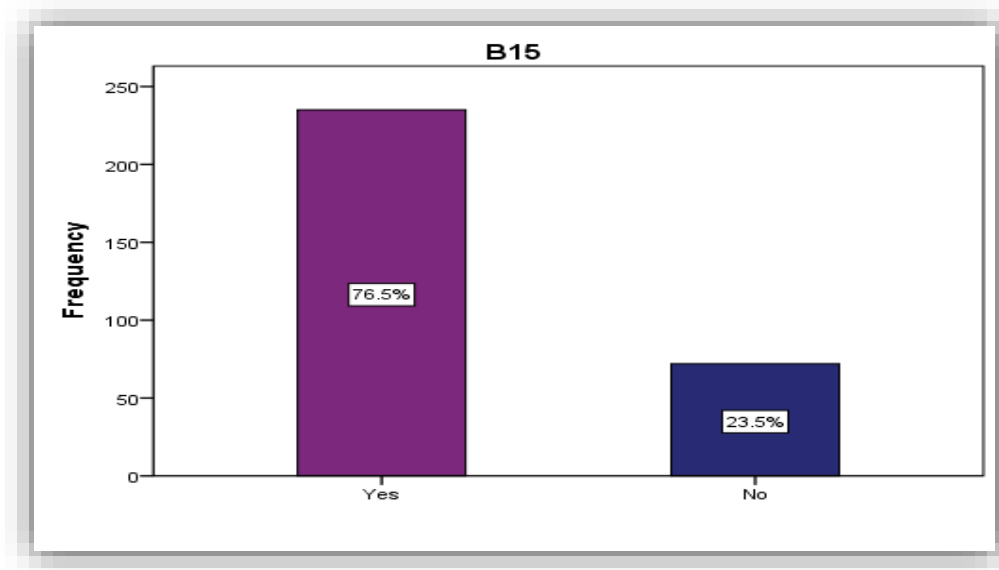
Figure 8.12 Distribution of responses to availability of HIV/AIDS counselling



Financial/debt counselling

This sub-head refers to the item designated as B15 on the FS scale designed for this study to ascertain if the municipality adopted financial/debt counselling as a WLBS to assist employees in coping with the finance/debt related issues. The outcome displayed on Figure 8.13 shows that 76.5% of the respondents were of the opinion that financial/debt counselling was adopted by the municipality as a WLBS to aid employees in managing their finance and debt matters. Below is a pictorial presentation of this result.

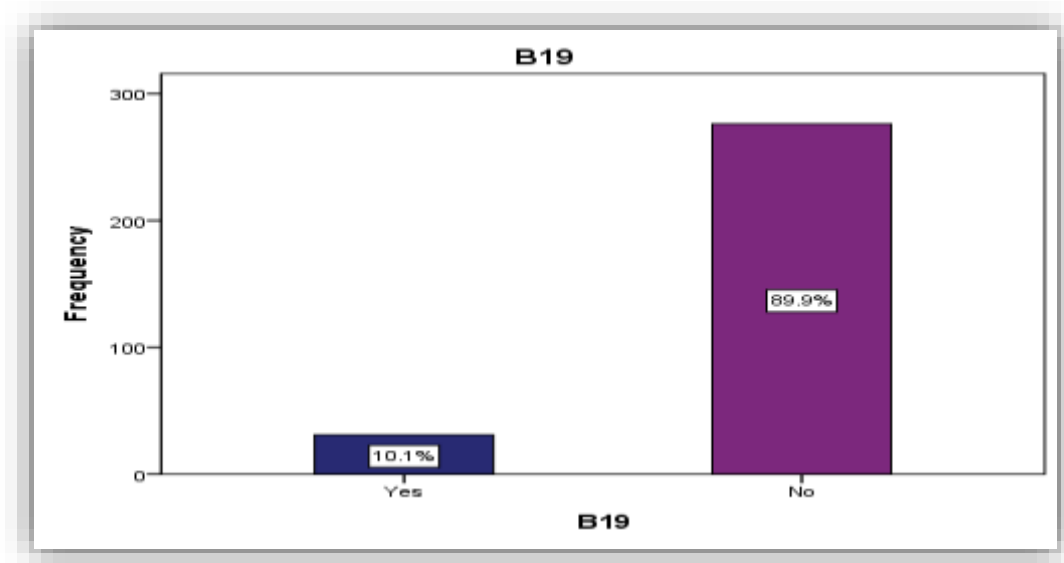
Figure 8.13 Distribution of responses to availability of financial/debt counselling



Work from home on an ad hoc basis

This first item on the WS scale denoted as B1.9 explored the frequency distribution of respondents that agreed or did not agree that the municipality has adopted the strategy for employees to work from home on an ad hoc basis as a WLBS. Two hundred and seventy six respondents showcasing 89.9% of the total responses agreed that the municipality has not adopted work from home on an ad hoc basis as a WLBS while the remaining thirty one representing 10.1% were of the opinion that the strategy is in place at the municipality. Obviously, Figure 8.14 below presents the result that majority of the respondents do not agree that work from home on an ad hoc basis is a WLBS implemented at the municipality. Figure 8.14 presents the result of the responses of participants with respect to work from home on an ad hoc basis.

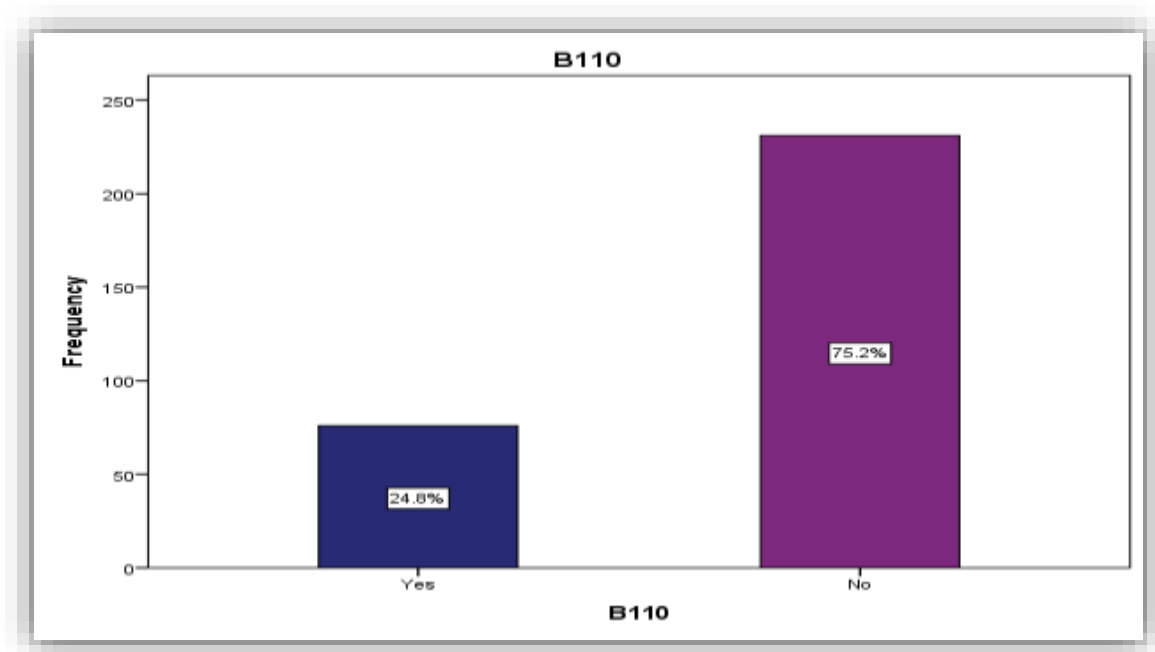
Figure 8.14 Distribution of responses to availability of work from home on an ad hoc basis



Job share

This involves the sharing of a specific job between two employees dividing a particular job between two employees (See details in 3.4.1.1.c). Job share is the second item on the WS scale represented as B1.10 on the scale. The result presented pictorially in Figure 8.15 shows that the municipality did not implement job share as a WLBS because most respondents were of this opinion. A total of 231 participants representing 75.2% of the total responses coded “no” to indicate that job share was not in place at the municipality to assist employees in managing their work-life challenges. Below in Figure 8.15 is a display of the result.

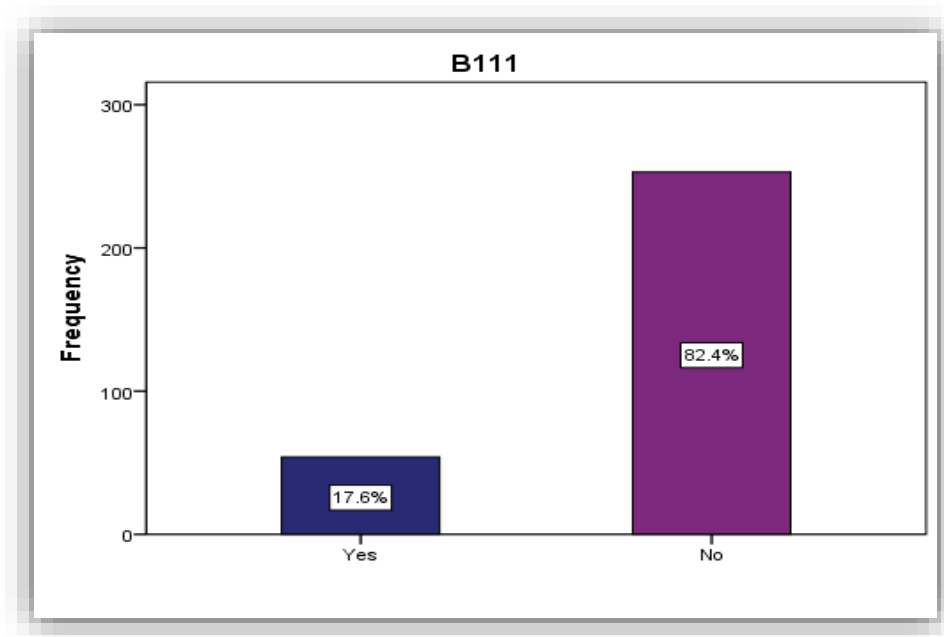
Figure 8.15 Distribution of responses to availability of job share



Compressed work week

As explained in 3.4.1.1.b, compressed work week involves the engagement of an employee with work for longer periods in a lesser number of days of the week rather than the usual (traditional) 8am to 9pm daily for a five-day-work week (Wadsworth et al., 2010). A third on the WS scale is compressed work week designated as B1.11 on the scale. The item assessed the availability of a compressed work week as a WLBS at the municipality. The result shows that most employees did not agree that the municipality has put in place this strategy to assist employees in coping with their work-life issues. A total of 253 respondents (i.e. 82.4%) coded “no” to indicate that the municipality did not have in place a compressed work week as a WLBS, while the remaining 54 respondents were of a contrary opinion. The respondents that coded “yes” represented 17.6% of the total responses. Figure 8.15 below presents the outcome in a bar chart.

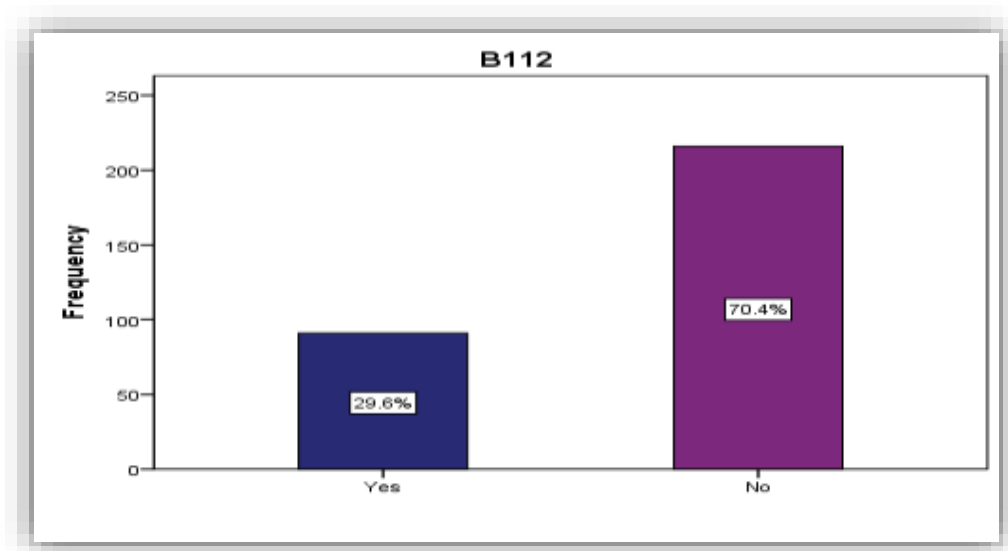
Figure 8.16 Distribution of responses to availability of compressed work week



Telecommuting

This arrangement offers a level of autonomy to employees, which affords them the opportunity to more effectively balance work and life needs. This is because of the provision of opportunity for employees to work from a distant site, for instance, a home office, via computer and electronic technology (see 3.4.1.1.d). Telecommuting is designated by B1.12 on the WS scale to ascertain if the municipality has adopted the strategy (telecommuting) as a WLBS to assist employees in coping with their work and life difficulties. The result shows that 216 respondents coded “no” while 91 others coded “yes” representing 70.4% and 29.6% respectively of the total responses to the item. Figure 8.16 displays the pictorial presentation of participants’ responses to this item.

Figure 8.17 Distribution of responses to availability of telecommuting

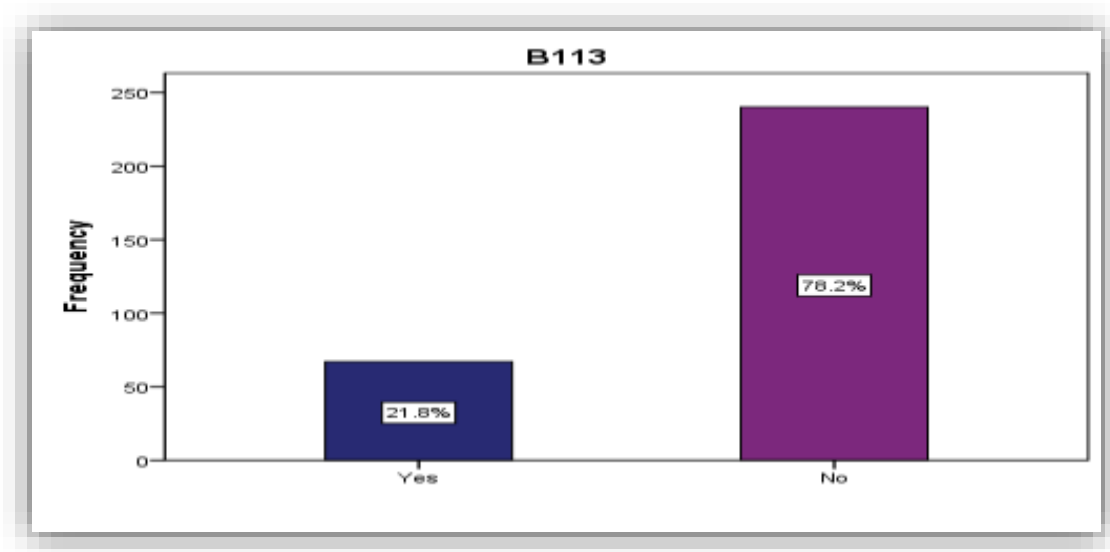


Career break

Career break is a type of career planning that assists women to take time off work to nurture their young ones after utilising maternity leave. It may involve the allowance of reduction of working hours and salary for a specific period of time. It is a temporary measure (K. K. Ali, 2014).

The fifth and last item on the WS scale is career break denoted as B1.13 on the scale. The outcome of the responses to the scale signified that 78.2% of the respondents were of the opinion that career break has not been adopted by the municipality as a WLBS while 21.8% of the respondents agreed that it has been adopted as a WLBS. Figure 8.16 presents the graphical representation of the outcome of the responses to this item.

Figure 8.18 Distribution of responses to availability of career break



In answering research question one, the results displayed in Figures 8.9 to 8.17 show that most respondents were of the view that Family (Balance) Strategies were in place. This is confirmed by 72.6% “yes” responses to stress management, 66.1% positive responses to domestic relationship counselling, and 88.3% positive responses to substance/alcohol abuse counselling. Furthermore, 90.6% and 76.5% responses to HIV/AIDS counselling and financial/debt counselling respectively were positive. On the other hand, most respondents were of the opinion that work strategies were not in place at the municipality. Responses to work-strategy items, work from home on ad hoc basis, job share, and compressed work week show 89.9%, 75.2% and 82.4% in the negative showing that the municipality had not adopted these. Likewise, 70.4% and 78.2% represent “no” responses to telecommuting and career break respectively. These results indicate that research question one has been answered in this study.

8.4.2 The extent to which work-life balance strategies (WLBS) contribute to the wellness programme (WP).

The subhead refers to research question number two in this study. To verify the extent to which WLBS are part of WP, the *Work-life Balance Strategies Scale (WLBSS)* comprising work strategies (WS) and Family (Balance) Strategies (FS) were adopted in this study to measure WLBS on two distinct dimensions, while a *Work-life Wellness Scale (WLWS)* adapted to this study was utilised in measuring important aspects of the WP that are pertinent to the study. Research question two was: *To what extent do work-life balance strategies contribute to the wellness programme?* The data collected from respondents to the survey on items B12 (from family (life) strategies), B111 (work strategies), B23 and B211 (items from the WLW scale on

work and family issues) assessed the input of WLBS to WP as shown in Tables 8.7, 8.8, 8.9 and 8.10 below.

The municipality has put in place domestic relationship counselling as a WLBS

This caption depicts the second item (B12) on the WLBS scale adapted to the present study. It was based on a two response scale of “Yes” and “No” examining the WLBS in place at the municipality. The results presented in Table 8.6 show that 203 respondents representing 66.1% of the total responses agree that domestic relationship counselling was adopted by the municipality as a WLBS while the remaining 33.9% were of the opinion that the municipality did not adopt domestic relationship counselling as a WLBS. The feedback on this item yielded a mean of 1.34 and standard deviation of .474 further clarifying the opinion of respondents that the municipality had made domestic relationship counselling available to employees as a WLBS.

Table 8.6 Domestic relationship counselling adopted as a WLBS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid Yes	203	66.1	66.1	66.1
No	104	33.9	33.9	100.0
Total	307	100.0	100.0	

The municipality has put in place a compressed work week as a WLBS

This title concerns item B111 on the WLBS scale adapted to this research. It examines the adoption of compressed work week as a WLBS in the municipality. The feedback on this item presented in Table 8.7 shows that 253 respondents representing 82.4% of the total responses were of the view that a compressed work week was not adopted by the municipality as a WLBS. A total of 54 respondents representing 17.6% reported that the municipality had put in place a compressed work week as a WLBS. The outcome of the responses on this item produced a mean of 1.82 and standard deviation of .381; clearly asserting that majority of the respondents were of the view that the organisation had not adopted a compressed work week as a WLBS. The result is shown on the table below.

Table 8.7 Compressed work week adopted as a WLBS

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid Yes	54	17.6	17.6	17.6
No	253	82.4	82.4	100.0
Total	307	100.0	100.0	

Use of a wellness programme as a WLBS to address work-related challenges

This heading associates to the third item on the WLW scale adapted to this study. It examines the use of a wellness programme in addressing work and family related challenges in the survey instrument. From the results presented in Table 8.8, the majority of the respondents represented by 32.2% (99 respondents) took a neutral stand with respect to the question, while 67 respondents representing 21.8% of the participants disagreed strongly and 64 others (20.8) also disagreed that the wellness programme assisted them in managing their work-related challenges. A total of 66 participants (21.5%) agreed that the wellness programme helped them in managing their work-related issues and the remaining 3.6% strongly agreed to the statement. The feedback on the item yielded a mean of 2.64 and standard deviation of 1.147. The results indicate that over 42% of the participants expressed the view that the wellness programme did not assist them in coping with their work-related challenges, while about 37% others agreed to the statement. Table 8.8 below presents the findings from this item.

Table 8.8 Wellness programme addresses work-related issues

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid Strongly disagree	67	21.8	21.8	21.8
Disagree	64	20.8	20.8	42.7
Neutral	99	32.2	32.2	74.9
Agree	66	21.5	21.5	96.4
Strongly agree	11	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total	307	100.0	100.0	

Use of a wellness programme as a WLBS to address family related issues

This title relates to the 11th item on the WLW scale measuring the use of a wellness programme as a WLBS to address work and family related issues. The outcome presented in Table 8.9 indicates that 23.8% of the responses strongly disagreed that the wellness programme helped them in coping with their relational issues and 20.5% of the others also disagreed with the statement. 104 respondents representing 33.9% did not express any view on the statement by taking a neutral stand while 19.2% and 2.6% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the wellness programme helped them in coping with their relational challenges. The mean and standard deviation derived from this item were 2.56 and 1.125 respectively. This result shows that 44.3% of the total responses disagree with the statement while 21.8% agree that the wellness programme assisted them in managing their relational challenges. Below is a tabular presentation of the outcomes of the responses to this item.

Table 8.9 Wellness programme addresses family related issues

	Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid Strongly disagree	73	23.8	23.8	23.8
Disagree	63	20.5	20.5	44.3
Neutral	104	33.9	33.9	78.2
Agree	59	19.2	19.2	97.4
Strongly agree	8	2.6	2.6	100.0
Total	307	100.0	100.0	

The descriptive statistics on two items each from the WLBS and WLWS respectively presented in Tables 8.6 to 8.9 supply answers to research question two. These results suggest that work strategies contribute more significantly to a wellness programme than Family (Balance) Strategies.

8.4.3 Effect of work and family stressors on SOC

In this study, research question three sought to determine the effect of work and family stressors on SOC. To determine this, the *Work Stressor Scale (WS scale)*, a three dimensional scale comprising function vagueness/role conflict scale, job autonomy scale and job control scale was used to measure work stressors on three distinct dimensions. The Cronbach alpha reported in this study for these scales are: 0.863, 0.870 and 0.870 respectively and were considered appropriate in accordance with George and Mallery (2003). The *Family Stressor Scale (FS scale)* also a 3-dimensional scale consisting of Child Misbehaviour Scale (CMS), Parental

Workload/Relational Tension Scale (PW/RTS) and Absence of Spousal Support Scale (ASS) was used in assessing family stressors. Considering the Cronbach's alpha reported in this study for these scales at 0.983, 0.897 and 0.919 respectively, they were judged suitable per the rule of thumb (George & Mallery, 2003). The *SOC-13 version of Orientation to Life Questionnaire* was used in measuring SOC, Cronbach alpha observed in this study was 0.795 which is also suitable when compared to previous studies (Vastamäki et al., 2009). Data collected from field work on the effect of work and family stressors on SOC are displayed in Table 8.9, being items extracted from the SOC scale (D6), WS scale (E317) and FS scale (F15).

From Table 8.10 below, responses on the effect of work and family stressors on SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector are displayed. To item D6 on the SOC scale examining how participants view their situation at work and/or at home with intention of ascertaining the way they attach meaning or comprehend situations, the majority of the respondents reported that they very seldom or never felt that they were in an unfamiliar situation and did not know what to do. This majority represents 28.7% (88 participants) while 25.4% (78) of the others rarely felt unfamiliar and did not know what to do. A total of 16.0% (49) of the responses indicated that they sometimes, not often, felt that they were in an unfamiliar situation and did not know what to do, 11.4% (35) of the others were neutral about the statement, while 13.4% (41) of the others were of the view that they sometimes often felt that they were in an unfamiliar situation and knew not what to do. About 5.3% (2.0% + 3.3%) of the others reported that they very often/usually often respectively felt that they were in an unfamiliar situation and did not know what to do. The outcome of the responses on the item yielded a mean of 5.27 and standard deviation of 1.609. These outcomes indicate that about 70.1% of the respondents felt that they were in a familiar situation and knew what to do while only 18.5% (excluding those who were neutral to the statement) were of the opinion that they were in an unfamiliar situation and did not know what to do.

The work stressor item E317 was *I have to work under vague directives or orders*. Interestingly, 85 respondents representing 27.7% were of the view that the statement was false and 21% asserted that the statement was very false, however, 10.01% expressed the view that the statement was somewhat false. 53 respondents did not express any view about the statement by taking a neutral stand. Conversely, 11.1% and 9.1% were of the view that the statement was somewhat true and true respectively while 3.6% affirmed that the statement was very true. The responses on this item produced a mean and standard deviation of 3.111 and 1.7696 respectively. These results demonstrate that about 58.71% of the respondents were of

the opinion that they do not work under vague directives or orders at the municipality while 23.8% (excluding 17.3% that took a neutral stand) saw some truth in the statement.

To ascertain the effect of the challenging demand of placing oneself and career first vs one's spouse putting themselves and their careers first, 28.7% of the respondents claimed that it causes no stress, 22.1% were of the view that it causes minimal stress while 26.1% of the others did not express any views about the item. On the other hand, 18.6% of the responses to the question claimed that it causes some stress to decide on putting oneself and career first against their spouses putting themselves and their careers first. Minimal response from 4.6% of the respondents indicated that the dilemma causes high stress. The mean and standard deviation reported from the item are 2.482 and 1.2136 respectively. Summarily, 50.8% did not consider the decision as stressful while 23.2% were of the view that some degree of stress is involved in making the decision to put themselves first in terms of their work vs their spouses putting themselves first in terms of their work.

Finally, 70.1% of the respondents to item D6 (SOC scale) felt that they were in a familiar situation and knew what to do while only 18.5% (excluding those who were neutral to the statement) were of the opinion that they were in an unfamiliar situation and did not know what to do. The results from item E317 (WS scale) demonstrate that about 58.71% of the respondents were of the opinion that they do not work under vague directives or orders at the municipality while 23.8% (excluding 17.3% that took a neutral stand) saw some truth in the statement. Finally, the outcomes of the responses to item F15 (FS scale) indicate that 50.8% did not consider the decision as stressful while 23.2% were of the view that some degrees of stress are involved in making the decision to put themselves first in terms of their work vs their spouses putting themselves first in terms of their work.

Moreover more respondents (70.1%) indicated good SOC therefore, most of them (58.71%) were of the opinion that they did not work under vague directives, while 50.8% of the respondents did not consider making the decision to put themselves and their work first vs their spouse putting themselves and their work first as being stressful. Therefore, the findings demonstrate that there is an association between work and family stressors and SOC and answers to research question 3. The level of this association is examined using inferential statistics in section 8.5.3.

Table 8.10 Effect of work and family stressors on SOC

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Statement	1 Very often	2 Usually often	3 Sometime s often	4 Neutral	5 Sometimes not often	6 Rarely often	7. Very seldom or never	Mean	Std. Deviation
Do you have the feeling that you are in an unfamiliar situation and don't know what to do?	6 (2.0%)	10 (3.3%)	41 (13.4%)	35 (11.4%)	49 (16.0%)	78 (25.4%)	88 (28.7%)	5.27	1.609
I have to work under vague directives or orders.	Very false 65 (21.2%)	False 85 (27.7%)	Somewhat false 31 (10.01%)	Neutral 53 (17.3%)	Somewhat true 34 (11.1%)	True 28 (9.1%)	Very true 11 (3.6%)	3.111	1.7696
Putting yourself first in terms of work versus your spouse putting himself/herself first in terms of his/her work.	1 Causes no stress 88 (28.7%)	2 Causes minimal stress 68 (22.1%)	3 Undecided 80 (26.1%)	4 Causes some stress 57 (18.6%)	5 Causes high stress 14 (4.6%)			2.482	1.2136

8.4.4 Influence of work-life balance strategies on work and family stressors

Research question 4 assessed the influence of WLBS on work and family stressors. *The WLBS* was employed in WLBS on two distinct dimensions. Work stressors were measured using *WS scale*, a three dimensional scale, while family stressors were similarly assessed utilising *FS scale* also a three dimensional scale. The Cronbach alpha observed from these scales in the present study shown in Table 8.1 presented suitable values judging from the rule of thumb. The answers collected on items B22, E39 and F12 from the field work on the influence of WLBS on work and family stressors are displayed in Table 8.10.

It was discovered that 25.1% of the study respondents strongly disagreed that they made use of the WLBS in place at the municipality while 17.6% others disagreed with the statement. The majority of the responses from 89 respondents (29%) were neutral to the statement in this item, 23.8% agreed that they made use of the WLBS and the remaining 4.6% affirmed that they strongly agreed with the statement. The feedback received on this item yielded a mean of 2.65 and standard deviation of 1.218. These outcomes indicate that 42.7% respondents did not utilise the WLBS in addressing their work and family stressors while 28.4% others agreed that they made use of the WLBS.

However, the responses received in respect of the item E39 stating *I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it* shows that 30.3% of the respondents viewed the statement as false, 12.4% were of the opinion that the statement was very false and 12.7% indicated that the statement was somewhat false. Contrarily, 15.3% held the view that the statement was somewhat true, 8.5% were of the opinion that it was true while 8.8% agreed that it was very true, that they received assignments without the manpower to complete them. The remaining 12.1% took a neutral stand on the statement. The mean and standard deviation

produced from the item are 3.48 and 1.865 respectively. These outcomes demonstrate that 55.4% of the respondents disagreed that they received assignments without the manpower to complete them while 32.6% agreed that the statement was true, i.e. that they received assignments without commensurate manpower to complete them.

With respect to the family stressor item F12 assessing the effect of *spending most evenings on work-related activities versus spending most evenings with your family*, responses were provided in the following dimensions: 30.9% respondents indicated that no stress was caused to them as a result of spending most evenings on work-related activities rather than spending most evenings with their families, 22.8% opined that it caused minimal stress while 14.3% were undecided concerning the statement. On the other hand, 24.1% of the responses show that 74 respondents were of the view that it caused some stress and 7.8% others opined that the decision caused high stress. Mean and standard deviation produced from this item were 2.55 and 1.350 respectively. This feedback shows that 53.7% of the respondents were of the view that the decision to spend most evenings on work-related activities rather than spending most evenings with their families caused little or no stress; the reverse is the case with 31.9% others whose opinion was that the decision caused stress.

WLBS are designed to assist employees in coping with their work and family stressors. The findings from the items in Table 8.11 summarily demonstrate that the percentage of participants that used the WLBS was less (28.4%) than those that utilised the strategies (42.7%) in addressing their work and family stressors. Moreover, responses to the work stressor item (E39) assessing if respondents received assignments with commensurate manpower show that 55.4% of the respondents found the statement to be false while 32.6% agreed that the statement was true. Similarly, the family stressor item (F12) evaluating the effect of the decision to spend most evenings at work rather than home revealed that 53.7% of the respondents were of the opinion that it caused little or no stress and 31.9% were of the view that it caused stress.

Hence, these results show that there may be no association among WLBS in place at the municipality and the way employees cope with their work and family stressors, since the percentage of those that utilised the strategies was much lower than those that did not use them. Also, the high percentage rate of the responses that indicated that the statement that they received assignments without commensurate manpower was false (55.4%) could validate that there may be no association between work stressors and WLBS. Similarly, the 53.7% response

that spending most evenings at work rather than at home could be an indicator that an association between WLBS and family stressors may be lacking. These findings give answers to research question 4.

Table 8.11 Influence of work-life balance strategies on work and family stressors

Statement							5. Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
	1 Strongly disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree					
I make use of the work-life balance strategies.	77 (25.1%)	54 (17.6)	89 (29%)	73 (23.8%)			14 (4.6%)	2.65	1.218
I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	-	-
	Very false	False	Somewhat false	Neutral	Somewhat true	True	Very true		
	38 (12.4%)	93 (30.3%)	39 (12.7%)	37 (12.1%)	47 (15.3%)	26 (8.5%)	27 (8.8%)	3.48	1.865
Spending most evenings on work-related activities versus spending most evenings with your family.	1	2	3	4	5	-	-	-	-
	Causes no stress	Causes minimal stress	Undecided	Causes some stress	Causes high stress	-	-	-	-
	95 (30.9%)	70 (22.8%)	44 (14.3%)	74 (24.1%)	24 (7.8%)	-	-	2.55	1.350

8.4.5 Effect of work-life balance strategies (WLBS) on work-life balance (WLB)

Research question five investigated the effect of WLBS on WLB. In order to answer this question, selected items from the *WLWS* measuring the wellness programme, *JIS* measuring job involvement and satisfaction with job situation and *FIS* measuring involvement and satisfaction with family were used. These items were B22, G14, G11, G212 and G24. The results of the responses to these items are presented in Table 8.12 below.

I make use of the work-life balance strategies

This title is an excerpt from the item number B22 on the *WLWS* in the survey instrument included in the appendix. The outcome shown in Table 8.12 indicates that 25.1% and 17.6% of the responses were from participants who strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that they made use of the WLBS. A total of 29% of the respondents were neutral to the statement. However, 23.8% agreed with the statement while only 4.6% strongly agreed that they made use of the WLBS in place at the municipality. The mean and standard deviation yielded from the responses were 2.65 and 1.218 respectively, thus demonstrating that about 43% of the

respondents were of the view that they did not make use of the WLBS provided by the municipality.

I am very much involved in my job role

The heading is the 4th item on the *JIS* in the survey instrument attached. The results of the responses presented in Table 8.11 show that 52.4% of the respondents agree that they were very much involved in their job roles while 21.2% others strongly agreed with the statement. A total of 4.6% disagreed and 4.2% strongly disagreed. A total of 17.6% were indifferent to the statement and took a neutral stand. The feedback from the item produced a mean of 3.82 and standard deviation of .960. These outcomes demonstrate that 73.6% of the participants' opinions were that they were very much involved with their job roles. 8.8% responses from only 27 participants represented the view of those who disagreed with the statement. This could be an indication of a possibility that the latter group of respondents may be employed at departments or units that had lesser workload than the former group.

The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job

This title refers to the 1st item on the *JIS* in the questionnaire attached. The feedback from respondents presented in Table 8.12 show that 30% (the majority of the respondents) were indifferent to the statement thereby taking a neutral standpoint. Nevertheless, 23.1% and 9.4% others agreed and strongly agreed with the statement. On the other hand, 25.4% disagreed that the major satisfaction in their lives came from their jobs while the remaining 12.1% strongly disagreed with this statement. The responses from the item yielded a mean of 2.925 and standard deviation of 1.1593. These results show that about 33% of the participants are of the view that they derive major satisfaction in life from their jobs while 37.5% disagreed with this statement. However, the high percentage (30%) response from participants who are indifferent to the statement may indicate dissatisfaction with their job.

The major satisfaction in my life comes from my family

This sub-heading was taken from the 1st item on the *FIS* as stated in the research questionnaire attached to the appendix. The responses from participants are displayed in Table 8.12 which shows that 39.7% of the responses strongly agree to the statement while 41.7% others agree with the fact that they derive major satisfaction in life from their families. Conversely, 4.6% and 2.6% responses disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. Only

11.4% of the participants were neutral to the statement. The mean and standard deviation derived from the responses to the item were 4.114 and .9583 respectively. The results indicate summarily that over 81% of the respondents were of the opinion that they derived major satisfaction in life from their families while the reverse is the case with the other 7.2% whose opinion was contrary, i.e. the major satisfaction in their lives does not come from their families. This could mean that most of the respondents are satisfied with their family situation.

I am very much involved in my role as a spouse

This title is extracted from the 4th item on then *FIS* as shown in the questionnaire attached. Responses to this item are presented in Table 8.11 above. The responses are as follows: 37.8% indicated that they agreed with the statement while 23.5% others strongly agreed that they were very much involved in their spousal roles. Moreover, 25.4% were of a neutral opinion while 9.4% and 3.9% strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement respectively. The responses to this item produced mean and standard deviation of 3.619 and 1.1637 respectively. These outcomes demonstrate that 61.3% of the participants were of the view that they were very much involved in their roles as spouses while 13.3% held an opposite view, i.e. they were not very much involved with their spousal roles. The percentage of those who took a neutral stand could be explained by the marital status of some of the respondents who may be unmarried, divorced, single or probably widowed.

From the explanation of the results displayed in Table 8.12, it could be seen that the majority of the respondents did not make use of the WLBS in place at the municipality as indicated by the total percentage response of about 43% which is higher than the 28.4% of those who responded favourably to the statement. Interestingly, the number of those who were of the view that they were very much involved with their job roles was astronomically higher (73.6%) than the percentage response to satisfaction with job item which stood at 33%. In fact 37.5% reported that they were not majorly satisfied with their jobs while 30% were neutral to this statement. This could mean that although most respondents are very much involved with their jobs, they were not satisfied with their job situations. This could also imply that the WLBS in place at the municipality may not be addressing the job demands of the respondents which could have improved their satisfaction.

Moreover, over 81% of the responses were in agreement with the statement that the major satisfaction in their lives was derived from their families, which also justifies the involvement in their spousal roles which stood at 61.3%. Although there seems to be a positive association

between involvement with spousal role and satisfaction with family, no such relationship can be seen between involvement with work and satisfaction with work. Similarly, there seems to be not much linkage between use of WLBS in place at the municipality and the outcomes of work and family involvement. These explanations from the results in Table 8.12 indicate that use of WLBS at the municipality did not affect the achievement of WLB by employees and proffers a suitable answer to research question five. Therefore in offering a realistic answer to the extent that WLBS affect WLB among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector, it could be concluded that the WLBS in place at the municipality did not assist employees in gaining satisfaction with work or life situations. It also did not affect employees' involvement with work which may be as a result of increased work-load, neither could it be said to have influenced the level of involvement with family since most respondents did not make use of the benefit (WLBS).

Table 8.12 Effect of work-life balance strategies (WLBS) on work-life balance (WLB)

S/N	Statement	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	I make use of the work-life balance strategies.	77 (25.1%)	54 (17.6)	89 (29%)	73 (23.8%)	14 (4.6%)	2.65	1.218
2	I am very much involved in my job role.	13 (4.2%)	14 (4.6%)	54 (17.6%)	161 (52.4%)	65 (21.2%)	3.82	.960
3	The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job.	37 (12.1%)	78 (25.4%)	92 (30%)	71 (23.1%)	29 (9.4%)	2.925	1.1593
4	The major satisfaction in my life comes from my family.	8 (2.6%)	14 (4.6%)	35 (11.4%)	128 (41.7%)	122 (39.7%)	4.114	.9583
5	I am very much involved in my role as a spouse.	29 (9.4%)	12 (3.9%)	78 (25.4%)	116 (37.8%)	72 (23.5%)	3.619	1.1637

8.4.6 Relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and SOC

To ascertain the kind of relationship that exists between WLB and SOC, WLB was measured using a three-dimensional WLBS adapted to this study while the *13-version Orientation to Life Questionnaire* (E. E. Kossek et al.) was engaged in measuring SOC. Relevant items were extracted from these scales to answer research question six: *What type of relationship exists between work-life balance and sense of coherence?* The items were G11, G21 and D13 and the responses to these items from the survey are presented in Table 8.13 below. Items G11 and G21 measuring satisfaction are selected again in answering research question 6 although they were used earlier in answering question five. This is because of the pivotal role that satisfaction with work and family plays in the WLB equation in the present study.

The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job

This title is the primary item on the *JIS* in the questionnaire attached. The responses from the field work presented in Table 8.13 indicate a 30% (the majority of the respondents) response of those indifferent to the statement. However, 23.1% and 9.4% respondents agreed and strongly agreed to the statement. Inversely, 25.4% disagreed that the major satisfaction in their lives came from their jobs while the remaining 12.1% strongly disagreed with this statement. The responses from the item produced a mean of 2.925 and standard deviation of 1.160. These results confirm that 33% of the participants were of the opinion that they derived major satisfaction in life from their jobs while 37.5% disagreed with this statement. Nevertheless, 30% response from participants who are indifferent to the statement may indicate dissatisfaction with their jobs.

The major satisfaction in my life comes from my family

The heading was taken from the 1st item on the *FIS* as stated in the research questionnaire attached to the appendix. The responses from participants are displayed in Table 8.13 which demonstrates that 39.7% of the respondents strongly agree to the statement while 41.7% others agree that major satisfaction in their lives was resultant from their families. Conversely, 4.6% and 2.6% responses disagreed and strongly disagreed with the statement respectively. Only 11.4% of the participants were neutral to this statement. The mean and standard deviation obtained from the responses to the item were 4.114 and .958 respectively. These results summarily portray that over 81% of the respondents were of the opinion that they derived major satisfaction in life from their families while on the other hand, 7.2% of the respondents had contrary opinion, i.e. major satisfaction in their lives was not derived from their families. This could mean that most of the respondents are satisfied with their family situation and a very few experience the opposite.

How often do you have the feeling that there's little meaning in the things you do in your daily life?

To this 13th item on the *OLQ*, 27.4% of the respondents indicated that they very seldom or never felt that there is little meaning to the things they do daily, the response of 24.8% was 'rarely or never', and 21.5% indicated that they sometimes but not often felt in line with the question. Contrariwise, 8.1% of the responses 'sometimes not often' felt that there is little meaning to their daily life, 3.9% and 2.0% 'usually often' and 'very often' respectively felt

that they had the feeling that there is little meaning to the things they do daily in their lives. The feedback from the item yielded a mean and standard deviation of 5.31 and 1.538 respectively. A summary of these results shows that at the other side of the scale where respondents had little or no feeling that there is little meaning to their daily engagements stood the total response of 73.7% while only 14% responses showed that the participants felt that their daily engagements were meaningless.

From the results described above, most respondents were satisfied with their family but fewer respondents were satisfied with their work. The outcome from item D13 showed high SOC because the percentage of respondents who attached meaning to their daily engagements was high (73.7%). The mean distribution of SOC as presented in Table 8.13 (b) among employees who participated in the study was 30.665. This further confirms that employees had high SOC (Kinman, 2008). It could therefore be realistically concluded that high SOC had an association with satisfaction with family and did not associate with satisfaction with work. WLB is achieved when individuals achieve satisfaction with work and life simultaneously and not when satisfaction is loaded at one side of the continuum. Although the level of SOC seemed to be high at the municipality, it does not associate positively with the achievement of WLB. These results seem to provide a convincing answer to research question six in this study.

Table 8.13(a) Relationship between WLB and SOC

							Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation	
Statement							1	2	3	4	5			
The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job.							37 (12.1%)	78 (25.4%)	92 (30%)	71 (23.1%)	29 (9.4%)	2.925	1.1593	
The major satisfaction in my life comes from my family.							8 (2.6%)	14 (4.6%)	35 (11.4%)	128 (41.7%)	122 (39.7%)	4.114	.9583	
How often do you have the feeling that there's little meaning to the things you do in your daily life?												-	-	-
1	2	3	4	5	6	7								
Very often	Usually often	Sometimes often	Neutral	Sometimes not often	Rarely often	Very seldom or never						-	-	-
6 (2.0%)	12 (3.9%)	25 (8.1%)	38 (12.4%)	66 (21.5%)	76 (24.8%)	84 (27.4%)						-	5.31	1.538

Table 8.13 (b) presents a clarification on the mean SOC observed among professional level employees at the municipality.

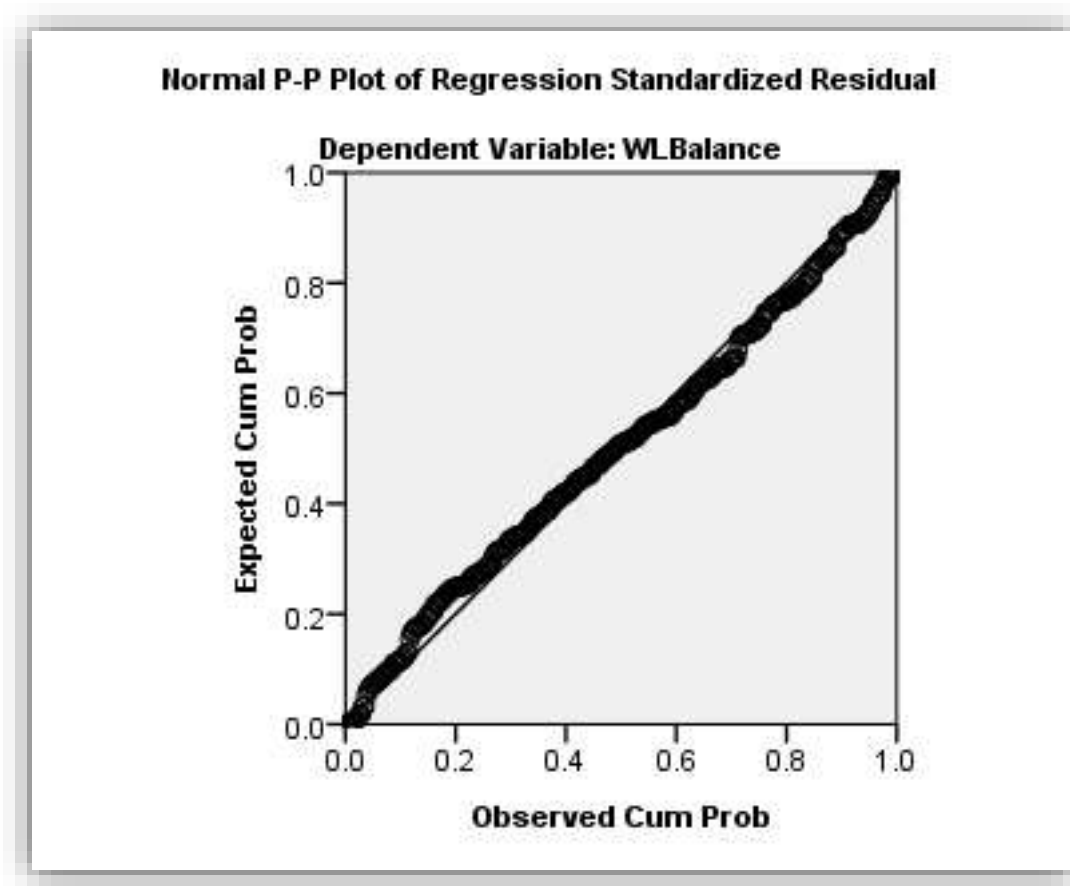
Table 8.13 (b) Descriptive statistics on SOC

N	307
Mean	30.6645
Median	32.0000
Mode	32.00
Standard Deviation	6.89331
Variance	47.518
Sum	9414.00

8.5 Testing the research objectives

There were six objectives formulated for this study which were tested by engaging relevant inferential statistics that called for initial analyses of the data before testing the objectives. Primary data gathered from a municipality in the South African public sector were vetted through the *Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22*. This was done to confirm the veracity of captured data, *missing values*, *outliners* and *normality* as recommended by Pallant (2011, p. 59). Missing data discovered in the study was less than 5% and were substituted with the *sample median value* (Pallant, 2011, p. 58; Lowry & Gaskin, 2014). Multivariate variables were also primarily tested to circumvent the violation of the basic assumptions of *normality*, *linearity*, *homoscedasticity* and *multicollinearity* (Pallant, 2011). *Outliners*, *normality*, *linearity*, *homoscedasticity* and *independence of residuals* were tested by noting the maximum Mahal Distance and Cook's Distance, which ranked below the critical value; and buttressed by the normal P-P plot of the regression standardised residual as presented in Figure 8.18 below.

Figure 8.19 Normal P-P pot of regression standardised residual



As shown in Figure 8.18 above, the regression standardised residual among the dependent variable (SOC and WLB) and the independent variables (work and family stressors, and WLBS) explored in this study looked normal. This confirms the extent of normality of the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

To rule out any violations of the assumptions of multicollinearity, the researcher examined the coefficients tables by checking the *Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)* values of all the independent variables that were covered in the study which revealed that none was found to be neither below the accepted 0.10 level nor beyond 10 respectively (J Pallant, 2011). In Table 8.14 below, the tolerance and VIF values of all the independent variables examined in this study on the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector are displayed.

The examination of the values distinctly shows that correlation coefficients above 1.00 and below 0.800 were excluded from the regression model with respect to the tolerance values. The VIF column indicates values that are less than the apex point of 10.0 (Pallant, 2011). This

confirms that the study did not contravene the assumptions of multicollinearity. Furthermore, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used to establish construct or factor validity.

Table 8.14 Distribution of tolerance and VIF values for independent variables

Variables	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		
Family stressors	.948	1.055
Sense of coherence	.876	1.141
Work stressors	.855	1.170
Work-life balance strategies	.965	1.036

Furthermore, analysis of Pearson's correlations among key variables in the study was conducted and the result is presented in Table 8.15 below. In that table, the correlation coefficient among wellness programme and family stressors showed a negative and significant association ($r = 0.125$, $p < 0.05$). This demonstrates that a wellness programme is related to family stressors at the municipality in the South African public sector. Similarly, the correlation coefficient among a wellness programme and SOC at the municipality also indicated a negative and significant association ($r = 0.228$, $p < 0.01$). Unexpectedly, a negative and significant association was found between a wellness programme and WLBS ($r = 0.272$, $p < 0.01$). This could be an indication that additional practices need to be integrated into the wellness programme. Predictably, family stressors were found to be negatively and significantly related to SOC ($r = 0.181$, $p < 0.01$). However, family stressors associated with work stressors at the municipality, the correlation coefficient between the two variables were positive and significant at $r = 0.180$, $p < 0.01$. SOC and work stressors had the highest correlation coefficient among the key variables in this study. It was found that a negative and significant association exists between the two variables ($r = 0.329$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the correlation coefficient among WLBS and work stressors was found to be positive and significant ($r = 0.178$, $p < 0.01$). Surprisingly WLB was not significantly correlated to any of the key variables in the study. Similarly SOC was not correlated to any WLB and WLBS in the study. The reasons for these non-associations could be discovered through the findings of the qualitative data in this study. The extent of the relationships existing among key variables is examined through the regression models in sections 8.5.3 to 8.5.8 below.

Table 8.15 Pearson’s correlations among key variables in this study

	Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1	Wellness programme	-				
2	Family stressors	-.125*	-			
3	SOC	.027	-.181**	-		
4	Work stressors	-.228**	.180**	.329**	-	
5	Work- life balance	.013	.089	-.049	.027	-
6	Work-life balance strategies	-.272**	.085	-.070	.178**	-.034

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

In agreement with prior studies (Grover & Crooker, 1995; Hill, 2005), the present study found a non-significant association between WLBS and family stressors. It also supports Baral and Bhargava (2010) findings that a negative association exists between WLBS and satisfaction with work. This could be because findings by Thompson and Prottas (2005) suggest that unstructured aspects of the workplace like management support and support from colleagues contribute more to the variation in work outcomes than formalised strategies. It was also found in a study conducted among correctional service officers in the public sector that management support associated with job satisfaction (Armstrong, Atkin-Plunk, & Wells, 2015; Bono & Ilies, 2006). The sample of the present study could also be explicatory in understanding the reason why WLBS did not significantly relate to family stressors because the majority (about 71%) of the sample population were male. This influence of a male dominant sample was also seen in the study of Baral and Bhargava (2010) and suggests that male employees may not demonstrate enthusiasm about WLBS (Lyness et al., 1999) that their female colleagues would demonstrate over crèche and flexible work practices.

8.5.1 Factor analysis

Factor analysis is a complex statistical technique, however it portrays multifaceted variety of structure-analysing measures that are engaged in identifying the interconnectedness between large groups of surveyed variables (Fields & Bisschoff, 2014). Through data reduction, these bulky variables are further condensed into small groups sharing similar features (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; Pett, Lackey, & Sullivan, 2003; Rasool, 2012). According to Hafiz, Shaari,

and Saleh (2013), factor analysis could be employed in assessing the reliability and validity of scales used in survey instruments; therefore, it is beneficial to the objectives of the present research.

Albright and Park (2009) are of the opinion that basically, two types of factor analysis exist, namely exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). Fields and Bisschoff (2014) report that EFA could be used where the number of necessary factors required to explain the interconnectedness among a group of variables are unknown and when there is need to determine the fundamental features of the construct being investigated. EFA was used in this study, but confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) which Harrington (2008) defines as a multivariate statistical technique used when testing the extent to which the assessed variables rightly represent the number of the constructs, was not engaged with in this study. This is because the main objectives of the study were to determine the relationships (if any) between variables and the effect the variables have on one another.

The essence of an EFA was to discover the authentic number of factors and their matching items in the questionnaire (Ullman, 2006). In this study, EFA was engaged to further purify the data to ensure that the information gathered on the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector are sufficiently purified. This process further enhanced the statistical validity of the research instrument in line with the guidelines provided by Pentz, Terblanche, and Boshoff (2013) and Martin and Savage-McGlynn (2013). The authors' guidelines were for the analysis and reporting of the psychometric properties of a survey instrument. Table 8.14 below shows the psychometric scales found through EFA demonstrating the construct validity and reliability of the assessment of WLBS, SOC, work and family stressors and WLB at a municipality in the South African public sector. Factor analysis proved to be a valuable technique to this study as shown in Table 8.15 below.

It demonstrates the twelve factors and the total variance explained per factor. From this table (Table 8.16), twelve factors were assessed to determine the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. The factors are:

Factor 1, *Level of Misconduct by Child(ren)*, positioned itself as the most important factor having a favourable variance of 21.63%. This factor demonstrated that it is very crucial to critically ascertain the level of misconduct by participants' children and consider the connection that this has on their ability to manage work and family stressors. This factor also indicated that it is important to consider and ascertain the link that a child's (ren's)

misbehaviour has on an individual SOC and ability to achieve WLB. Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) was 0.983 and presented an excellently satisfactory reliability coefficient far above the required 0.70 needed for this factor.

Factor 2, *Wellness programme as a WLBS*, showed itself as the second most crucial factor to consider in measuring WLB and SOC. This factor accounted for 8.88% favourable variance and points to the role of the wellness programme adopted by the municipality as a WLBS in assisting employees cope with their work and family demands. Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) was 0.945 and demonstrates a very satisfactory reliability coefficient far in excess of the requisite 0.70 for this factor.

Factor 3, *Parental workload/relational tension*, explains a 5.93% variance and shows the influence of parenting and tensions in relationships on WLB and SOC by looking at the size of stresses that decision making in various aspects of parenting and relationship had on participants. Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) was 0.897 and demonstrates a more than adequate reliability coefficient.

Factor 4, *Function vagueness/role conflict*, succinctly examined the manner in which participants viewed their jobs and roles as being clearly structured (defined) and/or having clear guidelines/policies or otherwise, respectively. It explained a 4.34% variance among the factors. Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) was 0.863, a very satisfactory reliability coefficient.

Factor 5, *Job autonomy*, explained a variance of 3.97% and pointed to the freedom that participants had to engage in routine activities without taking permission from anyone. Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) was 0.870, and indicates an appropriate reliability coefficient for this factor.

Factor 6, *Absence of spousal support*, explained a variance of 3.29% and showed the level of support or otherwise that participants felt they enjoyed with their spouses. Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) reported was 0.919, which was well in excess of the required 0.70.

Factor 7, *Orientation to life questionnaire*, presented a 3.21% variance and pointed to participants' SOC by looking at various aspects of their lives. Feelings, ideas, meaning and comprehension of realities by participants were used to ascertain their SOC. Cronbach's coefficient alpha (α) was 0.795 and demonstrates a satisfactory reliability coefficient.

Factor 8, *Family (Balance) Strategies*, pointed to the family strategies in place at the municipality adopted by the municipality to assist employees in coping with family demands and showed a variance of 2.55%. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (α) was 0.782, indicating a very satisfactory reliability coefficient.

Factor 9, *Work Strategies*, pointed specifically to work strategies that could assist employees in coping with their work-related challenges. It explained a variance of 2.55% and demonstrated a Cronbach’s coefficient alpha (α) of 0.781, which was viewed as a very satisfactory reliability coefficient.

Factor 10, *Job involvement*, pointed to the level of involvement with and satisfaction that respondents derived from their jobs. This factor also explained 2.25% variance by examining interests and importance that the job held to participants. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (α) was 0.794, which exceeds the requisite 0.70 for this factor.

Factor 11, *Job satisfaction*, pointed specifically to the way participants viewed their jobs as being too boring or too easy in determining how satisfied they were with those jobs. The factor explained 2.04% variance. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (α) was 0.938, which is way in excess of the required 0.70, and therefore shows a very satisfactory reliability coefficient.

Factor 12, *Job control*, pointed to the frequency of occurrence of certain events (like what to do and when to do it) bordering on control at the jobs of the participants and explains a variance of 1.69%. Cronbach’s alpha (α) coefficient was 0.870 and demonstrates a very satisfactory reliability coefficient.

Table 8.16 Exploratory factor analysis on the assessment of the connection between WLB and SOC

Item	Mean	Standard deviation	Factor loading	Item total correlation
Factor 1 (Level of child misconduct)				
F411 Hits others	2.12	1.426	.859	.846
F422 Pushes others	2.117	1.4070	.843	.824
F426 Slams doors	1.974	1.4278	.842	.825
F425 Runs away	2.29	1.487	.838	.813
F433 Curses	2.09	1.461	.838	.811
F432 Verbally threatens	2.13	1.474	.837	.812
F415 Kicks others	2.09	1.452	.837	.817
F435 Yells	2.38	1.494	.822	.802
F429 Talks meanly to others	2.29	1.506	.818	.801

F412 Hurts pets	1.89	1.404	.815	.787
F48 Fights with friends	2.36	1.478	.814	.811
F427 Steals	1.95	1.447	.810	.774
F420 Behaviour non-compliant	2.67	1.565	.808	.804
F410 Sets fires	1.935	1.4081	.803	.775
F423 Pouts	2.440	1.5271	.790	.784
F434 Whines	2.46	1.532	.786	.776
F424 Plays roughly	2.46	1.517	.784	.784
F47 Acts destructively	2.36	1.583	.781	.777
F44 Bites others	2.09	1.496	.781	.761
F428 Talks back to adults	2.35	1.497	.768	.751
F431 Throws temper tantrums	2.51	1.562	.761	.760
F430 Teases	2.51	1.496	.758	.737
F419 Acts noisy	2.80	1.654	.755	.755
F46 Acts defiantly	2.713	1.6014	.754	.756
F416 Lies	2.50	1.438	.753	.725
F413 Acts irritably	2.60	1.559	.733	.715
F45 Cries for no reason	2.41	1.595	.720	.716
F414 Jumps on furniture	2.49	1.716	.719	.709
F417 Nags	2.81	1.587	.718	.687
F49 Fights with siblings	2.645	1.5887	.696	.663
F421 Not eating at meal times	2.85	1.653	.660	.561
F42 Argues with friends	2.879	1.3915	.571	.846
Factor 2 (Wellness programme as a WLBS)				
B211 The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with my relational issues.	2.564	1.1253	.849	.815
B23 The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with work-related issues like job stress, function vagueness, and absence of autonomy.	2.642	1.1470	.842	.828
B24 The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with work-related issues like function vagueness.	2.573	1.1012	.830	.803
B26 The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with my family related issues of parenting.	2.573	1.1506	.829	.785
B210 The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with time related challenges.	2.792	1.1641	.820	.791
B25 The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with work related issues like absence of autonomy.	2.603	1.0959	.804	.767
B22 I make use of the work-life balance strategies.	2.407	1.1145	.803	.742
B27 The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with my family related issues like elder care.	2.691	1.1876	.798	.739
B29 The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with my finance/debt issues.	2.951	1.2049	.788	.747
B28 The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with my personal health issues.	2.997	1.1533	.786	.534

B21 I think that the municipality has put in place work-life balance strategies (benefits).	2.651	1.2177	.560	.779
Factor 3 (Parental workload/relational tension)				
F18 Trying to be a “good” spouse versus being unwilling to risk taking the time from your work.	2.564	1.2648	.829	.792
F17 Devoting time to your work versus your spouse wanting you to spend time with him/her.	2.622	1.2810	.820	.755
F15 Putting yourself first in terms of work versus your spouse putting himself/herself first in terms of his/her work.	2.482	1.2136	.791	.748
F13 Your child(ren) requesting that you stay home with him/her (them) versus your following the routine of your usual work schedule.	2.394	1.2671	.781	.721
F14 Devoting a large percentage of your time to the raising of your family versus devoting a large percentage of your time to work.	2.440	1.2467	.760	.718
F12 Spending most evenings on work-related activities versus spending most evenings with your family.	2.550	1.3503	.671	.600
F16 Feeling it is more important for your spouse to succeed versus feeling it is more important for you to succeed in your work.	2.254	1.1550	.669	.590
F11 Supporting your child(ren)’s recreational activities versus spending time on your own career development.	2.101	1.1907	.595	.520
Factor 4 (Function vagueness/role conflict)				
E36 Lack of guidelines to help me.	3.189	1.6775	.801	.686
E38 I work under incompatible guidelines.	3.241	1.6411	.783	.702
E35 Lack of policies and guidelines to help me.	3.173	1.6860	.779	.670
E37 I work under incompatible policies and guidelines.	3.384	1.7099	.750	.659
E39 I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it.	3.482	1.8653	.667	.621
E317 I have to work under vague directives or orders.	3.111	1.7696	.619	.616
E314 I receive incompatible requests from two or more people.	3.482	1.7920	.601	.566
E316 I work on unnecessary things.	2.691	1.6741	.510	.503
E313 I have to “feel my way” in performing my duties.	3.801	1.7995	.470	.398
E311 I have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment.	3.726	1.8796	.345	.360
Factor 5 (Job autonomy)				
E24 To change the hours you work?	1.896	1.3728	.839	.738
E26 To come late to work?	2.378	1.3384	.837	.766
E23 To leave early for the day?	2.557	1.2625	.836	.749
E27 To take time off?	2.893	1.3029	.788	.695
E25 To leave my office or workstation?	2.003	1.1504	.659	.527
Factor 6 (Absence of spousal support)				
F22 I can count on my spouse to go out of his/her way to help me in a crisis situation.	3.788	1.2515	.913	.861
F24 I can count on my spouse to console me when I am very upset.	3.798	1.2120	.894	.817
F23 I can really count on my spouse to be dependable when I need help.	3.782	1.2239	.892	.819
F21 I can count on my spouse to listen to me when I need to talk.	3.853	1.1266	.838	.761
Factor 7 (Orientation to life questionnaire)				
D8 Do you have very mixed up feelings?	4.853	1.5660	.763	.661

D13 How often do you have the feeling that there's little meaning in the things you do in your daily life?	5.313	1.5382	.701	.608
D9 Do you have very mixed up ideas?	5.189	1.5071	.698	.568
D14 How often do you have the feelings that you're not sure you can keep under control?	5.283	1.4933	.642	.539
D6 Do you have the feeling that you are in an unfamiliar situation and don't know what to do?	5.270	1.6094	.609	.506
D10 Does it happen that you have feelings inside you would rather not feel?	4.756	2.0346	.583	.457
Factor 8 (Family (life) strategies)				
B13 Substance/alcohol abuse counselling.	1.117	.3223	.796	.626
B15 Financial/debt counselling.	1.235	.4244	.766	.651
B14 HIV/AIDS counselling.	1.094	.2929	.763	.572
B12 Domestic relationship.	1.339	.4741	.740	.596
B11 Stress management.	1.274	.4465	.541	.431
Factor 9 (Work strategies)				
B110 Job share.	1.752	.4323	.769	.637
B111 Compressed work week.	1.824	.3814	.758	.593
B112 Telecommuting.	1.704	.4574	.734	.619
B113 Career break.	1.782	.4137	.684	.549
B19 Work from home on ad hoc basis.	1.899	.3018	.576	.394
Factor 10 (Job involvement)				
G12 The most important things that happens to me involves my work.	2.857	1.0690	.832	.714
G13 Most of my interests are centred around my job.	2.700	1.0853	.821	.687
G11 The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job.	2.925	1.1593	.756	.602
G14 I am very much involved with my job role.	3.818	.9596	.636	.443
Factor 11 (Job satisfaction)				
E32 I perform tasks that are too easy.	2.919	1.5790	.888	.883
E33 I perform tasks that are too boring.	2.801	1.5581	.887	.883
Factor 12 (Job control)				
E29 How often does someone tell you when you are to do your work?	1.883	1.2124	.635	.541
E28 How often does someone tell you what you are to do?	2.726	1.2114	.598	.541

In Table 8.17 below is a presentation of the total variance explained by each of the twelve factors.

8.5.2.1 Total variance explained

Variance denotes the measure of dispersion of scores around the mean. It fundamentally is the average error among the mean and recorded observations. According to Field (2002), variance indicates the suitability of a model to the real data. In this study, total variance explained was used to evaluate the strength of the constructs in the models and to recognise unique, shared and pure factors in order to ascertain the point of variation (Rasool, 2012) and establish goodness-of-fit of the model (Hafiz & Shaari, 2013). A crucial role was played by variance in

interpreting different facets and finalising the many steps needed in conducting factor analysis. It was required that the data explained a total variance in excess of 60%. A total variance exceeding 60% showed a “good fit” as reported by Hafiz and Shaari (2013) and Field (2007).

Table 8.17 Total variance explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	20.986	21.635	21.635	20.986	21.635	21.635	20.416	21.048	21.048
2	8.620	8.886	30.521	8.620	8.886	30.521	7.407	7.636	28.684
3	5.761	5.939	36.460	5.761	5.939	36.460	4.993	5.147	33.831
4	4.214	4.345	40.805	4.214	4.345	40.805	4.776	4.923	38.754
5	3.850	3.969	44.773	3.850	3.969	44.773	3.523	3.632	42.387
6	3.188	3.287	48.060	3.188	3.287	48.060	3.450	3.556	45.943
7	3.112	3.209	51.269	3.112	3.209	51.269	3.424	3.530	49.473
8	2.575	2.655	53.924	2.575	2.655	53.924	3.118	3.215	52.688
9	2.473	2.550	56.474	2.473	2.550	56.474	2.841	2.929	55.617
10	2.178	2.246	58.719	2.178	2.246	58.719	2.711	2.794	58.411
11	1.974	2.035	60.755	1.974	2.035	60.755	2.155	2.222	60.633
12	1.644	1.694	62.449	1.644	1.694	62.449	1.761	1.816	62.449

8.5.2.2 Reliability of the factors (Cronbach alpha)

Reliability as indicated for all the factors, had to do with the measurement of the degree of consistency in various dimensions of a construct (Pentz et al., 2013). Validity and reliability constitute basic rudiments considered in the assessment of scales of measurement and are hence quite essential in this study. According to Fields and Bisschoff (2014), a measuring instrument is not valid if it cannot be viewed as being reliable; conversely, an instrument’s reliability is not dependent on its validity. Tavakol and Dennick (2011) report that Cronbach alpha coefficient (α) has been widely used as the most reliable measure of reliability. The internal consistency of each factor as well as the individual items that came out of the EFA in this study were distinctly analysed using Cronbach’s coefficient alpha through the IBM SPSS version 22 statistics. The result was presented in Table 8.18 below.

Nevertheless, some scales and items in the study were deleted based on the rule of thumb (Pallant, 2011; George & Mallery, 2003) after EFA either because they failed to produce Cronbach’s alpha coefficient up to 0.70 or the items cross-loaded on other items in another scale respectively. Among the scales that were disregarded after EFA was:

Job stress scale - Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) was 0.699 showing an acceptable reliability coefficient which is within the acceptable level of 0.70, but the scale was not listed among the psychometric scales that emerged from the EFA.

Family involvement scale - which had an initial Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) of 0.572, but after two items (G22 and G25) were deleted, α increased to 0.760. Although this scale showed satisfactory reliability coefficient, it was not included among the psychometric scales obtained via EFA.

Satisfaction balance scale - reported a Cronbach alpha coefficient (α) of 0.545 and therefore an acceptable reliability coefficient but was not included among the psychometric scales obtained through EFA.

Time balance scale - also was not included among the scales obtained via EFA although the Cronbach's alpha coefficient (α) was already 0.155, showing an unacceptable reliability coefficient and may not be present in recurring studies.

Moreover, the items that were dropped after EFA from the factors are as follows: two items (F41 and F43) from the level of misconduct by child(ren) factor, four items (E31, E34, E32 and E33) from the function vagueness/role conflict factor, two items (E21 and E22) from job autonomy, and eight items (D1, D2, D3, D7, D11, D5, D4, and D12) from the orientation to life questionnaire. Others include three items (B16, B17 and B18) from the WLBS scale, and one item (G15) from job involvement factor.

Table 8.18 Reliability the measuring instrument used in this study

Reliability Statistics		
Construct	Cronbach's alpha coefficient	Items
Child Misbehaviour Scale (CMS)	0.983	43
Work-life Balance Wellness (WLBW)	0.945	11
Function Vagueness/Role Conflict (FV/RC)	0.863	10
Parental Workload/Relationship Tension (PWL/RT)	0.897	8
Absence of Spousal Support (ASS)	0.919	4
Orientation to Life Questionnaire (E. E. Kossek et al.) (OLF)??	0.795	6
Job Autonomy Scale (JAS)	0.870	5
Job Control Scale (JCS)	0.870	2
Family (Balance) strategies Scale (FS)	0.782	5
Work Strategies Scale (WS scale)	0.781	5

Job Involvement Scale (JIS)	0.794	4
Job Satisfaction scale (JSS)	0.938	2

8.5.2.3 Kaiser, Meyer and Olkin analysis and Bartlett test of sphericity

The sampling adequacy for this study as well as the suitability of factor analysis based on the features of the sample was examined using the Kaiser, Meyer and Olkin measure (Bama, 2013). Schwarz (2011) reports that KMO is widely used as the standard procedure for testing factor analysis. KMO measure was utilised in this study to ascertain the adequacy of the sample for factor analysis. The 0.70 and above recommendations by Field (2007) and Bama (2013) were adopted as the base requirement of KMO value for sampling adequacy.

On the other hand, the Bartlett assessment of sphericity validates the appropriateness or otherwise of data that could be used in a multivariate statistical method like the factor analysis (Bama, 2013 in Fields & Bisschoff, 2014). According to Du Plessis (2009), favourable values are those below 0.005 level and therefore adequate for factor analysis. Low association among variables is not suitable, therefore the highest value for the present study was 0.005 (Bama, 2013; Field, 2007). The KMO and Bartlett tests for the present study are presented in Table 8.19 below. It presents a favourable KMO of value higher than 0.70 which way beyond the acceptable value (Field, 2007). This favourable value signified that the sample utilised in the study was sufficient. The result of Bartlett's test of sphericity signified that the data collected could be used for a factor analysis since that value obtained was below the 0.005 level (Field, 2002). Approximate Chi-Square and the DF (degrees of freedom) were 23488.769 and 4656 respectively and significant at 000. This result shows that the data was suitable for a multivariate statistical examination like factor analysis.

Table 8.19 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	.877
Bartlett's Test of sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square
	23488.769
	Df
	4656
	Sig.
	.000

Therefore, having completed the preliminary tests, the objectives of the study were verified by engaging appropriate inferential statistics (and descriptive statistics where necessary) as shown, analysed and explained in the following section.

8.5.2 Research objective one

The first objective formulated for this study was *to examine the work-life balance strategies that are in place at the municipality*. To test this objective, descriptive statistics was engaged in determining the frequencies of the responses to items on the WLBS scale as adapted to this study. Table 8.20 displays the frequencies and percentage responses to items ascertaining the availability of various WLBS as shown below.

It displays the frequency and percentage response among participants with respect to the WLBS in place at the municipality. Responses to stress management, domestic relationship counselling, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling and financial/debt counselling were 72.6%, 66.1%, 88.3%, 90.6% and 76.5% respectively. These respondents answered ‘ “yes” to the question eliciting information as to availability of these strategies at the municipality. This confirmed that most respondents were of the opinion that the municipality had adopted stress management, domestic relationship counselling, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling and financial/debt counselling as work-life practices. However, most respondents’ responses to work from home on an ad hoc basis, job share, a compressed work week, telecommuting and career break indicate a 89.9%, 75.2%, 82.4%, 70.4% and 78.2% respectively negative result. This implies that the majority of the participants were of the view that these strategies have not been adopted by the municipality as a practice to assist employees to equally manage their work and family challenges. From this result, it can be conclusively stated that the municipality has put in place stress management, domestic relationship counselling, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling and financial/debt counselling as WLBS under the name of the WP. Nevertheless, work from home on an ad hoc basis, job share, a compressed work week, telecommuting and career break have not been adopted by the municipality in the South African public sector as a policy to assist employees in coping with their work and family related challenges. This provides an answer to research question one as well as establishes that objective one has been achieved in this study.

Table 8.20 Frequencies and percentages of response to items on the work-life balance strategies scale

Description	Frequency		Percentage	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Stress management	223	84	72.6%	27.4%
Domestic relationship counselling	203	104	66.1%	33.9%
Substance/alcohol abuse counselling	271	36	88.3%	11.7%
HIV/AIDS counselling	278	29	90.6%	9.4%
Financial/debt counselling	235	72	76.5%	23.5%
Work from home on ad hoc basis	31	276	10.1%	89.9%
Job share	76	231	24.8%	75.2%
Compressed work week	54	253	17.6%	82.4%
Telecommuting	91	216	29.6%	70.4%
Career break	67	240	21.8%	78.2%

8.5.3 Research objective two

The second objective of this study was to clarify the level of contribution and degrees of association between WLBS and the WP at a municipality in the South African public sector. Inferential statistics were employed and presented in Tables 8.21. ANOVA through regression analysis established that there are significant mean variations in the contribution made by work strategies and FS to the WP with F value at 12.728. Below in Table 8.21 is a display of the outcome of the regression analysis of WLBS as a predictor of WP. The regression model presents an R square of 0.077 and adjusted R square of 0.071. This implies that the model (WLBS) predicts 7.1% of the variations in the WP at a municipality in the South African public sector. It is significant at ($p < 0.01$) indicating that there is a significant association between the independent variables at the two dimensions of WLBS and WP (dependent variable). These results have led to the achievement of the objective two in ascertaining that WLBS contribute to wellness at a municipality in the South African public sector. The standardised Beta and matching P values for FS and WS ($\beta = 150, p < .01$) and ($\beta = 235, p < .001$) respectively, indicate that WS made the most meaningful contributions to the model than FS. Therefore, these results can lead to the conclusion that work strategies and FS jointly serve as a predictor of the WP at a municipality in the South African public sector. Furthermore, it has been established here that a significant relationship exists among WLBS and the WP at a municipality in the South African public sector.

Table 8.21 Work-life balance strategies as predictors of wellness programme

Independent variable	R	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Beta	T	P
	.278	0.077	0.071	12.728			
Family (Balance) Strategies					150	2.727	.007
Work Strategies					235	4.267	.000
Constant					-	12.011	.000

8.5.4 Research objective three

The third objective formulated for this study was to investigate the effect of work and family stressors on SOC. An adapted type of the *13-version Orientation to Life Questionnaire* was employed as a measuring scale for SOC; work and family stressors were assessed by using the work stressor scale and family stressor scale respectively. Table 8.22 presents the regression model showcasing the outcome of the test of the independent variables (work and family stressors) as predictors of SOC (dependent variable). It shows a regression model that portrays R square of .124 and adjusted R square of .118. This means that the model (stressors) predicts 11.8% of the variations in SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. This is significant at ($p < 0.05$), implying that there is a significant connection between work and family stressors (independent variables) and SOC (dependent variable). Similarly, the standardised Beta and the corresponding P values for family stressors and work stressors ($\beta = 0.126$, $p < 0.05$) and ($\beta = 0.307$, $p < 0.001$) respectively, demonstrate that work stressors contributed the most to the model while family stressors made the least contribution. From these results it can easily be deduced that work and family stressors jointly function as a predictor of SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. Hence, this study has established that there is a significant relationship between work and family stressors and SOC.

Table 8.22 Family and work stressors as predictors of SOC

Independent variables	R	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Beta	T	P-value
	.352	.124	.118	21.480	-	-	.000
Family stressors					.126	-2.303	.022
Work stressors					.307	-5.620	.000
Constant						25.747	.000

8.5.5 Research objective four

The fourth objective formulated for this study examined the influence of WLBS on stressors. The aim was to ascertain if the WLBS addressed the work and family stressors faced by the employees. To achieve this objective, the WLBS scale measuring WLBS and stressor scale measuring work and family stressors were engaged. Table 8.23 showcases the simple regression model displaying the outcome. The table presents a simple linear regression model showing an R square of 0.017 and adjusted R square of 0.014. This result simply means that WLBS predict only 1.4% of the variations in stressors (work and family) at the municipality in the South African public sector. This prediction is significant at ($p < .05$) and confirms that there is a relationship between the independent variable (WLBS) and the dependent variable (stressors). The standardised Beta and matching P values for WLBS are ($\beta = 0.131$ and $p < 0.05$) showing the contribution made by WLBS to the model. Although, this result indicates that there is a significant relationship between WLBS and stressors, it is noteworthy that the contribution made by WLBS to the model is quite minimal at 1.4% and considering the Beta value of 0.131. This could be interpreted to mean that the WLBS at the municipality under study do not meaningfully address the stressors faced by the employees. Thus, the study has established that although there is an association between WLBS and stressors, the size of the prediction of WLBS on stressors is quite significant at $p < .05$. This has led to the achievement of objective four of this study.

Table 8.23 WLBS as predictors of stressors

Independent variables	R	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Beta	T	P-value
	.131*	.017	.014	5.286	-	-	.000
Work-life balance strategies					.131	.2.299	.022
Constant						6.181	.000

8.5.6 Research objective five

The fifth research objective unveils the extent to which WLBS affect WLB at a municipality in the South African public sector. The regression model in Table 8.24 presents the results of the exploration as shown below. The result was obtained through the engagement of WLBS scale that measured WLBS and the three-dimensional work-life balance scale adapted to this

study. It shows that statistically, there is no significant association among WLBS and WLB. Consider the result of the R square at 0.003 and adjusted R square of 0.004. This shows that work and family strategies predict only 0.30% of the variations in WLB at a municipality in the South African public sector. This is insignificant at ($p > 0.05$) confirming that there is no significant relationship between WLBS and WLB. The standardised Beta and corresponding P values for WS and FS ($\beta = 0.053$, $p > 0.05$) and ($\beta = 0.005$, $p > 0.05$) respectively. Although none of the independent variables (family and work strategies) contributed significantly to the model, FS were most insignificant. Hence, it can be concluded that WLBS had no influence on the achievement of WLB at the municipality in the South African public sector. This implies therefore that objective five of the present study has been achieved.

Table 8.24 Effect of work-life balance strategies (WLBS) on work-life balance (WLB)

Independent variables	R	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Beta	T	P-value
	.053	.003	.004	.434	-	-	.648
Work strategies					.053	.927	.355
Family strategies					.005	.087	.931
Constant						23.078	.000

8.5.7 Research objective six

The sixth and last research objective formulated and tested in this study was to establish if a relationship exists between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. To achieve this objective, the study adapted the work-life balance scale to assess WLB on three distinct dimensions, while the *13-version Orientation to Life Questionnaire* adapted to the study was similarly engaged to measure SOC. This objective was tested using linear regressions through the IBM SPSS version 22. Table 8.25 displays the test result as shown below. The regression model shows an R square of .002 and adjusted R square of .001; showing that the model (S O C) predicts 0.10% of the variations in WLB at the municipality in the South African public sector. The standardised Beta and matching P values for SOC ($\beta = .049$, $p > 0.05$) imply that there is no significant relationship between the independent variable(SHRM.) and the dependent variable (WLB). These outcomes clarify the achievement of objective six of this study by establishing that there is no relationship between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector.

Table 8.25 Relationship between WLB and SOC

Independent variables	R	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Beta	T	P-value
Sense of coherence (SHRM.)	.049*	.002	.001	.741	.049	.861	.390
Constant						16.542	.000

8.6 Assessment of qualitative data

In this section the researcher presents the feedback from the structured open-ended questions from sections “C”, “F5” and “G5” of the questionnaire used in this study. The items from these sections were framed to yield data from respondents with respect to their perceptions on (1) WLBS adopted by the municipality and how it can be improved or enhanced, (2) participant’s ability to cope with work and family stressors, reasons for coping and if they can meaningfully achieve WLB in their present work and family situations, and (3) their understanding about WLB and its achievement as well as if the respondent would like to reclaim balance as the case may be.

The qualitative data was collected from 11 selected interviewees from the top management cadre at the municipality as well as responses from open-ended questions included in the survey instrument. There were no restrictions as to choice of alternative answers in closed-ended form to participants. In addition to the need to conduct methodological triangulation, the information provided from this set of non-numeric data gave rise to more information that could not have been found through numeric technique of data collection. The responses obtained from the semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions showcased the participants’ perspective on the WLBS adopted by the municipality and how they could be improved in the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector.

Confidentiality was provided for the information given by respondents with the sole agreement that only summarised findings would be included in the thesis and possibly kept for the period recommended by the Ethical Committee of the University and not destroyed immediately. In this study, most of the data gathered from the interviews as well as some data from the open-ended responses were used because they gave deeper insight into the respondents’ opinions, perceptions and experiences about WLBS, SOC, work and family stressors and WLB.

Pseudonyms were given in this analysis. All the 11 interviewees were highly educated and full-time employees at the municipality who occupied the offices of deputy city managers (2), heads of units (6) and deputy heads (3). The other respondents were also educated and full-time employees, engaged in professional roles at the municipality.

It took approximately 35 minutes to conduct the semi-structured interviews and between 25 to 30 minutes to complete the open-ended questionnaire. The guide to the interview focused on subjects related to WLBS, SOC, WLB and work and family stressors. Respondents were encouraged to share their personal observations and experiences as well as their daily activities and how they coped with and felt about their SOC, work and family stressors and WLB. Every interview conducted was recorded and transcribed. A non-numerical analysis was used in discovering the way respondents interpreted and understood their processes and involvements with the subjects under investigation. NVivo Software was used in primarily coding the transcripts and open-ended responses to reveal respondents' thoughts and perceptions about the subject matters. Out of the many open codes that emerged, axial and careful coding was used to confirm dominant themes, relationships and patterns by engaging grounded theory practice formulated by Strauss and Corbin (1998) in Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, and Andrey (2008).

Spontaneous memos were utilised in capturing and noting the development of themes, sub-themes and conceptual understanding. This helped in appreciating the deeper insight into the subjects under examination. The characteristics of these emerging themes and spheres generated further questions as discussed in the following paragraphs. Comments from respondents to the open-ended questions in the survey instrument are captured as "Respondent 1 or 2 ..." in accordance with the numbers assigned to them while comments from interview transcripts are captured as "Interviewee 1 or 2 ..." as the case may be. The presentation and interpretation of the qualitative data collected for the present study are presented below.

8.6.1 Appraising the work-life balance strategies adopted by the municipality in the South African public sector

WLBS are the practices adopted by organisations to augment the autonomy of their employees in managing efficiently the work and non-work facets of their lives (De Cieri et al., 2005). The practices revealed in the qualitative data collected for this study are related to those WLBS proposed in De Cieri et al. (2005) and those adopted by the municipality through the WP. *Part-time work, study leave, flexible starting and finishing times, working from home on an ad hoc*

basis and job sharing (in order) were found by De Cieri et al. (2005) across their 3-survey years to be most regularly cited. However, in this study, the majority of the respondents cited the implementation of domestic relationship counselling, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling, stress management and financial/debt counselling as those adopted by the municipality. Below in Figure 8.20 is the presentation of the responses from participants with respect to the WLBS including those adopted by the municipality. The word “*parent*” in the figures below does not constitute any significant implication to the study but are NVivo generated labels for sources of data flow. Parent node is the main container of topics or themes in a particular factor. It aggregates the coding references from *child* nodes. Opening a parent node reveals the information coded directly to it and those coded at the first-level child nodes.

Figure 8.20 Work-life balance strategies (WLBS) at the municipality

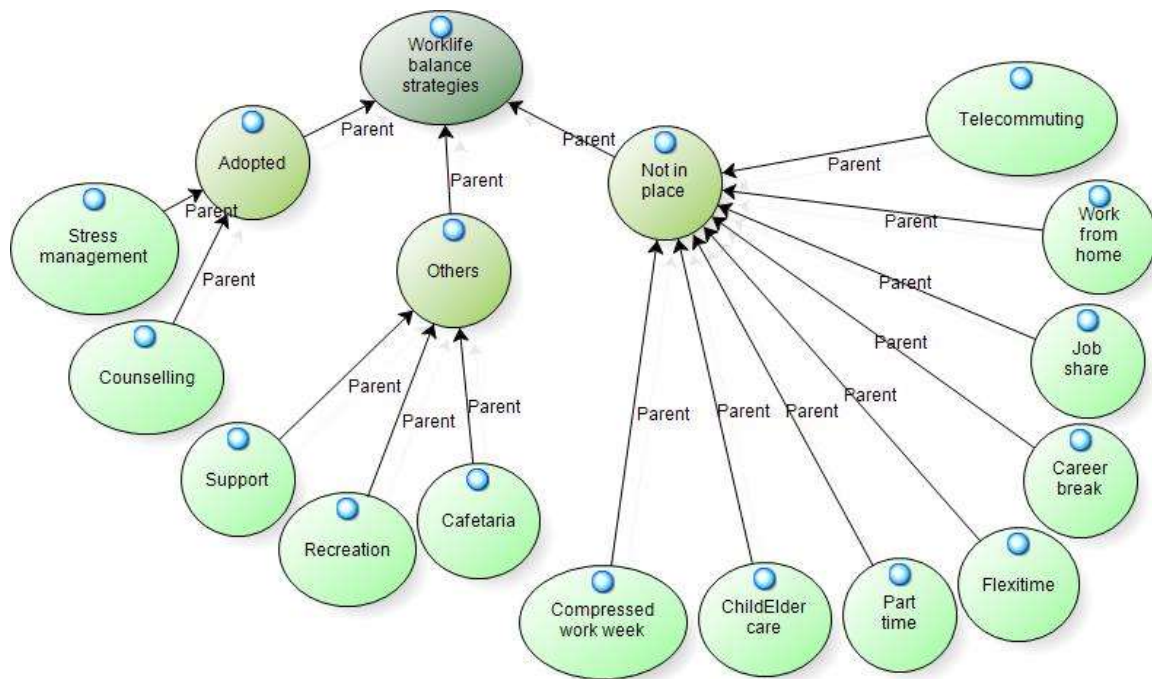


Figure 8.20 above clearly displays the various WLBS listed in the questionnaire which were responded to by the participants. Almost all the respondents affirmed that the municipality had implemented the wellness programmes as WLBS. The items that made up the WP were classified by the EFA as family or life strategies. They include counselling (domestic relationship counselling, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling and financial/debt counselling) and stress management. This implies that the WP included strategies that mainly addressed life stressors. On the other hand, virtually all the respondents were of the opinion that the municipality had

not adopted the other strategies, namely: part-time work, flexible starting and finishing times, work from home on an ad hoc basis, job share, a compressed work week, telecommuting and career break (Figure 8.20). With respect to child/elder care, respondents were of the opinion that employees, especially those with very young children, will be able to achieve balance if the municipality adopted the child/elder care strategy.

Other strategies that emerged from the analysis of qualitative data include the provision of basic amenities like a cafeteria and recreational facilities. Support from management and family was also highlighted as having the capacity to assist employees to deal strategically with their work and family challenges and the achievement of WLB.

Interviewee 1 was of the opinion that the introduction of:

“Basic amenities like places of refreshment and relaxation during breaks could do much.”

While Respondent 016 echoed Interviewee 1’s response by asserting that employees would be assisted by the municipality in managing stressors by:

“Making available gym/exercise facilities to staff and adequate meal facilities will help us a lot.”

This opinion resonated among many participants and some even went further to suggest that the municipality could motivate employees to live healthy lifestyles and achieve WLB by either paying for or subsidising payment for employees to enrol with gyms. This is supported by the following response:

Respondent 065:

“Municipality must have gym for employees, must pay membership so as to motivate people to live a healthy lifestyle.”

The result of the open-ended questions and interviews presented in the pictorial representation in Figure 8.20 corroborates the quantitative data analysis result on the WLBS in place at the municipality. It also displays emerging strategies from the qualitative data which are not adopted by the municipality.

8.6.2 Contribution of work-life balance strategies to the wellness programme

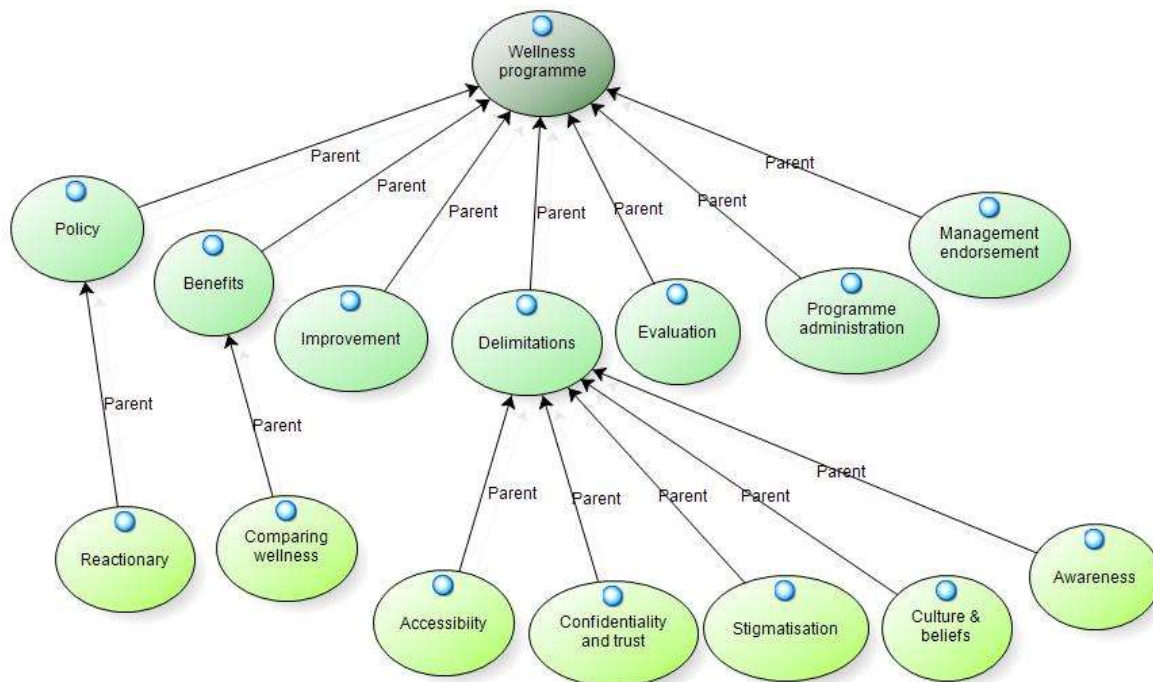
Respondents held divergent views with respect to the WP adopted by the municipality

as WLBS to assist employees in coping with work and family stressors and achieving meaningful WLB. Summarily, the majority saw the WP as a measure that was formulated in response to emerging health and lifestyle issues. For instance, Interviewee 8 said: *“We do not have any structured programme to address the issues of work-life balance but only have measures that try to address the wellness problems of employees.”*

This claim was corroborated by Interviewee 4 who said: *“There are no work-life balance strategies adopted here in the municipality. The wellness programmes are voluntary management initiatives that came up as a result of the environment wherein we are, the people are sick and stuff like that.”* Interviewee 1 confirmed that *“The wellness programme was actually a reactionary programme by the municipality to the health and wellness issues among employees.”*

The picture in Figure 8.21 presents the responses of participants as shown below.

Figure 8.21 Responses to wellness programme as a WLBS



The responses were coded into seven themes, namely: policy, benefits, improvement, delimitations, evaluation, programme administration and management endorsement. These themes and emerging sub-themes are presented in Figure 8.21 above. To

elaborate on the themes and sub-themes, the comments of respondents are presented as follows:

Policy: With respect to policy, interviewees' comments on the WLBS adopted by the municipality, some respondents' responses indicated that they did not see the strategies in place as well calculated programmes, while those who viewed the strategies as adopted policies thought that it was either reactionary or existed as a misnomer. Some of the responses in this line of thought are presented below:

Interviewee 8

"I will say we don't have a structured WLBS as a municipality. You do have individual attempts at programmes that help individuals work at their balance."

This statement represents the opinion of most employees that there were no WLBS adopted as a policy in place at the municipality. However, some other employees alluded to the wellness programme to be the WLBS in place at the municipality as stated in the following comment.

Interviewee 1

"No not in terms of policy, not in the form that I am aware of, but we have employee wellness programmes. I recall from the questionnaires that were disseminated as a result of the issues coming up among employees, the municipality adopted wellness. It was from the feedback that I think that a programme like a wellness programme was adopted, it was a response to what was happening then in employees' health."

Even though it was confirmed that the wellness programme was adopted as a WLBS at the municipality, the majority of the employees felt that it was a reactionary and 'faceless' programme.

Interviewee 6:

"As for policies, we have reactive ones! We have what is called Wellness managed by Careways with some other programmes that are out there. They react to problems, they don't try and prevent them. So with regard to employee issues, they only react instead of proactively provide ways of preventing the problems in the first instance."

The programmes look like they are not well harmonized between occupational health and wellness. On the skills part there are always complaints about how the people deal with their finances. I don't think people proactively look at how to manage their finances but when they have financial problems you see them running around to look for solution."

Respondents were clear in the statement of their perspective on the wellness programme comprising stress management, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, domestic relationship counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling and financial/debt counselling as the WLBS at the municipality. Nevertheless, there were varied opinions with respect to the emergence and status of the WP as a WLBS in employees' responses. It was more or less seen as an ad hoc and reactive programme instead of a well-crafted and implemented strategy to assist employees in addressing work-life issues. This could be the reason why there is no significant relationship between WLBS and the achievement of WLB as found in the analysis of the quantitative data and further confirmed by comments regarding benefits derived from the programme.

Benefits: Respondents held differing views with respect to the benefits derived from using the WP. These responses may well be accountable for the reason why the WP was seen as associating positively with stressors even though its percentage contribution to the variation in stressors was a mere 1.4% as stated in section 8.5.5. Although the majority of the respondents posited that the WLBS (WP in this case) adopted by the municipality were beneficial to them in addressing work and family related demands; expectedly, others differed in opinion and some others felt that the programme was not designed to accommodate the work-life needs of professional level employees. Some of the comments received from the interviews are stated below.

Interviewee 6:

"Under the first programme (wellness) I have a gentleman here who has a very challenging situation on both at home and at work. He had a challenge that had to do with his wife. The intervention that was done with him at the wellness programme, gave him a lot of assistance."

This participant's testimony of an employee that used the WP alludes to it being beneficial to the user.

However, those that see the WP as having no benefit commented as follows:

Interviewee 1:

“I repeat that the wellness programme is not able to help employees to address work problems in the format that it is, it is an outside organisation and the way they operate can be a problem for those that may need to use it. We have an organisational structure that is a problem. You don’t correct an unstructured system through a programme.”

While Interviewee 9 was of the opinion that:

“I don’t believe, no. No, I don’t believe that the wellness programme can help anybody cope with these problems at work.”

However, there were those employees who thought that the wellness programme was not designed to accommodate the needs of professional level employees.

Interviewee 2:

“I can’t say for sure that there are provisions made for professional level employees to manage their work and family stressors at the organisational level through the wellness programme. Individuals make arrangements by themselves.”

The present study was conducted among professional level employees and this response confirms the reason why the contribution of the WLBS to the variation in stressors is very low. These comments may also justify why there is no connection between the WLBS and the achievement of WLB at the municipality as seen from the quantitative data. Since the programme was not targeted at helping professional level but as a supportive programme to address life stressors, it may not assist them in enhancing their SOC or achieving WLB. Thus, these responses corroborate the outcome of the quantitative data analysis of the influence of WLBS on stressors as well as the effect of WLBS on WLB.

Some of the challenges facing the WP were deduced from the themes below.

Management endorsement: In this study, respondents were forthcoming with their opinion about the absence of management support of the programme in place at the municipality. Some respondents felt that if management supported the programme, the programme could have been more effective. Furthermore, they reported that the management of the municipality did not endorse or support the programme in practical

terms. For instance, Respondent 001 commented that the *“Wellness programmes could help employees achieve meaningful work-life balance if there’s on-going leadership support and endorsement of the programme.”*

Employees felt that assistance received from the WP were not augmented by supervising managers and saw this as absence of management support and endorsement. But this feeling was clarified by Interviewee 7’s explanation that: *“the challenge is that because the manager does not know who goes to the programme, they may not be able to back up the achievement of the programme for those using it, which may be seen as lack of management support. Wellness is very confidential and most managers do not know who attends the programmes for help.”*

Employees were of the view that even though the municipal management established the WP, there were shortcomings with respect to its endorsement. Some of the reasons why it was perceived that management did not support the WP ranged from lack of publicity for the programme to inaccessibility. Comments like: *“the wellness programme needs to be further promoted to attract employee attention and usage,”* from Interviewee 3, and Interviewee 9’s comment: *“Some of the people are not aware of this programme (wellness). I can, ah from my side, I think that most people are not aware of it. But if from the induction phase people can be told about it, then they may know, but now, I think most people are not aware of the wellness programmes. I can pick it up that they are not aware of it,”* buttress these claims. With respect to accessibility of the programme and its use, Interviewee 1 stated the following:

“Looking at other companies I think the municipality is lagging behind in terms of the strategies to assist employees. For example, the wellness programme is one programme that should be managed by the management. Wellness issues should be part of what management handles on a day-to-day basis, but the case is not the same here. It should be part of the organisation happening on a daily basis. In our work environment we should have areas where management support and intervention is perceived on a continuous basis, but we don’t look into stuff like that here. We have a very operational organisation, operation is very functional. Then you have a parallel function called the wellness programme which is distinct from organisational operation; it does not make sense, the wellness programme is not really integrated into the municipal workplace. And if I compare the municipality with places like Unilever where they provide coffee

tables and coffee, and some companies that have a gym, I see that management is not doing much to assist employees here. So in a building as big as this (Renee House) where we have about 2,000 employees, the organisation should be able to provide some kind of facility to enable employees to relax a bit. Those are the kind of things to look at in assisting employees rather than having a sort of an organisation seating outside and trying to manage the wellness of organisational members.”

Most respondents felt that if management could stop theorising the concept and be more pragmatic the programme would be far reaching in addressing employee work-life needs. Some of the comments extracted from many others are presented below.

Interviewee 8:

“We have a theoretical programme here, the wellness. You see someone leaves the programme with high expectations but the organisational system is not tailored in line to give the subsequent practical support needed for success to be achieved in the problem. So though the wellness programme is an organisational programme, the organisation is not prepared adequately to ensure the success of the programme by supporting it in order to reap the dividends of the programme because the system is not in place. For instance, if an employee is involved with the programme, the manager is not trained in what he/she can do to support this employee when he/she leaves the programme. And therefore, they find comfort and solace when they are in the programme but when they return to the work environment, the manager is not in a frame to follow up or follow through what they have received at the programme in order to give necessary and relevant support to this employee. Let’s say a person who suffers from HIV goes into the programme and upon return tells the manager about the situation, what does the manager do? He/she breaks down and starts crying! How do you think it will impact upon the employee and what he/she received at the wellness/occupational health programme? This happens because the manager does not know what to do or how to handle the situation. You see people leave the programme with high expectations but the organisational system is not tailored in line to give the subsequent support needed for success to be achieved in the problem. So though the wellness programme is an organisational programme, the organisation is not prepared adequately to ensure the success of the programme by supporting it in order to reap the dividends of the programme because the system is not in place.”

Interviewee 8 did not hold back words in expressing the view that management support of the programme is lacking and this could upset the efficacy of the programme and achievement of its objectives. This seems to have been the line of argument of the majority of the responses with respect to management endorsement of the WP.

Programme administration: The wellness programme at the municipality is adopted as a WLBS and outsourced to an external service provider that conducts annual wellness programmes for employees. Regularly, employees facing family-related challenges are referred to the programme through a referral process. Respondents' opinions on the administration of the programme as extracted from the comments on the open-ended questions in the survey instrument as well as the semi-structured interviews indicate that employees waited long periods through the referral process to be attended to. And even when employees get the services of the service provider, there were no in-house arrangements to draw-in the benefits achieved by the employees.

Respondent 231:

“There is not much interaction between employees and wellness programmes. Besides access to the wellness programmes is not made easy for employees (When I had to see wellness counsellor, it took me a month to see one).”

Discussing further, the commentary below echoes that:

Interviewee 8:

“This is actually reflected on the way the programmes (wellness) is ran. It is literally an appendage that does not work well. Supervising managers lack knowledge of what to do to hone in the benefit of the programme when subordinates and colleagues make use of it. Managers should have a kind of training on how to assist employees using the wellness programmes further upon their return to work. For instance, a surgeon will perform surgery on a patient but a GP and nurses will take care of the patient until the wound is healed.”

This comment concisely summarised the matter on how the programme is administered. As an outsourced service, where management employees are not trained to further drive home the benefits achieved at the programmes by those employees, time and resources would have been wasted. These comments are supported by the quantitative outcomes resulting from the data analysis.

There were noted factors that limited the efficacy of the WP as obtained from the qualitative responses.

Delimitations of the programme: Some of the delimitations of the programme that emerged from the interviews were: lack of awareness, effects of culture and belief, stigmatisation of the programme, matters of confidentiality and trust and finally accessibility. Virtually all respondents confirmed that the WP was not visible and they were not aware of its existence at the municipality. The lack of awareness may have led to the minimal use of the programme by most professional level employees. Those that were aware of the programme did not want to associate with it because of stigmatisation as they said it was tailored for those needing various lifestyle related challenges, like alcoholism, substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, and debt challenges. Some respondents were of the opinion that the challenges faced by Africans needed an African solution and not Western or European methods. Interviewee 9 for instance, queried as follows with regard to culture and beliefs:

“Is the wellness tailored to help us as Africans or what? Yeah, but the question that I always ask myself is, are they looking at those that cultural issues that concern us or are they looking and focusing at those European issues? Are we doing it as it concerns our cultural background or are we imposing those European things on the people? These are the questions I ask myself. There are needs that are culturally based, are we trying to solve those problems for the employees or are we imposing European solutions on them? These are the challenges I think that are not looked into when we discuss a wellness programme.”

Other respondents asserted that anyone attending the WP was a target for retrenchment and that the programme could be a management tool to victimise those that use it regularly. Management on its side was also not able to benefit maximally from the programme due to pressures from the unions. For instance, the issue of substance abuse and its consequences cannot be treated by management with the temerity it demands especially when victims are not able to receive lasting help after a given period on the programme.

Moreover, many respondents felt that the manner in which the programme was administered leaves no room for confidentiality especially due to the fact that a referral process is required to be followed. This further hampered the use and subsequent

enjoyment of the benefits of the programme, leading to the inability of the programme to achieve the objective of its adoption.

Several suggestions were made by employees on how to improve the WP so that it can achieve the goal of assisting employees to manage their work-family stressors, enhance their SOC and help them in achieving WLB.

Improvement: Suggestions as to how the programme can be improved ranged from listening to additional learning. Most respondents were of the opinion that the WLBS (that is WP) in place at the municipality did not assist employees in achieving WLB, therefore, they made recommendations that could assist in improving its effectiveness. Some of the most outstanding suggestions came from:

Interviewee 7:

“We need management that listens to and appreciates employees’ challenges. It will help a lot especially where you have a head of department or unit who listens. The municipality can also help further by implementing programmes that can trigger WLB. Create a working environment that resonates with all the employees. Encouraging learning among employees can also help in improving their coping abilities. Supportive management can also help employees cope with an assurance of understanding from leadership. Good leadership encourages the suppression of negative behavioural tendencies among employees through the recognition of individual uniqueness and differences. Redesigning work along the outcome required can help reduce some of the stressors associated with the present municipal structures. The ways are exhaustive and the approaches many. Some heads can also design their own ways of assisting employees cope with work stressors depending on the nature of work that they perform.”

This participant thought that listening, improving the work environment, redesigning work and supportive management could assist employees in managing their work and family stressors and possibly achieve WLB.

Interviewee 7:

“Some of the attempts to craft interventions to assist employees have actually succeeded in exacerbating the issues instead of mitigating them. To me I will then agree that quite a lot has to be done in dealing with the issue of coherence of employees. We

have been dealing with the symptoms and not the vital issues underlying those symptomatic manifestations. People find solutions elsewhere and when they return to the workplace like I said before, different stereotypes challenge what they had received and cause more problems. Our diversity is still a serious problem you see. Clearly speaking, it becomes a difficult thing to achieve balance or stability in any given circumstance of stressors among employees.”

Interviewee 4:

“There are other things that the municipality can do; have a crèche at work for working mothers, or look at something like family responsibility leave; we do have family responsibility leave here but is just very limited, it could be extended to dependent relatives. For example, my mum is late but her sister (my aunt), whom I see as my mum, lives with me at my home. But I can’t get family responsibility leave for her sake. So there should be a kind of flexibility in that regard given individual circumstances, i.e. since my mum is not there, my aunt could be accommodated in the programme.”

Interviewee 10:

“I think that it should be recommended to employers around here that as soon as an employee is promoted, he or she should get some kind of counselling. Can you imagine if you are the head of department and when you became a manager you got counselling relevant for that post, when you became a deputy head you got relevant counselling for that post, and also when you got promoted to the head position you got counselling too. Then imagine the counsellor giving a two minute call to your wife and telling her to support you in this new post by doing this and that? Assuming that all the while you were receiving counsel your wife was also being counselled all the way? If the counsellor calls to break the news of your promotion to her and tells her “Ma’am Mr Exchange Guru has been promoted to the position of head of department today. Please if you have been shopping at shop XYZ once a week, please do not stop showing up once a week at shop XYW, or changing to a more expensive shop ABC for three times a week. This is because, if you start shopping ABC thrice weekly, your husband will not be able to perform his normal duties as a result of the financial stress that he may enter as a result of your shopping.” Then if Mr Guru rises even up to the city manager, the counselling must not stop. It must be made compulsory for every employee that has just been promoted and their spouses. It must be one of the conditions attached to every

promotion and should not be allowed to be voluntary. It could be a time out with the family and the counsellor. It could also be a sms saying “Mr Guru has just been promoted, please avoid so and so.” Moreover, it could be a session that precedes the release of the promotional letter, for e.g. if you are to be given the letter of promotion on the 31st of the month, you should have gone for counselling before the 20th”.

Interviewee 11:

“We don’t have enough opportunities for people to socialise. Socialise in a way; how do you build teams? How do you build a sense of unity of purpose? A lot of us work together and we never really engage and our families don’t interact. There isn’t that sense of community, over 23 000 people working in the same place but we are all individualised yet we should be a united front, the strong community. If we can have interventions that build interpersonal relationships that could help.”

Interviewee 5:

“We need to be innovative especially using technology in solving work challenges.”

Respondent 151:

“Having a clear policy statement and being committed to providing a flexible responsive workplace, which enables all employees to balance work and family responsibilities is needed here.”

Respondent 157:

“When politics is put aside and expertise/qualifications are used as parameters for advancement. When supervisors are trained to handle employees and our HR becomes autonomous and NEUTRAL employees may achieve WLB.”

Respondent 292:

“Reviewing work-loads and employee abilities and training. Cutting red tape and quicker decision making. Empowering employees to make more decisions on their own will help us achieve balance between work and our family needs.”

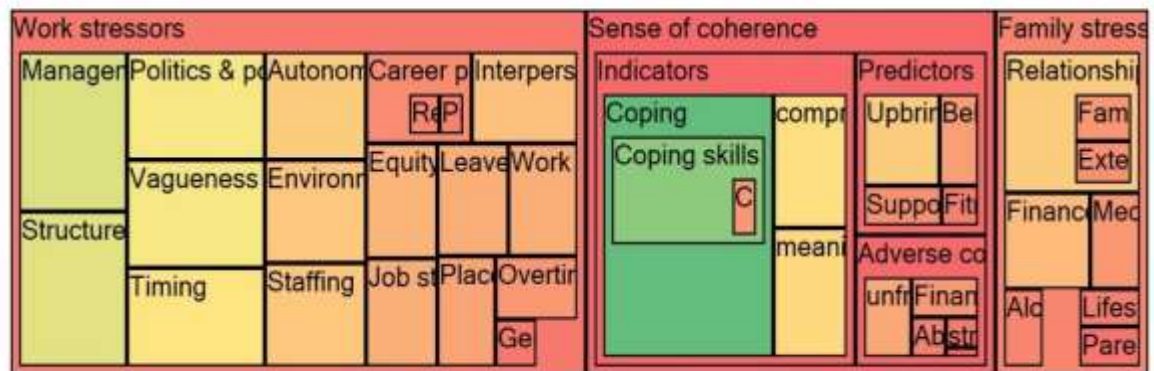
These recommendations as to how the WP could be improved at the municipality are useful in making recommendations at the end of the study.

8.6.3 Influence of work and family stressors on SOC

Work stressors set out to be investigated in this study were job stress, function vagueness/role conflict and absence of autonomy. Similarly, family stressors were parenting and child care, elder care, time and relational stress/tension. The study also examined the predictors of SOC, that is meaning, comprehensibility, manageability (coping) and meaningfulness. The diagram below (Figure 8.22) presents a snapshot of the themes that emerged from the responses of the participants. It indicates that most references were coded to work stressors, followed by SOC and then family stressors.

Figure 8.22 Comparing sense of coherence, work and family stressors by number of themes

Nodes compared by number of coding references



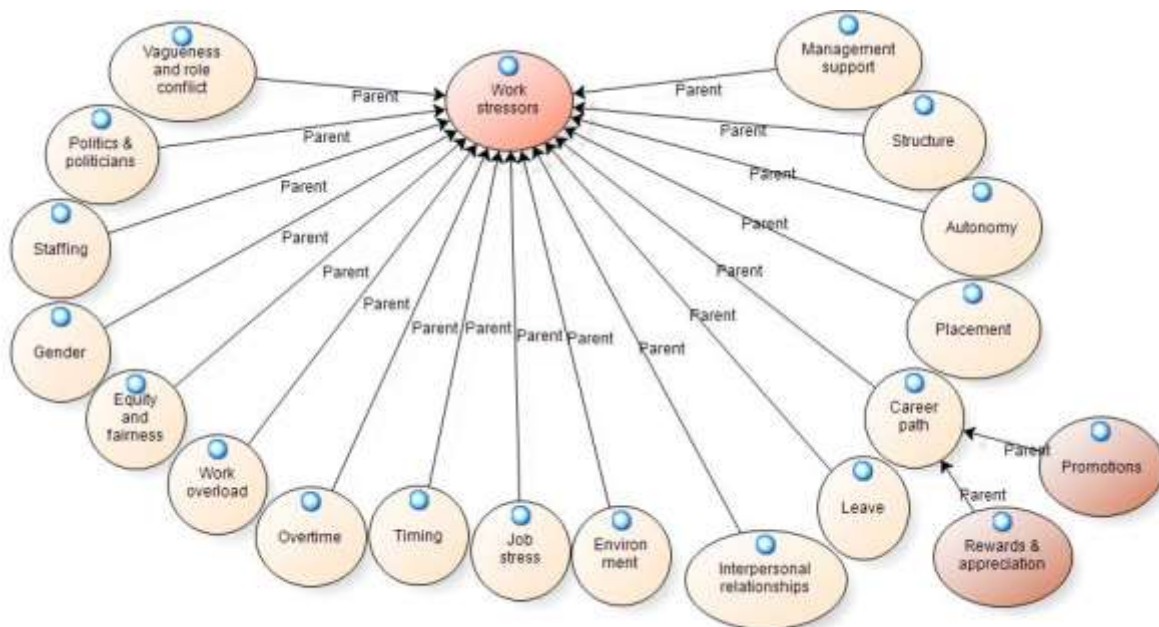
The size of each box represents the number of references made by respondents on the theme concerned. A smaller box within a theme indicates that there is a sub-theme involved. From the diagram above, the most coding went to coping, indicating that most respondents had one thing or the other to say about coping. Responses to each of the themes and sub-themes will be further explained in the sections 8.6.3.1, 8.6.3.2 and

8.6.3.3.

8.6.3.1 Work stressors noted at the municipality

According to Tang and Chang (2010), work stressors can have both direct and indirect effects on employees and these can impact on their performance and in this case, SOC. The researcher set out to examine three job stressors, namely job stress, function vagueness/role conflict and absence of autonomy, but the responses from participants revealed fourteen additional notable stressors faced by employees at the municipality as presented in Figure 8.23 below. In this study the majority of the participants mentioned that absence of management support, the structure of the organisation, politics and politicians, function vagueness, timing, and absence of autonomy, among others, as the most notable work stressors. But only those pertinent to the study objectives will be discussed. And these are: function vagueness/role conflict, absence of autonomy (manifested through the influence of politics and politicians) and job stress (experienced as a result of bureaucratic organisational structure).

Figure 8.23 Notable work-stressors at the municipality



Function vagueness/Role conflict

Function vagueness refers to the absence of specificity and predictability with respect to an employee's work or duties and responsibility (Kahn et al., 1964 in Tang & Chang,

2010). Most respondents were of the opinion that “*naturally, local government is a bureaucratic organisation and ambiguity/role conflict and absence of autonomy may cause stress to employees*” (Interviewee 7).

The municipality is a bureaucratic organisation and decision-making with respect to functionality passes through a lengthy processes. These cause stress. Roles are performed arbitrarily although the organogram describes what and who should do what. Some more remarks from the participants with respect to function vagueness/role conflict are presented below.

Interviewee Hard Knock:

“Take for instance, when the board of directors requires information on a project and asks for such information from a junior official; to someone in management position, hearing that of course, could be stressful and worrisome to this management staff.”

This comment speaks of role conflict and its effect on employees, a case of undermining a superior officer. Where an employee’s SOC is weak and he/she feels undermined, he/she may not be able to cope with the emerging stress especially if this affects the communication between the manager and the board member and/or the manager and the subordinate (chain-of-command).

With respect to job stress, the comment below is noteworthy:

Interviewee Exchange Guru:

“The unfortunate part within the municipality is that the senior people are bogged down with admin, there is too much paper work. There is too much piling of paper work at the head of unit level. We do too many things that require that we spend most of the time dealing with compliance issues. We ought to be visionaries seeking ways to deliver service to the constituencies and residents, but no, visionaries are bogged down with compliance matters. If I spend most of my time trying to do supply chain management documents, signing invoices, reading things to ensure that no corrupt practices are carried out, when am I going to get time to sit down and think. You have managers at the senior level who have capacity to think but cannot apply that capacity because they are bogged down in meetings and with compliance stuff. For e.g. if I am the head of electricity, I need time to plan to deliver to my clients, my clients are not the municipality, I need to be out there in the squatter camps to see how people are doing

with my services. What I know about my clients depends on me going out to them to gather information not in meetings in boardrooms. But we can't go to the clients, rather we are always in boardrooms discussing compliance. That becomes stressful when one begins to feel that they are not performing as a result of these distractions."

The statement categorically stated the opinion of many other respondents concerning the source of job stress and role conflict in the organisation; paper work and working on compliance needs instead of doing the actual job that they are employed to perform. This view is supported by another participant in a rhetorical style of presentation:

Interviewee 11

"How do you balance between being an efficient administrator or civil servant with the demands of the political parties that are effectively your bosses? With a company it is very straight forward, but in this environment there are multiple demands made on you at the level of people wanting you to help them with their project or this and that project; and they want you to employ those people and not that people. All those demands, you have to constantly balance them."

However, some respondents felt that the 'birthing' issues surrounding the creation of the municipality were responsible for the problems associated with politics and politicians in the workplace. Refer to the comment below.

Interviewee 4:

"Well, if you take this municipality as an organisation, it was born 'cripple'. It is a crippled organisation. In the sense that it is not theoretically sound as in the way it should operate that is why it is crippled, it doesn't have the elements of a sound organisation. It doesn't have the elements that constitute a well organised organisation. The role of the political side of it is completely misunderstood by the politicians. They think that they are the bosses, they can walk in and trample all over you. And they are not skilled in what they do, they are not skilled in leadership, they are not skilled in any of your functions. But they will tell you what you should be doing. Something is actually wrong with the whole political setting and the politicians that run this setting."

The statement above portrays unequivocally, what may be seen as the root of role conflict at the municipality. It suggests that at the municipality, role clashes between the politicians and the technocrats, where the technocrats who are professionally trained

to handle their job duties are ‘bossed’ by politicians who did not have relevant training. This could be stressful and in fact draining on the part of the employees.

However, some participants were of the opinion that at the municipality, clear guidelines and policies are given to avoid role clash and function vagueness, but nevertheless, stress arises at the implementation level due to the bureaucratic organisational structure. The respondent’s comment is stated as follows:

Interviewee 10:

“Also, the structure of the organisation is clear so there is no vagueness because guidelines are provided to guide each role. The functions of every entity in the organogram is clearly stated ranging from the municipal manager, deputy city managers, heads of units and departments and so on. So I know what is supposed to be done by the deputy city manager, so there is no ambiguity there, but the problem is when we are now in the game we are playing. That is where it becomes a problem because at times you will see that instead of waiting for the municipal manager to give approval, this thing could have been handled by your immediate boss (deputy city manager). Or at times you feel that if there was no deputy city manager you will communicate with the city manager directly, which is quicker. The issue of role clarity is not in question here, but when implementing policies that is where the structural problems are highlighted.”

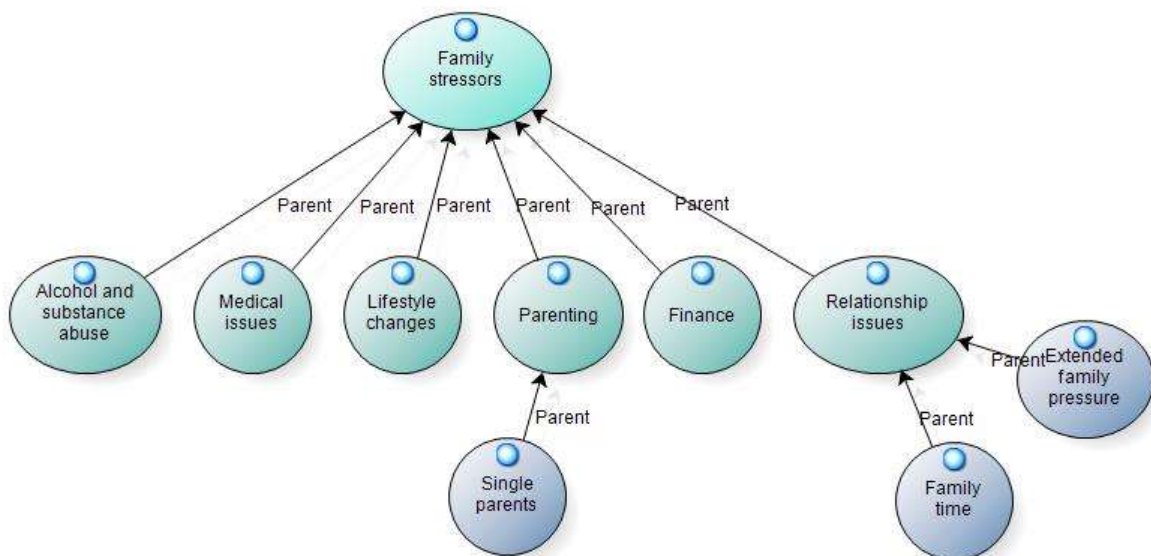
This statement corroborates the result of the quantitative data where the majority of the respondents were of the opinion that there are guidelines and policies to help them at their work and gives clarity to the stand of the other respondents who were of the opinion that there were incidents of function vagueness and role conflict at the municipality. All the responses indicated that function vagueness and role conflict were attributed to stress which could adversely affect an employee’s SOC and confirms the outcome of objective number three of this study that stressors significantly associate with as well as predict with SOC at the municipality.

8.6.3.2 Family stressors noted at the municipality

To Mc Cubbin and Sussman (2014), family stressors are on-going factors that signify the level of disruptions, disorganisations or incapacity in the social system of a family. The family stressors that emerged in this study are presented in Figure 8.24. Although

additional family stressors (such as medical issues, lifestyle changes, financial issues and extended family pressures) to those which the study set out to investigate, only medical issues will not be explained because the study did not ask any questions in this respect.

Figure 8.24 Pictorial presentation of family stressors found at the municipality



Financial/debt issues

The questions answered in this respect pertain to the financial situation of employees at the municipality that could have led to stress or inability to achieve WLB. Some of the comments include the following:

Interviewee 2:

“Over the years I have had to deal with quite a few people who had financial problems and they even resigned from work to get their pensions out. They did not share it with anyone at work and only after they’ve left, you find out that that was the reason why they left.”

This comment suggests that employees having financial issues did not disclose such to others. This could have led to the resignation of some of these employees. Additionally, the respondent was of the impression that some people secretly struggled with their finance/debt problems and resigned in order to collect their retirement benefits upfront or for fear of being stigmatised as having such a problem. In this study, individuals that attach meaningfulness to challenges have been shown to possess strong SOC. But where employees quit their jobs to collect pensions up-front as a result of financial pressures, this could be indicative of low SOC.

Interviewee 3:

“So many professionals especially in my field (medical), many of them went through their education by borrowing from the bank. Apart from the fact that they come from poor families they have to take care of so many things. As soon as they finish (graduate) from school, they are not able to balance because they have to pay banks the debts, that is number one. Number 2, that prevents them especially in medicine from specialization. So if you want to specialize you then continue to study. And you still have to pay your debts and many people (family members) are expecting you to give them something. And the lifestyle that they had created for themselves during the medical aid abuse, needed to be funded and you know that their salaries are not sufficient to sustain that lifestyle and that becomes a problem.”

Additionally he said:

“You have instances that we have experienced where doctors could not make ends meet, the car would stop on the road and he is not able to come to work as a result of this. It can go to that level of degeneration. Those that are trying very hard to cope would look for additional source(s) of income leading to their working extra hours (time).”

This respondent considered the length of time it took to graduate from medical school and the bulk of loans taken by medical doctors working at the municipality and the dire need to pay back those loans as being responsible for some of the finance/debt issues attributable to doctors at the municipality. This comment suggests that the financial

issues attributed to medical doctors at the municipality could be traced to educational loans acquired to fund studies and the lifestyles accruing from extravagant living. The respondent further stated that an ostentatious lifestyle adopted as a result of making dubious gains from medical aids abuse needed to be maintained, so many employees (doctors particularly) needed to work overtime.

However, some respondents found that the individual need for more money led them to work overtime at the municipality not necessarily because of work overload imposed by the municipality.

This statement was corroborated by Respondent 287:

“People like to get more money/raise by working overtime just because they need money, but this takes family time.”

Additionally, many employees were of the opinion that the municipality paid her employees well, as Interviewee 10’s comment suggests.

Interviewee 10:

“And I believe that the municipality is doing this very well, she pays her employees well. But you know, as you get more and you are paid well, you tend to raise the bar and because you have done that, your life tends to be miserable because you use that unreasonably. But if people could plan their earnings and save and use less loans, then they can have a balanced life, e.g. there are times that employees do not take leave. They save their leave so that they can sell it. Now, it has recently started becoming a trend on a particular system.”

This respondent considered the municipality as a good and well-paying employer that could not be held responsible for the financial/debt problems of her employees. Therefore respondents felt that the inability of employees to plan the use of their earnings well led to their problem of debt and financial stress. Planning could be attributed to the manner that individuals appraise their situations which may be linked to the SOC. A person with strong SOC may meaningfully appraise financial needs and manage finances reasonably while the reverse could be the case with an individual with weak SOC.

Summarily, it could be seen that financial debt issues at the municipality could be

associated with the level of individual SOC. Although the WP include strategies that address finances and debt (through counselling) issues, it may not have been effective in assisting employees address these stressors and improve their SOC. The implication of this at the individual level is the suggestion that even though the quantitative analysis suggests that most employees had strong SOC, some of the employees were unable to manage finance/debt related challenges.

Relationship issues

This addressed the challenges associated with marital and cohabiting/spousal relationships. The challenges that affect performance at work and are stressful to the individual emanating from spousal relationships are appraised among respondents. Some of the comments provided to questions about the relational challenges among employees at the municipality are:

Interviewee 3:

“It is mainly family responsibilities which affect work, either extended family or your own family. In most cases almost all workers even my colleagues would have people that they need to take care of (responsibility) and that becomes a problem. You will either be irresponsible which you don’t want to be because this is Africa (our culture demands that you belong to a family and the community) and no matter what you do you still want to belong and take care of your family and extended family responsibility. And that becomes a conflict which in most cases becomes irreconcilable, because the individual employee has to live a certain level of standard of living. You are responsible to the family and needed there too while your work demands your presence also. This crumbles so many of them and of course affects their coping mechanism.”

He further said that:

“Many people are facing divorce, and others spend time at work to escape problems at home. A lot of the ladies are single mothers and seem to have challenges with family and work involvement. They marry today and in three months’ to one year’s time the marriage fails and they are divorced! And in most cases the divorce is very bitter and messy. Some leave with little children that require attention and care. Most people are lucky to leave such marriages without ‘baggage’ but they (divorce) are always messy, very messy. And then of course that causes a lot of stress to the employee and affects work.”

Most of the respondents described relationship challenges as being primarily based on the African culture that requires employees to be responsible for assisting relatives dependent on them, whether old or young, as well as their immediate nuclear family. Others appreciated these challenges as stemming from high divorce rate which often are messy and bitter leaving its bitter traits with employees. Most divorcees are left to care for young children needing care and attention which creates work-life conflict among those involved. Additionally, the death of a spouse or family member was also highlighted as contributory to family stressors faced by employees at the municipality. These stressors definitely impact the affected employees negatively especially in their outcomes at work and home. The impact of these challenges could be worse if the individual SOC is weak and there are no strategies in place to assist them in coping.

Interviewee 8:

“But at the higher level, money may not be the problem, but that does not take away the other aspects of family needs (especially relationship conflicts) that encroach into work and significantly impact workers at work.”

This comment clarifies that at the level of engagement of the participants sampled in this study (professional level employees), money may not be the main stressor since employees at this level of employment are well paid. Rather, it confirms that relational challenges comprise the stressors that spill over to work and affect employees negatively. This is also an indication that generally, although employees’ SOC at the municipality may be strong it could confirm the outcome of research objective number 3 that stressors predict SOC at the municipality.

The influence of general family relations on the lifestyle of employees emerged as contributory to the family stressors that employees contend with at the municipality.

Interviewee 10:

“The same family will expect you to take your kids to expensive schools and buy yourself expensive cars. They expect you to also shop in the most expensive shops as well and wear the expensive labels, this is highly stressful as one will have to contend with pleasing the family to live big or following one’s values and manage what one has reasonably.”

This statement brought in another perspective to the relationship issue since the respondent considered the expectation of family members concerning employees as a

challenge. The statement articulated the assumptions of family relations when they consider the employment status of employees and expect that they shop at expensive shops, live in highbrow suburbs and appear in expensive and branded cars, jewellery and clothing. Employees with low SOC often fall prey to these expectations and soon are entangled in debts acquired as a result of other people's expectation. These can affect stress level, wellbeing and conversely achievement of WLB adversely.

Furthermore, domestic violence and sexual harassment were suggested as a challenge among employees at the municipality. The next comment clarifies thus:

Interviewee 11:

“Domestic violence is also on the increase even among people that you expect to be responsible. When you hear that a manager among your colleagues is beating his wife, it is troubling, we hear these reports. Family stress definitely impacts on the work place as people transfer their problem to work and colleagues. Also, I think the particular way that people use workplace relationships especially men, using their positions to have sexual relationships with junior female employees is always a problem, it's a huge problem. It undermines the trust and ability required for one to be an effective manager.”

The sample participants for this study are high ranking officers but the comment above suggests that although this level of employees are expected to be responsible, domestic violence is rife among them. Moreover, the statement highlighted abuse of position as an issue where male employees use their offices to seduce junior female workers. The effect of these kinds of informal relationships affects individual performance and could negatively impact interpersonal relationships at the workplace. These have also contributed to the clarification of the outcome of quantitative data analysis regarding the effect of stressors on SOC at the municipality.

Finally Respondent 143 comments:

“One always looks forward to going to a peaceful environment, your home, but sometimes it becomes more stressful at home.”

The semantics involved in this statement implies that the workplace was not a peaceful environment; it also concluded that the home sometimes is more stressful possibly because of the numerous relational challenges that negatively affect employees and

their outcomes. These challenges task individual coping mechanisms and may lead to the non-achievement of WLB. This may be confirmatory of the research objective 6 and supportive of the quantitative data analysis finding that employees at the municipality did not achieve meaningful WLB.

The sub-themes that emerged from relationship issues are extended family pressure and family time.

Extended family pressure

Interviewee 10:

“If you are an executive, your family will definitely know, so they will make demands. Well I am not married and even if you are not married at least your girlfriend will know that you are in such a position and will make her demands. The same goes for the extended family members. They expect something from you so those are the stressors that people take to the work place.”

Interviewee 11:

“And I think that there is a lot of expectation from my people that I should solve their problems and employ my brothers and sisters. It becomes an issue for me, because, if you are my brother I can't employ you and will be unable to fire you. These are the kinds of problems in our context although they are more serious for other people. Many people are under the pressure from demands from family and relatives.”

Interviewee 8:

“Elder care needs as well as emotional responsibilities with children and school things are also a problem.”

Taken together, these three comments specify the issues associated with pressures from extended family members and relatives. In general, the respondents agreed that extended family members expect to be cared for by employees who are their relatives. Interviewee 11 observed that even relatives who may not qualify for a job placement at the municipality would expect to be employed by family members who are professional level employees. This, of course, could become stressful because of the issue of nepotism and especially when the relation does not perform maximally.

Family time

Time is often seen as not sufficient when a person has too much to do (work-overload). From Interviewee 4's comment presented below, insufficient time for planning leaves most employees struggling to be involved with their family roles. This confirms the quantitative data result on involvement and explains why the time balance scale was eliminated from the scales approved by EFA. Most employees work at weekends while others could not tell when their closing time was. There was no response scale to measure this kind of situation. One of the interviewees in this study was given the pseudonym 24/7 Executive because he worked every day for 24 hours, according to him.

Interviewee 4:

“Well, time is a crucial thing. Time is a problem here. Time is a crucial thing because officials are taken away from their families for long periods. You could be told today at 5 O'clock that you must organise something and you have to call home and say, well I am not coming home today or I am coming home to pack my bags. And so you are taken away and it could be for days. So you abandon your family to get the job done. So time is crucial here.”

Interviewee 11:

“In family, some people put their work first because of survival and forget to balance the needs of work and that of the family. And especially fathers will need to spend more time with their sons. I think that's a huge problem in the continent (Africa). I think young men in our continent need affirmation from their fathers. But this is not possible because fathers never have time to work with their boys (their sons) and this could explain why males are sometimes violent against the women. The pressure of work does not give the men time to be involved with the family.”

The need to survive and cater for family takes men and women away from their families and robs them of the vital role of parenting and nurturing their young ones. As passionately stated by the Interviewee 11, this is becoming a problem for the African continent. However, at the individual level, absence of involvement with family creates dissatisfaction at home and work. This could be accountable for the job dissatisfaction and high rate of involvement with work obtained from the quantitative data. The fact that these employees spend more time at work, and lesser time at work was dissatisfactory, explains the outcome of research questions 5 and 6. Although

employees were mostly involved with work and spent more time at work, they felt more satisfied with the family situation than their work situations.

Interviewee 7:

“But generally, we as auditors work under stressful circumstances that can cause conflict at home, as a result of working late hours or on weekends. This can also be a general statement, but we work beyond the official work timing.”

This statement further confirms that most employees have insufficient time to spend with their families and the ripple effect could be conflict at home which spirals into the office and affects coherence and possibly performance. It is reported that the more a person is involved in his job, the higher the work family conflict which eventually leads to increase in job burnout, low satisfaction and reduced commitment (Azeem & Akhtar, 2014).

Alcohol and substance abuse issues

Given the situation where employees' situation at work and home is rife with stressors, it is not surprising to find that employees engage in drinking and some having alcohol-related issues. Alcoholism signifies that the individuals involved are not able to cope with stressors therefore, they indulge in alcohol.

Interviewee 3:

“When some people are under pressure whether from home, the next thing is that they just succumb to alcoholism. Those who can't cope often take to alcoholism.”

A few of the respondents described the issues about alcoholism as a default mode which employees fall into when they are unable to cope with family stressors. Some confirmed that the individual problem is highlighted by the problem of drinking alcohol but that there is always an underlying issue precipitating the use of alcohol among employees.

Interviewee 9:

“And sometimes they start drinking and sometimes you want to help them stop the drinking but the problem is more than that. These are the challenges that I can pick up you know. Drinking, yes.”

Interviewee 1:

“Cases of alcoholism and drug abuse are seen here and there.”

Even though alcohol and substance abuse is noted among the workforce at the municipality, yet the issue is not generalised as most respondents did not think that the problem is daunting.

Parenting

Parenting did not seem to be much of a stressor for the respondents because many of them did not respond to the question. However Interviewee 5 observed that some employees may be stressed because they *“probably have problematic children.”* Problematic children in this case may include those abusing substances and/or alcohol. The effect of this on employees could be increased stress and inability to cope with work demands. Moreover, the theme ‘single parents’ emerged from the study.

Single parents

Interviewee 1:

“So, most people are hardly involved with family because of the work-load and time required to perform work. Therefore, single mums do not have sufficient time for both work and family.”

Interviewee 11

“And especially single mums, they are under great pressure because they perform the role of husband and wife as well as father/mother at home.”

The challenges faced by single parents range from the need for crèches to security and every day needs. The dual role (father and mother) performed by a single parent at home could affect their coherence and ability to achieve WLB, since they are often under pressure to perform many roles

Lifestyle changes

Interview 10:

“When people get the management positions, lifestyle changes are made. Often the family would pressure you to move from the township to the suburbs. Why? That is stressful. Can you imagine if most executives are staying in the townships? They may not have to spend as much as they do every time on housing, vehicles and the rest. The houses in the suburbs could be as much as four-times more expensive than the same

size of houses in the townships. So, most of us are under pressure to live ostentatiously while some of us have personal appetite for such wasteful lifestyles.”

Continuing, he comments thus:

“There are very few of the people at the senior level that will still have money three days before their pay day, simply because they had lavished their salary. You cannot be living in Umhlanga Rocks and drive all the good cars with your normal salary and not be broke before the next pay day. I think some people are living on too much credit and it is the credit that is caused by the demand back home and lifestyle demands. I have observed those who are earning good money and are still living in the townships, they are always happy because they have a big enough salary and they have peace of mind. Some of them have houses that they have paid up and those that are still paying bonds on their homes pay so much less than those paying for suburban houses. Status is a problem here.”

This statement captured the overall sentiment about the effect of workplace changes like promotion and receipt of annual bonus on employees’ lifestyle. This conclusively led to the acquisition of unnecessary goods and ostentatious living that culminate in indebtedness and ultimately stress. An individual with strong SOC may be able to manage successfully on their income even when such income increases as a result of promotion at work.

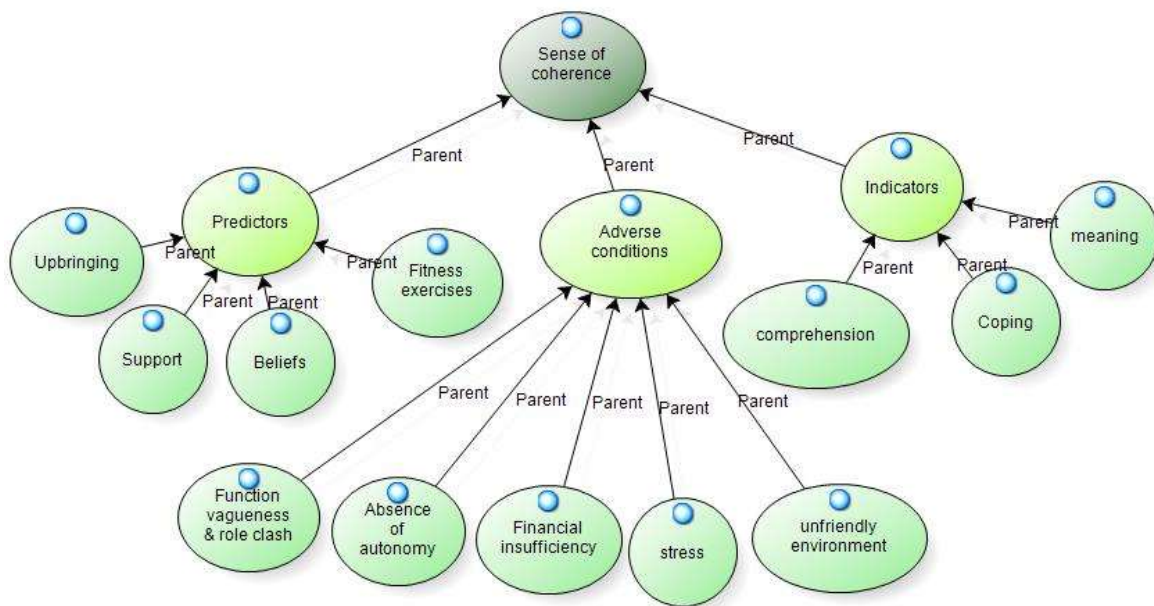
8.6.3.3 SOC at the municipality

According to Antonovsky (1987), SOC is a universal inclination of an individual to appraise the world through three characteristic dimensions, namely: 1) meaningfulness (an interpretation of stressors as meaningful demands that deserve to be handled), 2) manageability (perception that the person has sufficient resources to manage the environment in which one finds him/herself), and 3) comprehensibility (a case of perceiving an environment as being explainable, organised and predictable) (Feldt et al., 2003; Kivimäki et al., 2002). It is connected with the capacity to manage pressures that individuals face. Moreover, it is the aptitude which empowers an individual to face challenges and stressors with optimism basically accepting strain to be one of the things that fosters growth and maturity. A person with a high SOC has the potential to counter stress amenably as well as effectively surmount hostile circumstances (Togari et al., 2008). Similarly, Feldt et al. (2005) confirm that a strong SOC is life’s dispositional

tendency that protects individuals from stress through the perception of life situations as challenges (*sense of meaningfulness*), which happen for a reason (*sense of comprehensibility*), and even if such are beyond the individual's control, they could be coped with through the use of other resources available to them (*sense of manageability*).

In this study, the result of the analysis of the qualitative data collected on SOC is presented pictorially in Figure 8.25 below.

Figure 8.25 Presentation of the analysis of SOC at the municipality



From Figure 8.25, three major themes emerged from the data, namely predictors, adverse conditions and indicators.

Predictors of SOC

Predictors in this context are the factors that underlie the development of SOC. They include and are not limited to upbringing, support, beliefs and fitness as seen in this study.

Upbringing

Antonovsky (1987) was of the opinion that the roots of SOC are found in what he called the Generalised Resistant Resources (GRRs). These GRRs (intelligence, money, ego strength, social support and family cohesion) beginning from early childhood frame the

daily life encounters of individuals to translate into positive experiences that systematically develop into strong SOC, while the absence of these GRRs precipitate weak SOC (Feldt et al., 2005). This therefore implies that upbringing plays a fundamental role in the development of GRRs and ultimately strong SOC. With respect to the effect of upbringing on SOC therefore, the comments collected from the interviews are presented as follows:

Interviewee 8:

“Yeah, I think that South Africa has got a history. And that history as you know is a little bit unfortunate. The family unit especially of the Africans has been undermined, undermined in a variety of ways. Those of us that come from rural areas have a situation whereby we grew up under the nurturing of our mothers. Our fathers not being present because they had to be away at work in the cities to eke a living on our behalf. This brought a lot of pressure on family values. You see, fathers visited probably once a year when they were on annual leave and could afford the trip. We had limited interaction with them and could learn little or nothing at those short times. These may have had influence on the way we manage and cope with life issues even today.”

The statement highlighted the little time and role fathers played in the nurturing of their children as a result of the prolonged history of the country under apartheid and slavery and reflects the state in which children were raised during those days. This situation not only brought economic hardship on the family, it also created no room for building GRRs and conversely weak SOC.

Comments on nurturing confirm the place of upbringing in the development of strong SOC and highlight the way individual’s sense of meaningfulness is developed. This is supported by the comment of Respondent 009: *“Yes, I believe my upbringing in part is part of the reason for me being able to cope.”* South Africa is a multi-racial society and this researcher bears in mind that all the respondents were not from one racial background. As a result of this, some would have been raised and nurtured in wealthy environments while some others were raised in a not too comfortable/wealthy environment. For instance, Respondent 016’s statement: *“Probably, because I have had to deal with hard times in my youth and now tend to take life as it comes and deal with problems step by step,”* indicates that the encounters in his/her youthful days shaped his/her ability to cope with stress even though they were not altogether pleasant.

Most often, respondents commented about the type of parenting they received as being the reason why they cope or do not cope with stress, implying that the kind of parenting received during upbringing could be a determinant of strong or weak SOC.

Respondent 058:

“May be to an extent because I never saw my parents (Grandma and dad) struggling or lacking anything so automatically, I thought every aspect of life is a breeze, I was totally wrong. I have difficulty coping because my situation is not the same with my parents, although they were good parents.”

Respondent 237:

“Yes. I was abandoned by my father and was raised by mother. She took all of her time to raise me well as she is a single parent.”

Despite the fact that positive assessments of upbringing were attributable to strong SOC by some respondents and weak SOC by others, some respondents also saw hardship during their youthful days as accountable for the reasons they can cope, as stated by Respondent 287:

“Yes it has. I had to cope with a lot while growing up. At boarding school, I also had to cope, hence I can manage,” and this was corroborated by Respondent 148: *“I had to fend for myself at a very young age.”*

The statements indicate that upbringing in one way or the other affects the level of SOC that an individual may have, although apparently, apartheid contributed to the problems of the family which affected the nurturing base of most individuals. These statements contend with Antonovsky’s claim that only positive elements like wealth, support, and religious belief, participation in decision making and community, built strong SOC. Some of these participants clarified that they had challenging upbringings, yet they still have strong SOC. Another participant claimed that although he was well provided for by his parents, he still portrays weak SOC.

Beliefs

Beliefs are held and committed to assumptions by individuals concerning thoughts, feelings, situations, individuals and everything else. The online business dictionary defines belief as *“assumptions and convictions that are held by an individual or a*

group, regarding concepts, events, people and things.” Participants in this study expressed their beliefs as being responsible for their strong SOC as follows:

Respondent 071:

“I am capable of coping with work and life stressors. I have a strong spiritual foundation which helps me cope with the trials and tribulations of life.”

Having strong spiritual beliefs led to strong coping abilities, for most respondents this is the way to overcome stressors. In general, most respondents expressed positive sentiments about their ability to manage stress through their faith.

Respondent 093:

“I can cope because I have the strength given by God to me, I fear no evil.”

Respondent 191:

“I am able to cope because I learn from the environment around me and Jesus gives me grace to change for the better.”

These statements showcase people’s faith in their God as the source of their ability to manage stressors, thereby confirming belief as a predictor of strong SOC. Respondent 287 clearly attributes her being a prayerful Christian and member of a prayer group as being the reason for her ability to cope with stress in her comment: *“I am a Christian and most of the stresses are solved through prayer and the prayer group has sessions where we discuss these.”* Undoubtedly therefore, ability to cope with stress is an indication of strong SOC. Likewise, many participants gave credence to the time that they spend weekly doing yoga and other spiritual activities which provide contentment, as captured through Respondent 018’s comment: *“I do yoga and go to Ashram half of the week, leading a contented life with strong spiritual basis.”* Most respondents perceived that spiritual beliefs were an inevitable way to cope and manage stress which might lead to the development of a strong SOC.

Some respondents’ belief was that work is worship and therefore required some kind of devotion, hence, the meaning attached to work and stress associated with it is that it is an inevitable entity that needs commitment.

Respondent 018:

“Yes, I have come from a humble, disciplined family where we have been taught that work is worship. Think the apartheid system with inequality and inequity made me also appreciate the need to be passionate about work.”

By attaching this kind of meaning to work, people could easily step-over the challenges of work because they may see such as meaningful obstacles worthy to be combated and won. This therefore shows a degree of coping ability that could be translated as strong SOC.

Support

The *Conservation of Resources (COR)* theory propounded by Hobfoll (1988, 1989) has as its core principle the belief that individuals are driven by the need to acquire and sustain resources that assist them in attaining goals. Hence, when people obtain resources, they receive the capacity to maximise them to augment their lives. Therefore, COR theory proposes that the vulnerability of or real loss of resources makes individuals employ efforts to evade more loss (Halbesleben, Zellars, Carlson, Perrewé, & Rotondo, 2010; Hobfoll, 2001). According to Halbesleben (2006), social support is one vital resource which people develop and obtain to reduce the diminution of other resources (Leiter, 1990). Halbesleben et al. (2010) report that social support comprises *“the exchange of resources between individuals with the aim of helping the person receiving the support”* (Van Daalen, Willemsen, & Sanders, 2006; Winnubst, 1993). The present study did not focus on support from management and family to ascertain their contribution to improved SOC shown by capacity to better manage stress. But below is a presentation of some of the statements from respondents in this regard.

Respondent 018:

“Yes, I have learnt to adopt and adjust to challenges of work and life with good family support; a family that support me in my job.”

A supportive family contributes to resources that an individual can draw from in managing challenges and reducing work-related stress. The profound happiness of Respondent 058 demonstrated in his/her comment: *“nothing much stresses me at home. I have a great child and supportive partner,”* clearly shows the confidence that a partner has with the kind of support they are getting from the family domain which indicates that they are coping well with the work-related stressors because of this result of this resource. It could therefore be conclusively proposed that family support provided

employees with the resources to cope with stress and enhances SOC. This may be responsible for the reason why most employees are satisfied with the family situations, as found from the quantitative data analysis.

On the other hand, participants observed that there is notable absence of supportive management.

Respondent 023 further said with respect to supportive management:

“If management support you the life and stress can be managed, we lack management support here.”

This comment represents the opinion of some of the respondents and implies that there is notable absence of support from management for the employees. According to Greenhaus, Ziegert, and Allen (2012), supportive management engages in diverse behaviours namely provision of instrumental support, emotional support, role modelling as well as *creative work-family* related actions in order to assist employees to cope with work and family stressors. Where sustainable supportive management is lacking employees’ resources deplete under stress over time and this could predict low SOC at the workplace.

Fitness

Bodily exercise enhances fitness and increases mental alertness as suggested by some of the respondents in this study. Most of the participants suggested that exercises promote health and well-being which indicate SOC. Even though respondents understood the benefits and implications of exercise and fitness, most of them were of the opinion that they did not have sufficient exercise and therefore it affected the way they enjoyed life. Others agreed that they went to the gym regularly and therefore cope well with work and family stressors.

Interestingly, many respondents revealed dissatisfaction and satisfaction respectively about the effect of not exercising and exercising. Those employees who did not exercise complained of feeling ‘grumpy’ and unable to cope with stress while those who engaged in exercise and fitness work-outs demonstrated more ability to cope with stress. This implies therefore that exercise and fitness improved coping abilities and conversely enhanced SOC.

Indicators of SOC

In the present study, attention was given to the three factors of SOC in a one-factor analysis in line with Antonovsky's (1987) injunction in this regard. Qualitative data collected for the three indicators of SOC, namely meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability (coping), are analysed as follows.

Meaningfulness

This concerns the way in which respondents attached meaning to stressors by viewing them as being predictable, structured and explainable. Generally respondents faced work and family stressors but most of them expressed the meaning they attached to the stressors as follows.

Respondent 008:

"I think that stress is part of everyday life and that in order to perform my best I need to be on top of my game."

Respondent 153:

"I strongly believe that there will always be a situation that you may not be able to control because such situations depend on others. I always prepare myself for eventuality; it is part of the broader life."

Most participants understood stress as part of everyday life and according to them personal arrangements were made within their resources to address these stressors. Therefore they could predict and explain the stresses confronting them daily. Participants that shared in the common beliefs with the comment (153) above saw stressors as coming from situations beyond their personal control and therefore had understanding of the need to prepare for the eventualities that arise out of such uncontrollable situations. Although they saw the situation as being beyond control, they know the structure of these stressors and could predict that other people will definitely contribute to their stresses. The two statements above could indicate the presence of strong SOC because employees knew the structure and could predict their work stressors. This further confirms the findings of the qualitative data analysis with respect to strong SOC among employees at the municipality in the South African public sector.

On the other hand, some respondents expressed that they were frustrated with the

stressors that face them in the workplace. They primarily were of the view that those situations were beyond their control. For instance:

Respondent 010 commented as follows:

“Work stressors that we face are mainly around job grading, post allocations and unfairness in recruitment systems, delays in processes for grading etc. In these situations I get frustrated but realise it is beyond my control.”

Though Respondent 010 knew the structure and the predictability of his/her stressors, he/she had not demonstrated readiness to see these stressors as challenges that need to be exploited, rather, a knowing of his/her outcome, in this case, frustration. Frustration could easily be seen as a sign that someone had not understood why he/she should see a stressful situation as a challenge and this could be an indication of low SOC.

Respondent 027:

“Some of the work stressors make me doubt myself because sometimes I do things the way I understand and feel but when somebody sees it and thinks that it is wrong, it is demotivating, but I quickly recover most of the time.”

Many respondents shared in this opinion. Even though these respondents knew the structure of the workplace as being one that did not give autonomy for decision making, they went ahead to feel stressed and demotivated when their actions were found to be out of line with organisational expectations. Knowing that self-doubt is the outcome of their response to stress, they quickly recovered from self-doubt. This may be an indicator of a weak SOC.

However, there were employees who indicated that they did not cope well with stress.

Respondent 067:

“When I stress, I usually don’t deliver my work at my best ability and sometimes I feel inferior.”

It is evident here that this respondent has not demonstrated any meaning that he/she attaches to stresses. Low self-esteem and inability to perform maximally are obvious indicators of low SOC. Similarly, this comment: *“they (work stressors) make me feel uncomfortable, develop headaches and block my thinking ability. Sometimes they cause procrastination of certain activities,”* (Respondent 031) strongly confirms that people

that do not understand stressors and whose SOC is low do not see the meaningfulness of stressors.

Summarily, these comments highlight the way respondents attached meaning to their stressors. The outcome of their responses to these stressors could be categorised into low, weak or strong SOC as the case may be.

Comprehensibility

Comprehensibility involves the individual's assessment of resources within his/her reach as being capable of assisting him/her in meeting the demands of a stressor. Non-numeric data collected with respect to comprehensibility in this study states as follows:

Respondent 029:

"To summarise, work is about a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather torpor, in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying. I know that I could face challenges at work but I understand that it is part of the package."

Respondent 071

"All work is sacred and provides an opportunity to earn an honest living. There are millions of people who are unemployed and cannot find jobs. Work is a privilege in the current economic climate and should be respected. One's attitude determines how one views life stressors. I appreciate my job and the challenges that come with it."

Work is a provider of means and a challenge; this is the way in which these employees saw work-related stress. These respondents' comments demonstrated that they comprehend the work environment and the attendant stresses as necessary for livelihood instead of it being lethargic and wasteful. This ability to deduce and appreciate the resourcefulness of work may well be a good indicator of strong SOC. Additionally, the ability to accept stressors at the work place as being acceptable could indicate strong SOC. For instance, Respondent 154's comment: *"Some work stressors you cannot do anything about, you just need to accept it,"* and Respondent 153's *"I strongly believe that there will always be a situation that you may not be able to control because such situation depends on others,"* contribute to the claim that employees at

the municipality have strong SOC. On the other hand, some respondents indicated weak SOC.

Respondent 027:

“Sometimes it is difficult to focus and concentrate on your work when you are much stressed at home; as a result you don’t perform the work properly because you are absent minded.”

The comments above represent the views of the majority of the respondents. Although they were abreast of the stressors, they also believed that they (stresses) were in other people’s control and hence unmanageable and unavoidable. The organisation could make efforts to address some of the stressors *“in other people’s hands”* suggested by employees through effective WLBS. The fact that these respondents insist that these stressors are in the hands of others could be indicative that the WLBS in the municipality are not addressing these stressors. This could account for the non-association between WLBS and WLB in the study as indicated by the analysis of the quantitative data.

Manageability (coping)

This is concerned with the level of engagement of employees’ capabilities with the demands (stressors) because they considered them worthy to be invested in. Respondents to this study indicated various reasons why individual employees are coping or otherwise with the stresses relating to work and family as shown below.

Interviewee 11

“I spent some time in prison during the political struggle. I met a lot of younger people particularly of African descent taken from the African townships. I think a lot of things were destroyed there and damaged and a lot of childhood was destroyed. And I think that is why we have a lot of people who can’t cope with or deal with stress. They are among the lot who don’t know how to deal with or cope with challenges.”

Some respondents attributed the reason why most employees at the municipal workplace were unable to manage their work-life stresses to the damage done during apartheid years (childhood days of most children then who are now professional level employees). The demographics result showed that most employees in the professional

level employment category were born and raised during the apartheid era. Due to cultural diversity, the effect of the issues of the apartheid era cannot be generalised as demonstrated in the comment below.

Interviewee 1:

“Broadly speaking, a lot of managers are resilient here. Although I think it could be a fair mix. There may be difference in the influence that different situations may have had on each individual manager. For an Indian like me from the rural area, if you compare my confidence and coping skills with that of a man my mate who is White, you will find me struggling. This could be generalized among the rest of the workplace where our cultural background and orientation could be seen to impact our decisions and reactions to stressors. Education also plays a big role that is very important in the way people deal with issues. People from advantaged backgrounds like the White people are more confident and less hesitant and guarded in the face of stressors.”

This seems to be common sentiment shared among many respondents who were of the opinion that level of education, cultural and racial background contributed to the way individuals respond to and manage stresses. The study is based on professional level employees who should be well educated although they come from diverse backgrounds. Data was not collected on an ethnic/racial basis although educational level was examined in the quantitative data analysis.

This study appraised the way that individuals managed their work and family stressors. Respondents demonstrated many coping techniques ranging from seeing psychologists to segregating between work and family. Some of such comments are presented below.

Respondent 006:

“Currently No, I am not coping at all. I am seeing a psychologist, I just got divorced.”

Respondent 008:

“I separate work from my personal life. When I am stressed at work I think that home time is not far off and then I can go and live my life.”

Most of the respondents shared the way they managed their stressors above, indicating that they saw challenges as worthy of being invested into. While the majority indicated that they were not coping well with their work and family stressors as shown in the

following comments.

Respondent 023:

“Currently, it (coping) is a challenge.”

Respondent 031:

“I am not sure I cope well with the work and family stressors.”

Respondent 052:

“At times I am able to cope but when they both become stressful I get very depressed.”

Respondent 157:

“No. I feel powerless and numb, I lose focus constantly and lose concentration/become irritable/confrontational when I am stressed.”

Above are statements that indicate the different ways individual respondents had demonstrated their inability to manage stresses probably because they had not considered these stresses as challenges that are worthy to be exploited by making investments into solving them. These are indications of low/weak SOC.

Taken together, meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability in this study indicate the SOC of employees at the municipality in the South African public sector. Generally, respondents were able to predict the nature of stressors associated with work and their structure and clearly explained some of them (meaningfulness). However, most respondents did not find any useful resources in the environment that assisted them in managing their work and family stressors even though some respondents considered the WP useful in attending to family stressors that required counselling (comprehensibility). Finally, different ways in which employees coped (managed) with their work and family stressors were demonstrated by many employees while most of them indicated that they could not manage (cope) with work and family stressors, thereby implying that they did not consider the challenges worthy of investing into (manageability).

Adverse conditions to SOC

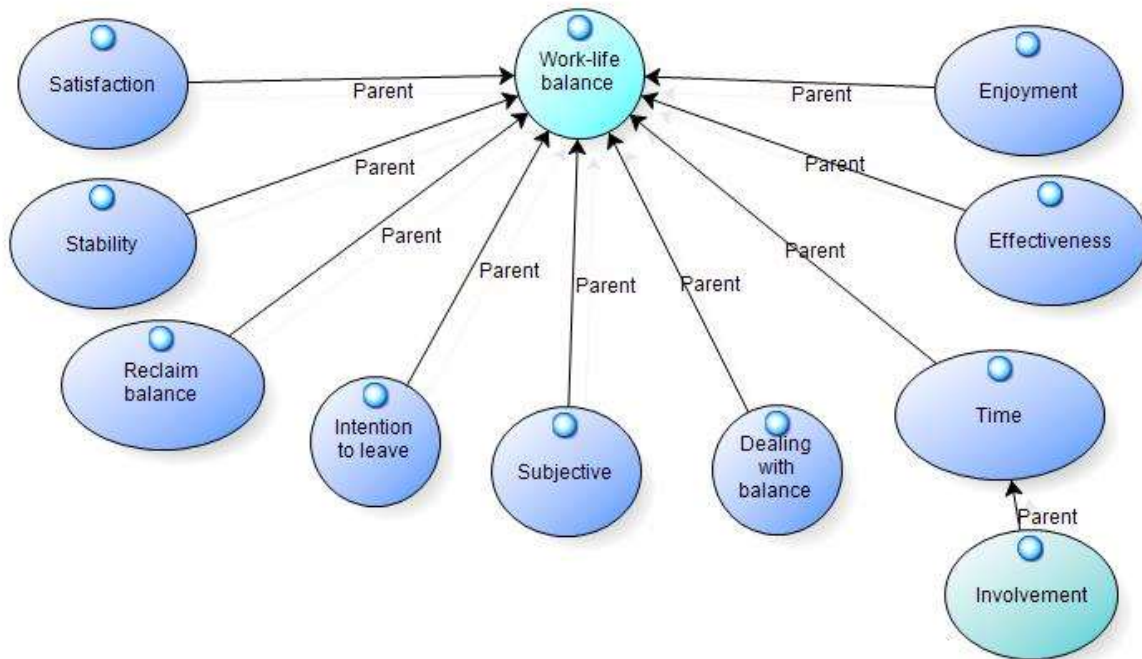
This title is a theme that emerged from the qualitative data analysis as being those situations present at work and family domains that respondents indicated were of

negative impact to their SOC. They include unfriendly work-environment, job stress, financial insufficiency, absence of autonomy, and function vagueness/role conflict. These sub-themes have been discussed in detail elsewhere in the study and could be meaningful in ascertaining why there is no significant relationship between SOC and WLBS as discovered through the analysis of the qualitative data.

8.6.4 Analysis of WLB at the municipality

This study adopted Greenhaus and Allen's (2011) definition of WLB as "*an overall appraisal of the extent to which individuals' effectiveness and satisfaction in work and family roles are consistent with their life values at a given point in time,*" without going into the categorisation of role priorities. WLB is not considered as an issue of levels or continuum tied on one end with elaborate imbalance that favours a singular role (Greenhaus et al., 2003). However, the study noted that equality in satisfaction and effectiveness in both domains of work and life functions is not a precursor to the achievement of balance. Moreover, in accordance with Greenhaus and Allen (2011), this study also noted that although involvement plays a crucial role in the WLB equation, it is viewed as being only contributory to WLB instead of actually being an indicator of balance. WLB in this study was seen as satisfaction with work and family situations. In the present study, several other factors emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data as what individuals perceived as WLB, as presented in Figure 8.26 below.

Figure 8.26 Presentation of the outcome of the analysis of WLB at the municipality



Satisfaction

To ascertain what the respondents understood as WLB, most respondents declared that it involved the achievement of satisfaction in the work and family domains.

Respondent 003:

“It is having satisfaction in both your work and personal life as I believe both are interlinked.”

This comment represents the opinion of some of the respondents and suggests that employees knew that satisfaction contributed to WLB. Therefore, they knew what was satisfactory and what was not satisfactory with respect to their work and family situations. To Interviewee 10, satisfaction is observable among employees as he stated in the following comment:

“If there is a meeting of executives and you look at them coming with their cars, laughing and talking to each other, they seem to have achieved satisfaction and balance.”

However, Interviewee 5 was of the opinion that some employees have seemingly achieved satisfaction while others have not:

“We see some employees seemingly satisfied with their work and family although some people have crafted innovative ways for themselves to arrive at satisfaction and balance, but others may not have achieved balance.”

The statement also indicates that the employees who have not achieved satisfaction are creatively working on ways to achieve it. Although the quantitative data had indicated that there is no significant relationship between SOC and WLB, the fact that employees who have not achieved satisfaction do make attempts at achieving this is a strong indicator of comprehensibility, an indicator of strong SOC and could be a justification for the less than 1% meagre contribution of SOC to WLB.

Furthermore, it was evident that what constituted satisfaction to one person may not be seen as being satisfactory to another, as shown in Interviewee 2’s comment:

“Generally, I will say there is very little job satisfaction. I am not too sure of what their personal life is like but there is a large number of people among the professional staff whom when they are put under pressure by the job, go the extra mile and still get a lot of satisfaction from the job. This implies that the pressure did not affect them negatively. But among the people I work with, there is an element of lack of enthusiasm to go the extra mile in the job. So it’s not necessarily the number of hours or the pressure in this case that determines satisfaction but the excitement of putting a strong team together within a short time to achieve a target.”

This statement implies that some employees were not satisfied with their job especially when additional demand was made on them to put in more time or energy in the work. However, it also states that a certain group of people among the employees derived satisfaction from assembling a strong team of people within a short period, despite the challenges. This could mean that the achievement of a given target even under pressure could contribute to the satisfaction that individuals derive from their jobs. Pressure in this instance could include working longer hours or during the weekend. The following statement supportive of the claims of Interviewee 2 indicates that the subjective nature of the construct (WLB) may be the reason why some people may be satisfied with working long hours and others may not, as stated below.

Interviewee 7:

“WLB is subjective, therefore, many people may be satisfied with working long hours while others may not.”

Subjectivity

The issue of subjectivity of satisfaction was mentioned by the majority of the employees as stated below:

Interviewee 7:

“Certainly balance is an individual thing and a person can decide what to do but when the job requires extra time and energy from a person, it then is not easy to say. Therefore WLB is peculiar.”

Interviewee 3:

“Otherwise, the achievement of balance is subjective because what a person sees as balance may be different from what the other perceives as balance.”

Interviewee 5:

“Work-life balance is personal, it is difficult to achieve work-life balance. It depends on the individual and what they do. It is a yes and no thing which depends on the individual. At my level I am able to cope and enjoy life as well as my work. But you see individuals have peculiar challenges and those using prescribed ways of addressing such may achieve balance. From my perspective, what is balance is not a static position of time and engagements. I may work on weekends to catch up with work I could not perform during the week and I could compensate those weekends by closing earlier during the next week to catch up with the time I missed away from my family at the weekend. To other people it may be different.”

These statements further confirm that balance is not a one-size-fits-all construct and could be explanatory as to why the scale used in the quantitative data analysis to measure satisfaction balance was not found to be part of the model after EFA. These statements also confirmed the findings of the analysis of quantitative data by justifying the reason why there was no significant relationship between SOC and WLB as well as WLBS and WLB. It further lends credence to earlier work in the literature that suggests that WLB is not a point on the continuum that indicates what and where balance is or could be determined. The different meanings and definitions given to WLB by

employees could be explanatory of why WLB was not achieved in the study by employees. The study measured satisfaction with work and family situations as WLB while individuals thought that balance meant other things such as effectiveness, equal time, involvement and even unachievable, except an individual who quits employment. Comments in this context are presented below.

Effectiveness

Respondent 016 contributed to the discussion on effectiveness by stating that:

“I understand work-life balance as being effective at work without adversely impacting on care for the family and family and recreational activities, while not letting family related issues negatively impact on my effectiveness to perform my job.”

Interviewee 10:

“With respect to achieving effectiveness, I think from the head up, deputy heads and so on are effective at work. At work I think they are effective, I am yet to see a head that is not effective at work.”

Most respondents share the same opinion with the comment above indicating that professional level employees at the municipality had achieved effectiveness at work. But effectiveness as some allude is always costly, as shown in the statement below:

Interviewee 2:

“At the professional level, effectiveness means many things; ability to achieve a target, finish a project, raise an efficient team and so on. We may have achieved effectiveness but it costs us in family relationships. When pressure is placed on work requirements, it costs in family time, stability and satisfaction. When an employee throws up his hands into the air as a sign of exasperation, one can think about what the pressure is costing the given employee. So there is always a cost to achieving effectiveness.”

However, the cost effect on family time could be addressed using relevant WLBS (such as flexi-time and other flexible work arrangements), but there seems to be no such strategies in place as indicated by the analysis of the quantitative data. The comments above assert that one can achieve effectiveness but at the cost of family time, satisfaction and stability. It contributes to clarifying the fact that effectiveness is also only a contributor to WLB but not an indicator. An individual employee could be

effective at work but may not be satisfied with the job situation. This is why the study measured satisfaction with job and family situations in determining WLB.

Other contributors to WLB noted in the study include:

Time

Time spent at work impacts on time spent in the family sphere, especially if extra time is consistently spent at work. Extra time could be required to achieve a particular target at work thereby costing employees the time they may need to be involved with and carry out family responsibilities. In this study, respondents were of the opinion that much pressure is on them because of time. Some of the comments are presented as follows:

Respondent 019:

“I need more time in a day. Already I have tried different time management courses to do what needs to be done in a sensible time saving sequence without success. This affects my work and family negatively.”

Interviewee 2:

“So when pressure is placed on work requirements and one has to stay longer than the official working time, it costs in family time.”

Interviewee 10:

“But they (employees) don’t have enough time for their families because they are at work five days a week and they take their laptops and work back home and their cell phones are always ringing with work requests and e-mails come through even when they are eating with their families. I think they are not spending enough time with their families, anyway I am judging by myself because I think we are all exposed to the same work environment. At this level you don’t have the normal nine to five working hours, you are on duty 24/7. The only time you are not working is when you are asleep and sometimes you are thinking about work while sleeping. So achieving balance is almost impossible in this scenario.”

These comments evidently and succinctly put forward the effect of time pressures on employees and their families. It indicates that most employees spent more time at work than they do at home and supports the findings of the quantitative data on involvement

with work, where most employees indicated that they were highly involved with work. But some respondents did not feel that efficiency and achievement was dependent on the length of time spent at work.

Interviewee 1:

“Time management and effectiveness is not determined by the amount of time spent on work or family but the efficiency and achievement recorded. You see, people may be here looking like they are working for 8 hours but they are not delivering on performance and requirements while others work and work harder and deliver and they are noted as the ‘deliverers.’ But this does not account for efficiency or satisfaction.”

Some respondents indicated that time management poses challenges to them and that they have attended training to assist them in this regard. The subjectivity of the concept of WLB is supported by these comments, meaning that to ascertain what WLB is could be daunting.

The discussion on time will not be conclusive without examining its effect on involvement with family and work.

Involvement

In discussing involvement, the level of involvement with work is not here in doubt but focus is on the level of involvement with family that employees have achieved. This could assist in justifying satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with work and family as reported by the quantitative data analysis.

Respondent 179:

“Most of my time, I spend at work and therefore, I don’t have much time with my family.”

Interviewee 7:

“Auditors work late for hours and an extended number of days at work. The time available for them to be involved with family can be easily predicted; not sufficient time.”

In general, most employees attest to the fact that they spent most of their time at work and with work-related activities. However, some respondents were of the view that top management level employees have time to be involved with their families, as stated by Interviewee 10:

“With their families, I won’t know, really I don’t know their families and specifically who they are spending time with. But the few that I have seen in some cases in the malls are not normally alone, they are with somebody, especially the heads of departments and top management. So I will take it that they are involved with their families, because they have a kind of flexibility depending on where they work.”

This statement out rightly pointed out that it is difficult to ascertain the level of involvement with family that employees have, yet, top management employees have time to be involved with families. Since quantitative data analysis showed high level of involvement with work among professional level employees and the qualitative data is stating that top management employees have time to be involved with their families, it could be implied that a kind of differential timing of work or flexibility exists at the municipality. This could also be a sign that a form of work flexibility (WLBS) is available for use to top management and not to all other professional level employees.

Sadly, some respondents at the professional level status seemed to be hard pressed to have time for their family. The comments below demonstrate the desperation of some respondents:

Respondent 293:

“My family is my priority and I have already made the decision that if the work environment does not improve I will leave. I need to have time for my family.”

Respondent 058:

“I am sure that by applying for work elsewhere not within the municipality, I will have time for my family and myself; then I can achieve a balance between work and life.”

Some respondents indicated that they were willing to leave the municipality if the challenges faced in the employment that adversely affected their families were not addressed. The suggestion that employees were often absent from home and even when at home were still engaged with work-related activities could be leading to the turnover

intentions of employees. The issue of time can be addressed using WLBS like job share, telecommuting and working from home on an ad hoc basis which seemingly is not in place at the municipality.

8.7 Comparative analysis of outcomes from the quantitative and qualitative data

The display, examination and interpretation of the outcomes of the groups of quantitative and qualitative data used in the present study discovered the five important subjects of methodological or data triangulations presented as follows.

8.7.1 The contribution of WLBS to wellness programme.

The analysis of the numeric (statistical) and non-numeric data gathered for the present study confirmed that a WP was implemented as WLBS at the municipality in the South African public sector. WLBS contributed to the wellness programme and the EFA confirmed that the types of strategies that specifically contributed to the WP were mainly those that addressed family stressors, namely: stress management, domestic relationship counselling, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling and financial/debt counselling as shown in Table 8.13, Table 8.14 and subsection 8.6.1. These outcomes achieved the goal of utilising mixed methods in the present study in order to address the limitations of mono methods or techniques (Saunders et al., 2009; Creswell, 2009).

8.7.2 The effect of work and family stressors on SOC

The outcome of the descriptive statistics used in ascertaining the influence of work and family stressors (objective three of this study) discovered that a relationship exists between work and family stressors and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector (see Table 8.9). Additional analysis of the quantitative data showed that the relationship between work and family stressors and SOC was significant at $p < 0.05$ (see Table 8.19).

Qualitative data analysis also supported the quantitative data results in confirming the influence of work and family stressors on SOC through the responses of most of the participants that lent credence to this influence (per subsections 8.6.3.1, 8.6.3.2 and 8.6.3.3).

8.7.3 The influence of WLBS on work and family stressors

The quantitative data analysis through objective four examined the interplay between WLBS and work and family stressors. The results of the descriptive statistics used showed that no relationship existed between WLBS and work and family stressors as presented in Table 8.10. Further examination of the quantitative data through regression analysis revealed that a significant association existed between WLBS and work and family stressors (see Table 8.9) and that the contribution made by WLBS to the model was quite small at 1.4%. This may have undertaken for the descriptive statistic result that reported that no relationship was found between WLBS and work and family stressors.

However, the qualitative data provided more clarity to the results obtained from the quantitative data analysis through the response of the majority of the respondents who gave credence to the fact that the WP (WLBS) adopted by the municipality seemed to be effective in addressing some of their family demands and none of their work-related challenges (see sub-sections 8.6.2, 8.6.3.1 and 8.6.3.2).

8.7.4 The insignificant effect of WLBS on WLB

The quantitative data analysis shown in Tables 8.15 and 8.21 revealed that WLBS had no significant influence on the achievement of WLB at the municipality in the South African public sector. Although there seemed to be an acceptable level of satisfaction with family among employees, most employees felt that they were not satisfied with their work situation. The level of satisfaction in the family domain may be attributed to the adoption of the WP as a WLBS which was targeted to addressing family-related issues at the municipality. The EFA in agreement with the qualitative data supported this assumption in providing reasons for the satisfaction achieved by employees at the family level. The qualitative data was also beneficial in explaining the reason why high involvement with work did not result in high satisfaction with the job. Reasons for this ranged from work overload, function vagueness and role overload, absence of autonomy, and influence of politics and politicians at the workplace. Furthermore, the qualitative data analysis gave rise to many other reasons that could give justification to the reason why most employees were not satisfied with their work situation. Some of which are career path, job placement, rewards and appreciation, interpersonal conflicts

and unfriendly work environment, excessive meetings and job stress (see Figure 8.22). Although, the inferential statistics report revealed that there was no significant relationship between WLBS and WLB, the descriptive statistics and the qualitative data indicated that the WP which was adopted by the municipality as a WLBS was effective in addressing the life demands of employees since the majority of the employees reported that they were satisfied with their family situations (see sub-section 8.62 and 8.64).

8.7.5 Relationship between WLB and SOC

The descriptive analysis of the quantitative data conducted for research question six revealed that the majority of the employees were satisfied with their family situations and very few were satisfied with their work situation. Moreover, most employees demonstrated strong SOC, which could have accounted for their satisfaction with family situations (see Table 8.12).

However, the result of the quantitative data analysis conducted for objective six of this study showed that SOC predicted less than one percent of the variations in WLB at the municipality in the South African public sector (see Table 8.11). Furthermore the inferential statistics discovered that no significant relationship exists between WLB and SOC. Nevertheless, the qualitative data analysis clarified the reason for this insignificant relationship in subsections 8.6.3.3 and 8.6.4. Most employees were able to demonstrate meaningfulness, but did not find any useful resources at the municipality to address their work demands (comprehensibility). Manageability was demonstrated by employees who confirmed that they coped well with family stressors but most of them indicated that they were not coping well with the work demands. However, in line with Antonovsky's (1987) recommendation, the three factors of SOC (meaningfulness, comprehensibility and manageability) were considered as a one-factor construct in examining SOC at the municipality. Moreover, WLB was indicated by satisfaction, effectiveness and time (involvement). Most employees were not satisfied with work situations while many of the others were satisfied with their family situations. Generally employees demonstrated effectiveness and high involvement with work which showed that they had less time for their families. Interestingly, the high involvement with work did not cascade into satisfaction with work situation while the little involvement with family resulted in more satisfaction with family outcome. This is notable in confirming

that length of time spent on family was insignificant but possibly the quality of the time spent was more meaningful. Finally, the inability of most employees to achieve meaningful balance with work and family outcomes confirms that employees had not appraised those challenges as worthy of investing in therefore established that WLB had no association with SOC at the municipality.

This study has therefore fulfilled methodological triangulation as well as theoretical triangulation through the fit indicators in the EFA.

8.8 Comparing primary and secondary data

Secondary data gleaned from the Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the Public Service (EHWSFPS) and business plan of the municipality's WP analysed in the second chapter of the present study, showed that WLBS predicted the WP as shown in Table 8.20. But the EFA classified all WLBS from the literature and those collected from the EHWSFPS as well as the municipality's WP into two as presented in Table 8.19. The strategies adopted through the EHWSFPS were classified as life strategies while flexible practices were classified as work strategies. Most respondents agreed that the municipality had put in place life strategies and not work strategies. This was confirmed by the outcome of the quantitative data analysis presented in Table 8.23, where no association was found between WLBS and WLB. Qualitative and quantitative data gathered and examined in this chapter showed that the WLBS in place at the municipality were effective at addressing family stressors and not work stressors. It was also empirically supported that the employees had not achieved WLB possibly because the strategies in place were not sufficiently addressing the stressors and the need to achieve WLB. COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001), and P-E fit (Edwards et al., 1998) supported the findings that although employees had strong SOC, they may have been using their personal and organisational resources to address stressors and not towards achieving WLB because the WLBS are not sufficient.

8.9 Conclusion

The quantitative and qualitative data collected for this study was analysed by using relevant/corresponding analytical methods and presented in this chapter. Demographic data was analysed and presented by using descriptive statistics. Moreover, categorical variables were displayed in bar charts, pie charts and frequency distribution tables. Descriptive statistics was used in analysing the framed research questions in this

chapter. Similarly, inferential statistics (regression analysis) was used in analysing the research objectives.

The reliability and validity of the constructs used in this study were assessed using IBM SPSS statistics version 22. Exploratory factor analysis was also conducted using the same statistical package (IBM SPSS version 22). The non-numeric data (qualitative) was analysed using IBM NVivo version 10 software. The results of the qualitative data analysis were compared with the statistical findings to examine the extent to which data triangulated methodologically.

The results revealed that primarily, the strategies that make up WLBS could be classified into WS (those addressing work-related demands) and FS (those addressing life-related demands). It also showed that there is a significant association between WLBS and the WP adopted at the municipality. It also confirmed that the strategies that made up the WP at the municipality were only FS and therefore did not address work-related challenges. Furthermore, a significant association was revealed to exist between work and family stressors and SOC by the study. The study empirically disproved the traditional proposition that WLBS assist employees in achieving WLBS using a municipality in the South African public sector as a case in reference. However, the study did not find any empirical evidence that there is a connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector.

The next chapter presents a thorough discussion and interpretation of the findings of this study with respect to the research questions and research objectives along with the links from this researcher's extensive literature study.

CHAPTER NINE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

9.1 Introduction

In Chapter 8, the findings of the study were presented and in this chapter a detailed discussion of the findings will be presented. Discussions will be focused on the formulated objectives of the study and the research questions framed from the problem statement. A holistic discussion on the extent that the findings substantiate or refer to previous literary work and/or theories on the connection between work-life balance (WLB) and sense of coherence (SOC) will be presented.

The goal of this chapter is to ascertain whether the objectives of the present study have been achieved or not, and demonstrate that the research questions have been appropriately answered. In this chapter, the discussion on the results deriving from the achieved objectives provide an explanation, corroboration or otherwise of the assumptions/theories on the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector.

This chapter focuses specifically on discussions relating to the research questions and objectives of the present study and on a discussion of findings in connection with the theoretical framework adopted for this study.

9.2. Discussions relating to the research questions and objectives of the present study

In formulating the research questions and objectives, attention was given to ensuring that there was a linkage between both, so that answering the research questions simultaneously resulted in the achievement of the objectives. The discussions on the results with respect to the framed research questions and objectives of this study are shown in the sub-sections below.

9.2.1 WLBS in place at the municipality

The study combined ten major WLBS, namely 1) life strategies which include domestic relationship counselling, stress management, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling, financial/debt counselling, and 2) work strategies which include work from home on an ad hoc basis, job share, a compressed work week, telecommuting and career break by integrating the segmentation theory (Zedeck, 1992) and the demands, resources and strategies model (Voydanoff, 2005a, 2005b) in assessing the WP as a WLBS. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) revealed the categorisation of the WLBS into two (work-strategies and life strategies explained above) in this study. This categorisation is supported in the literature by Zheng, Kashi, et al. (2015).

The outcome demonstrates that the WP adopted as WLBS were categorically addressing family-related demands and that work strategies were not in place at the municipality in the South African public sector. This result aligns with the segmentation theory's (Guest, 2002; Lambert, 1990; O'Driscoll et al., 1992; Staines, 1980; Sumer & Knight, 2001; Zedeck, 1992) assumptions that work and the non-work domains are dissimilar and have no relationship with one another; therefore, strategies addressing both domains may be distinctly formulated and implemented.

The first formulated objective of this study was achieved and supported by the empirical evidences presented in Figures 8.9, 8.10, 8.11, 8.12, 8.13, 8.14, 8.15, 8.16, 8.17, 8.18 and summarised in Table 8.19. This finding is in line with conventional research on HR policies in explaining the characteristics of WLBS in place at the municipality (De Cieri et al., 2005; Kossek et al., 2006; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). Additionally, the strategies adopted (WP) by the municipality are clearly those strategies identified in the WLBS literature as health and wellness programmes (Caillier, 2013). Health and wellness, according to S. E. Hobfoll (2011a) *conservation of resources (COR) theory* are of primary value to the individual. Therefore this result supports the use of salience as moderator in P-E and stress studies of satisfaction and wellness (Judge et al., 1998; Locke, 1976; Rice et al., 1985). The non-adoption of work strategies by the municipality, corroborates Ngo et al. (2009) citation of Poelman and Saibzada (2004). This offers the answer to the first research question, which asked about the WLBS adopted by the municipality in the South African public sector.

Having confirmed that the WP was not a holistic WLBS in that it addressed only life-related issues and not work-related demands (Kim & Wiggins, 2011), research objective one was also achieved. This result is consistent with literature and qualifies the WP as an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) (Benavides & David, 2010). But Zheng, Molineux, et al. (2015) reported that flexible work practices were more beneficial in aiding employees to develop their coping strategies than health and wellness programmes. Yet, these strategies were not adopted by the municipality. The findings could be indicative of high stress levels at the municipality since the WLBS are not adequate in addressing the work-life needs of employees, as suggested by Edwards et al. (1998).

Qualitative data provided more substantive information on the effect of absence of work strategies at the municipality by confirming employees' need for the implementation of strategies like telecommuting, job share, work from home on an ad hoc basis and part-time

work at the municipal workplace. Qualitative data buttressed the claim that the wellness programmes at the municipality could not be referred to as a holistic coping strategy (WLBS) because it did not augment employees' experiences with work and family domains (Felstead et al., 2002; McCarthy et al., 2010; Thompson et al., 1999).

The findings of this study also support the claims of Valcour and Batt (2003, p. 329). This result is beneficial in predicting outcomes and this is supported in the literature (Arthur, 2003; Casper & Buffardi, 2004; Grover & Crooker, 1995; Kossek, Baltes, et al., 2011). It also furthers knowledge in the study of WP by ascertaining that the programme in place at the municipality is a life strategy. This highlights the need to appraise work-life practices to determine the type of problems they may be able to address at the work place and in the family sphere.

9.2.2 Contributions of WLBS to the wellness programme

The following discussion provides the appraisal of the findings regarding wellness and WLBS. This is for the purpose of advising prospective practices to improve employees' work-life experiences at the municipality in the South African public sector. To find the extent to which work-life strategies (work strategies and life strategies in this study) predicted a WP at the municipality in the South African public sector, the strategies (work and life strategies) were subjected to a regression model. The adjusted R square showed that the WLBS were responsible for 7.1% of the variations in the WP at the municipality. With reference to the Beta values and the matching P values in the regression model, WS and FS made statistically significant contributions to the WP at the municipality in the South African public sector. This is not surprising because, in line with Caillier (2013) categorisation of WLBS, a WP is one of the sub-categories of the construct designed to assist employees with health and wellness issues. Incidentally, work strategies made the most important contribution to the model than life (family) strategies, indicating that if WS were integrated into the WP, it could impact on employees' achievement of WLB in a more meaningful way (Guest, 2002; Voydanoff, 2005b). Besides this, Zheng et al.'s (2015) submission in the literature that there is a connection between health, wellness and WLB was also corroborated by the findings of this study.

This study revealed that both WS and FS jointly predicted a WP at the municipality, therefore the findings are useful in bridging the gap in literature as suggested by Skinner and Chapman (2013), by evaluating the practice at the municipality in the South African public sector. This therefore has satisfied the second objective of this study and research question two which examined the contribution of WLBS to the WP for the two factors measuring WLBS. The result

confirms the novelty of this study in classifying WLBS into two distinct and practical categories (work strategies and life strategies) and furthers knowledge on the connection between WLB and SOC.

9.2.3 The effect of work and family stressors on SOC

Research objective and question three respectively were formulated to ascertain the influence of work stressors and family stressors on SOC. Descriptive statistics showed that 70.2% of the respondents had a strong SOC. The Pearson's correlation coefficient showed significant correlations between SOC and work and family stressors and these associations were in the anticipated direction (that is, inverse relationship). This result offers the answer to the third research question and achievement of the third objective of this study.

This inverse relationship between stressors and SOC was supported in the literature by Ryland and Greenfeld (1991), Wolff and Ratner (1999), Kinman (2008) and García-Moya et al. (2013).

A regression analysis was engaged to establish the level of the associations between stressors and SOC. The regression model yielded an adjusted R square that demonstrated that work and family stressors accounted for 11.8% variations in SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. Considering the Beta values and the tallying P values in the regression model, both variables (work and family stressors) were statistically significant in their contribution to the model. The inverse relationship found among the variables (SOC, work and family stressors) supports the assumptions of this study and the findings of Holmberg et al. (2004) and Moksnes et al. (2011), that stressors strongly and negatively impact an individual's SOC. Interestingly, this was expected, because SOC are dispositional resources available to an individual to buffer stressors (Antonovsky, 1993). Therefore, where an individual's SOC is strong, the effect of stressors will be minimally felt because the individual will make necessary adjustments, whereas the absence of a strong SOC will lead to a greater impact of stressors on an individual.

The qualitative data analysis provided more clarity to this. Conditions adverse to SOC (such as an unfriendly work-environment, job stress, absence of autonomy, function vagueness and role clash) at the municipality were reported by most employees as the most prevalent work stressors. For instance, many of the professional level employees reported: *naturally, local government is a bureaucratic organisation and ambiguity/role conflict and absence of autonomy may often cause job stress to employees*. In this study, work stressors contributed the most to the regression model corroborating the report of Yozgat et al. (2013), that job stress

was noted as the most prevalent challenge that confronts employees at work. With respect to function vagueness/role conflict, there are studies that reported that negative association exists between the variable and satisfaction (Gregson et al., 1994; Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970; Tang & Chang, 2010; Ussahawanitchakit, 2008). This could be explanatory to the fact that most employees were not satisfied with their job situations at the municipality in the South African public sector.

Additionally, the qualitative data revealed many other work stressors such as influence of politics and politicians in the workplace, organisational structure (bureaucracy), unnecessary time spent on meetings daily, work-overload, overtime, absence of management support, career path, staffing and placement problems, discrimination in promotions, rewards and appreciation, unfriendly environment and interpersonal conflicts. These could be suggestive of the reasons why work stressors contributed more to the model than family stressors.

On the other hand, qualitative data on family stressors revealed fewer factors. Most of the factors found as family stressors such as substance and alcohol abuse, medical issues, parenting, financial problems and relational issues, were addressed by the WP and supported in the literature by Arthur (2003) and Casper and Buffardi (2004). In the context of this, family stressors might have made a lesser contribution. However, due to the subjective meanings that employees individually assigned to the stressors, family stressors may have been viewed as part of life or something that an individual must learn to live with. For instance, the qualitative data in this study presented the response from an employee who had an autistic child and accordingly was expected to be stressed, but the employee reported that she had no family stressor when compared with the stress she faced at work. This confirms Mc Cubbin and Sussman (2014) postulation in the literature that cultural inclinations, beliefs and family systems could form the basis on which individuals assess family stressors. Finally, another reason why family stressors contributed less than work stressors in the regression model could be because not every employee is married and facing relational tension, and not every employee has young children living at home, and/or a dependent relative living in their homes (Jones et al., 2013).

9.2.4 Influence of WLBS on work and family stressors

The fourth research question in this study tested the effect of WLBS on work and family stressors. The descriptive analysis of selected items on the measures used in the study revealed that most employees did not utilise the WLBS in place at the municipality. The qualitative

analysis was useful in explaining why most employees did not use the WLBS. The reasons that most employees gave for not using the WP were: lack of awareness, accessibility, and stigma associated with use and cultural beliefs. For example one of the comments of the employees is presented as follows: *Yeah, but the question that I always ask myself, are we looking at those that culturally concern us or are we looking at and focusing on those European imports? Are we doing it as it concerns our cultural background or are we imposing those European things on the people? These are the questions I ask myself. There are needs that are culturally based, are we trying to solve those problems for the employees or are we imposing European solutions on them? These are the challenges.*

In addition, it was found that the majority of the participants received assignments with sufficient manpower to complete them, thus implying that the effect of function vagueness/role conflict (work stressor) was minimal. It was further revealed that most respondents did not find the decision to spend most evenings on work-related activities rather than spending most evenings with their families stressful, hence demonstrating that they did not experience much relational tension (family stressor). The composition of the sample for this study could also be explicatory in understanding the reason why family stressors contributed less to WLBS. For example, 71% of the sample population were male. This influence of a male dominant sample was also seen in the study of Baral and Bhargava (2010). It indicated that male employees may not demonstrate enthusiasm about WLBS (Lyness et al., 1999) that their female colleagues would demonstrate over crèche and flexible work practices. This result shows that research question four was answered.

An association between WLBS and stressors was found in this study although the size of the prediction of WLBS on stressors was significant at $p < .05$. The contribution made by WLBS was negligible at 1.4% in line with prior studies (Batt & Valcour, 2003; Behson, 2002; Dikkers et al., 2004; Kossek & Friede, 2006; Kossek et al., 2006; Lapierre & Allen, 2006; Moen & Yu, 1999; Tausig & Fenwick, 2001; Thompson & Prottas, 2006). In addition, previous studies found significant association between WLBS and work-family conflict (Brough et al., 2005; Hammer et al., 2005), corroborating the findings of this study. Additionally, this result is supportive of the findings of Grover and Crooker (1995) and Hill (2005) that no significant relationship exists between WLBS and family stressors.

The qualitative data analysis explained why this contribution is minimal. The reasons found in this study that explain the negligible contribution of WLBS are: non-adoption of strategies

addressing work-stressors, numerous work stressors and many delimiting factors associated to the adopted wellness programmes at the municipality. These explanations supported the position of Kossek, Pichler, et al. (2011) on the provision and implementation of WLBS and the analysis by Felstead et al. (2002) of the theories underlying the adoption of WLBS. As previously stated, strategies adopted as a result of institutional demands and/or response to situations (situational theory) may not be properly framed to accommodate the overall needs of employees (French Jr, Kahn, & Mann, 1962; Harrison, 1985; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Kristof, 1996). This is supported in the literature by Chiang et al. (2010). The qualitative analysis further clarifies this position. Most employees claimed that the WP (WLBS at the municipality) was '*invisible*', meaning that they were not aware of its existence, while others felt it was inaccessible. It further revealed that employees felt that the wellness programme was a reactionary policy (Benavides & David, 2010), therefore, most of them did not see it fit to address their real challenges. In addition, it was found that confidentiality and trust issues (Sieberhagen et al., 2011), stigmatisation (Naidoo, & Jano, 2003b) and cultural beliefs hindered the use of the programme. The organisational structure (Després et al., 2014), career path, placement and reward systems were among the main stressors faced by employees.

The findings of this study support and extend that of Chiang et al. (2010), that the adoption of WLBS on its own is not sufficient to assist employees in addressing stressors especially where these stressors originated from the work environment, structure and systems in place in the organisation. Summarily, this demonstrates that the fourth objective of this study was achieved.

9.2.5 Effect of WLBS on WLB

The fifth research question and fifth objective were articulated to test the effect that WLBS has on WLB. To answer the research question, items examining the use of WLBS, job involvement and job satisfaction were tested. WLB in this study was indicated by satisfaction with work and family situations. As stated earlier, most employees did not make use of the WLBS. The majority of the employees who participated in the study claimed that they were very much involved in their job roles and surprisingly, many of them indicated that they were not mainly satisfied with their job roles but with their family roles (Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). This implies that although the employees were more involved in their work roles, they derived better satisfaction from their family situations. This supports the findings of Baral and Bhargava (2010) that no relationship exists between WLBS and satisfaction with work and could validate the findings of Thompson and Prottas (2006), that unstructured aspects of the workplace, like

management support and support from colleagues, contribute more to the variation in work outcomes than formalised strategies. The qualitative data analysis provided clarity into the claims of the employees by revealing that work-overload, overtime and lengthy hours spent in meetings were among the work stressors that employees indicated were present at the municipality in the South African public sector. This could further explain the dissatisfaction experienced with work among employees.

However, WLBS were subjected to a regression model as predictors of WLB at a municipality. The adjusted R square indicated that the WLBS predicted only 0.40% of the variations in WLB at this municipality. The Beta values and corresponding P values in the regression model showed that WLBS did not make any statistically significant contribution to WLB. This is in line with the findings of Shinn et al. (1989) and Brown et al. (2011) in the literature. The findings supported previous studies' discoveries (Batt & Valcour, 2003; Behson, 2002; Dikkers et al., 2004; Kossek et al., 2006; Lapierre & Allen, 2006; Moen & Yu, 1999; Tausig & Fenwick, 2001; Thompson & Prottas, 2006) on the associations between WLBS and WLB. It is also supported by McCarthy et al. (2010). The qualitative data gave more clarity on the reasons why WLBS did not contribute positively to WLB. The reasons include: the focus on life (family and personal) strategies in formulating the wellness programmes (Wong & Ko, 2009), absence of management endorsement, high number of work stressors and absence of work strategies. In addition, the WP was delimited by a number of factors including awareness, accessibility, confidentiality and trust issues as reported in the qualitative data analysis. These additional clarifications provided through the qualitative data in the present study, suggests the merit of using the mixed methods design for this study.

9.2.6 Relationship between WLB and SOC

The Pearson's correlation coefficient among WLB and SOC revealed a non-significant association at the municipality investigated in the South African public sector. This answered research question six which examined the relationship between the two constructs (WLB and SOC). The mean score of SOC taken in this study was 30.66 as presented in Table 8.12b and Figure 8.19, indicating that employees had good SOC (Kinman, 2008). The SOC was further subjected to linear regressions through the IBM SPSS version 22 as predictor of WLB. The adjusted R square indicated that SOC was responsible for 0.10% variations in WLB at the municipality. The Beta value and P value in the linear regression model were considered and they confirmed that SOC did not statistically make any significant contribution to WLB. This

is surprising and not in line with the assumptions of the study that SOC will significantly influence WLB. But this study found that SOC associated negatively with stressors and that employees had strong SOC. This could mean that the SOC was dedicated to managing stressors and not achieving WLB in line with Hobfoll's (2011) *conservation of resources theory*. This finding also opposes the findings of scholars in the literature. For instance, SOC was found to associate significantly and positively with job satisfaction (Kalimo & Vuori, 1990; Lustig & Strauser, 2002; Strümpfer, 1997; Strümpfer, Fritz, & Page, 1991), main effect variable and moderator (Diraz et al., 2003; Flannery & Flannery, 1990; Korotkov, 1993), the predictor of health (Feldt, Kinnunen, et al., 2000; Feldt, Leskinen, et al., 2000; Kivimäki et al., 2002; Suominen et al., 2001) and mediating variable (Albertsen et al., 2001; Kivimäki et al., 2000). In addition, scholars found that involvement with work and job satisfaction relate clearly and negatively (Rabinowitz & Hall, 1977; Sekaran, 1989; Wiener et al., 1987; Wiener & Vardi, 1980), but this result is not obtained in the present study. Absence of interface among constructs that usually moderates associations suggests the need for further clarification (James et al., 2015).

The qualitative data analysed in this study provided requisite explanation for the reasons why WLB did not interact with SOC at the municipality in the South African public sector. The study examined WLB in the context of job satisfaction and family satisfaction (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Lyness & Judiesch, 2008), but most employees viewed WLB as enjoyment, effectiveness (J. Greenhaus & Allen, 2011), stability (Crooker et al., 2002), time (S. H. Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 1999) and subjective (Darcy et al., 2012; Goodman, 2012). Many others wished they could reclaim balance while others indicated their intention to leave the organisation and suggested this to be the foundation of achieving balance. These confirm scholars' opinions in the literature that defining WLB has been difficult (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Guest, 2002). In considering SOC, although the employees seemed to have reasonably high SOC, the continued effect of adverse conditions demonstrated by work and family stressors, like function vagueness, absence of autonomy, unfriendly work environment, job stress (Guest, 2002; Jones et al., 2013) and financial insufficiency may have impacted on the non-achievement of WLB. This was supported by Lyness and Judiesch (2008) and Kirchmeyer (2000). Literature revealed that continuous exposure to stressors reduces the strength of SOC among individuals (Wolff & Ratner, 1999). This can possibly impair the ability to meaningfully comprehend and manage stressors at work and life demands and ultimately achieve WLB.

This confirms and brings out the importance of using mixed methods in the present study. Here, the limitations of quantitative data (non-significant association among variables) are clarified through the qualitative data.

9.3 Discussion of findings in connection to the theoretical framework adopted for this study

The discussion in this section focuses on the findings of the present study in connection to the adopted theoretical framework for this study. With respect to the linkage between WLB and SOC at the municipality, the findings are discussed in line with the Person-Environment (P-E) fit, theories, demands, resources and strategies and conservation of resources (COR) theories. The findings on the adoption and use of WLBS are discussed in relation to situational, institutional and segmentation theories.

9.3.1 WLBS in place at the municipality

The findings of this study with respect to the WLBS adopted in the municipality agree with the segmentation theory (O'Driscoll et al., 1992; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990), P-E fit theory by Edward and Rothbard (1998, 1999, 2006) and COR theory (Hobfoll, 2011a). Exploratory factor analysis clearly categorised the WLBS at the municipality into two specific strategies addressing work and family respectively. The researcher named the strategies that seem to be pertinent to work as 'work strategies', while those pertinent to personal and family matters as 'life strategies'. The strategies that were identified with the WP seemed to be addressing personal and family-related demands; hence they aligned to life strategies. Work strategies emanating from and addressing work-related challenges were not adopted at the municipality. The clear categorisation of WLBS in this study therefore supported the segmentation theory (O'Driscoll et al., 1992; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). The singular implementation of life strategies and non-implementation of work strategies does not support the assumptions of P-E fit theory (Edwards et al., 2006; Edwards et al., 1998; Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). This is because the employees were exposed to both the work and family domains and not the family domain only. Scholars have found that both domains (work and family) are profound sources of stress (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999), therefore, strategies to address stress must integrate the two domains. The P-E fit theory emphasises that demand and abilities fit occurs when individuals are able to muster sufficient resources to address environmental demands (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). P-E fit also considers the alignment of needs and supplies (Harrison, 1985; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). These were not supported in this study, but the findings could

corroborate the assumptions that environment (work and family stressors), supplies (work and life strategies) alignment may lead to the achievement of WLB. This is supported by the findings of both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis in this study and is also corroborated by Voydanoff (2005b). In this study, employees did not achieve WLB.

The COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001, 2011a) however is supported by the findings of this study. This is because of the theory's basic assumption that uneven resources predict stress and could influence the conservation of resources by individual employees. Hence, individuals will seek ways of preserving personal resources to address work and family stressors (Hobfoll, 2001; Pyszczynski et al., 2004). In this study, the provisions of the WP were insufficient to address both work and family stressors and could be conclusively confirmed insufficient. Therefore, individuals with a strong SOC will effectively manage stressors and conserve some resources by using available organisational resources and seeking ways of conserving some personal resources against the effect of stressors. Although this study did not investigate the use of the wellness programmes as an objective of the study, the quantitative data showed that most employees did not utilise the WLBS in place at the municipality. Therefore, it can be assumed that individuals did not use the strategies to address stressors or recoup resources drained by stressors as prescribed by the second tenet (resource investment) of this theory (COR). The tenet assumes that individuals make investments in resources so as to secure themselves from the loss of resources, regain what is lost and improve resources. It was also of the assumption that individuals with more resources are least threatened by the loss of resources and most capable of reinventing resource gain. This non-use of WLBS by many employees may be as a result of their strong SOC which doesn't make them feel threatened by these stressors as demonstrated in the study. Therefore, the second assumption of COR is partially supported by this study. However, no association was found between WLBS and SOC at the municipality. This implies that the WLBS did not contribute to the strength of employees' SOC.

A noticeable contribution of work strategies (to address work-related challenges) and life strategies (to address family and personal challenges) to the WP was noted in this study. This result corroborated the assumptions of the demands, resources, and strategies model proposed by Voydanoff (2005a) which can be adapted to this study. The emergence of work and life strategies respectively from the ten WLBS examined in the study suggests that the utilisation of these strategies, in line with the two-dimensional mechanism (work needs-family resources fit and family needs-work resources fit) proposition of Voydanoff (2005b), would influence WLB as predicted by the model. The municipality implemented only the life strategies

(wellness programmes), and the result that there was no association between WLB and WLB confirm that employees did not achieve WLB. This result validates the theoretical assumptions of Voydanoff (2005a) that proper grouping of demands, resources and strategies could influence the achievement of WLB.

9.3.2 The association between work and family stressors and SOC

The findings that there is a significant association between SOC and stressors in this study, supports the conservation of resources theory (S. E. Hobfoll, 2001, 2011a) assumption that an individual's appraisal of general conditions of life and consistent loss of resource situations, leads to the development of resource conservation situations. The appraisal of work and family situations as stressful and potentially demanding of personal resources will trigger the SOC to muster resources to constantly address the stressors and possibly conserve some of the resources for the future. This is because SOC is both a buffering factor (Antonovsky, 1993) and an inclination to survive (Strümpfer, Viviers, & Gouws, 1998). The findings could be an indication that employees used their strong SOC to address stressors and conserved resources away from the achievement of WLB. The findings also support the P-E fit theory (Edwards, 2008; French et al., 1974; Tomer, 2013) process assumptions which recognise that the way in which the person and environmental concepts work together to affect stress (Harrison, 1985; Edwards et al., 1998) is significant. In this study, employees were noted to be exposed to high levels of work-related stressors and the municipality did not put in place work strategies to assist employees in tackling these work stressors. This is in opposition to Voydanoff (2005b), and explains why employees would rather channel their resources to managing stressors rather than WLB. It implies that employees appraised stressors as being more significant than the achievement of WLB.

9.3.3 Relationship between WLB and SOC

The findings of this study showed that there was no statistically significant association between WLB and SOC at the municipality. However, the findings corroborate the assumptions of the COR theory which is centred on the hierarchies of loss and gain of resources, as well as the cognitive behaviour of individuals in the face of uneven resources to address environmental demands (Hobfoll, 1989, 2001, 2011a). This explains why individuals found it important to address work and family stressors rather than strive to achieve WLB.

In this study, WLB is supposed to be a gained resource while stressors are sources of resource drain. Individual employees appraised stressors to be more important than the achievement of

balance as revealed by this study. It was revealed in this study that the WP adopted by the municipality to assist employees in managing their work-life needs, was only sufficient to address life (family) stressors and not work stressors. In the context of the COR theory, this was not sufficient to address the overall needs of employees, therefore, employees' dispositional traits, in this case, SOC, facilitated their coping mechanisms instead of the decision to achieve WLB. The findings further support the demands, resources and strategies theory (Voydanoff, 2005a, 2005b), by revealing that the strategies in place at the municipality were not sufficiently addressing the demands in the environment, nor enhancing the individual employee's personal resources such as SOC, hence, the employees could not achieve WLB. However, this finding did not subscribe to the P-E fit theory, which assumes fit to mean an alignment of the person and the environment. The aspect of the individual considered in this study is the individual SOC. Using the P-E fit theory in this study confirmed the argument by Edwards et al. (2006) about the P-E fit theory's inability to examine individual perceptions and assessment of themselves and the environment.

This study contributes to work-family literature by utilising P-E fit theory to depict the cognitive assessment process through which the interface between work and family stressors could influence SOC. By depicting this process, the researcher attempted to describe why employees with a strong SOC appraised stressors to be significant as indicated by the association between SOC and stressors in this paper. This study contributes to the literature in the field of organisational behaviour and human resource management. This is because while past P-E fit study focused on work and family (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999), this study investigated P-E fit connected with work-family stressors and SOC. The study also used the P-E fit theory to portray the cognitive appraisal process through which the individual's SOC could influence WLB. Through this, the researcher made an effort to ascertain whether employees' strong SOC found in this study could lead to the achievement of WLB. Through this process, the researcher found that employees channelled their SOC to addressing and managing stressors, which was confirmed by the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001, 2011b) and demands, resources and strategies model (Voydanoff, 2005a, 2005b).

The objectives of this study were met and the theoretical framework and literature study could be integrated with the study. The main aim of this study was also met.

9.4 Conclusion

In this chapter, the main findings of the present study were discussed in detail with respect to the formulated research questions and objectives. The findings showed that there was no statistically significant association between WLB and SOC at the municipality in the South African public sector. In addition, this research found that a statistically significant relationship exists between WLBS and work and family stressors at the municipality. This study empirically confirmed that work stressors and family stressors have a significant influence on the SOC of the respondents at the municipality. The present study also established that WLBS significantly contributed to the WP in place at the municipality and found that the strategies that comprise WLB practices can be empirically categorised into work strategies and life strategies. This played a significant role in explaining the non-achievement of WLB by employees in this study.

The next chapter is a presentation of the summarised version of the findings of this study with respect to the quantitative and qualitative data, recommendations and conclusion. It will also address the limitations of this study, implications for future research and practice, as well as the original contribution to knowledge.

CHAPTER TEN: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

10.1 Introduction

The general conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of this study on the connection between WLB and SOC are presented in this chapter. The overarching objective of this study was to examine the connection between WLB and SOC among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector. This was appraised from the behavioural and cognitive perspectives using WLB as the dependent variable in the interface between WLBS, SOC and work and family stressors (independent variables). In the course of achieving the objective, the WLBS in place at the municipality and their effectiveness in assisting employees to address their work and family stressors, as well as the achievement of

WLB were ascertained. The conceptual framework guiding this study (see Figure 1) was analysed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Due to the fact that some of the variables were not inter-correlated, regression analysis was used in determining the level of association among the associating variables. The results of the EFA on the assessment of the connection between WLB and SOC are presented in Table 8.14.

This chapter further presents the summarised version of the major findings from the chapters on review of the literature, and numeric and non-numeric data analysis. Based on the main findings of this study, the implication for practice is stated in this chapter. In addition, the limitations of this study and suggestions for further research are highlighted and discussed. The original contribution made by this study to knowledge and practice of human resource management and work-life literature is also delineated. The conclusions of this study hinge on the six research objectives stated below:

- To examine the WLBS in place at the municipality.
- To ascertain the contributions of WLBS to the WP.
- To investigate the effect of work and family stressors on SOC.
- To examine the influence of WLBS on work and family stressors.
- To explore the extent to which WLBS affect WLB.
- To establish if a relationship exists between WLB and SOC.

From the empirical evidence drawn from this study, the general conclusion presented in this chapter demonstrates that the research objectives were all sufficiently realised.

10. 2 Synopsis of key findings from the review of literature and the contribution of the present research

The chapters on the literature review and the theoretical framework on the connection between WLB and SOC revealed that all over the world, a lot of studies (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Eagle et al., 1998; Eagle et al., 1997; Gutek et al., 1991; Jones et al., 2013; Netemeyer et al., 1996; Williams & Alliger, 1994) have been conducted on the work-family interface with respect to the behavioural perspective. On the other hand, not much work has been done with respect to the cognitive aspect of the work-life interface by examining the role of SOC on the achievement of WLB. The results of this study further the borders of knowledge by particularly categorising strategies adopted as workplace practices into the two (work and family strategies respectively). Additionally, it explained how and why employees did not achieve the defined

WLB at the municipality. This leads to a better explanation and understanding of WLB at a municipality in the South African public sector.

Studies conducted in the last two decades on WLB have made improvements on the definitions of the concept towards conceptualising the achievement of WLB (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Balance was defined as absence of conflict in the work and family domain (Linda Elizabeth Duxbury & Higgins, 2001), involvement in multiple roles (Kirchmeyer, 2000), effectiveness and satisfaction among numerous roles (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Kirchmeyer, 2000; Kofodimos, 1993). Although the discourse by Greenhaus and Allen (2011) on the contribution of scholars with respect to these perspectives provided much enlightenment, these studies did not sufficiently explain why and how balance could be achieved or otherwise. The cognitive and behavioural perspectives of the study were integrated in this research study and provide an explanation on the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality, and comprehensively explored the effect that strategies in place at the municipality had on both SOC and WLB.

10.3 Synopsis of findings from the quantitative data

The key findings from providing dependable answers to the research questions and meeting the formulated and tested objectives achieved the main aim of this study.

The study found that WLBS significantly contributed to the WP. The scale WLBW (Work-life balance (wellness)), when measured through factors, discovered statistical reliability (alpha coefficient) of 0.945 and validity (exploratory factor analysis). This scale (WLBW) appraised the wellness programmes' efficacy as WLBS among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector. The EFA revealed that the WP adopted by the municipality mainly comprised of life strategies (domestic relationship counselling, stress management, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling and financial/debt counselling which addressed mostly life stressors and not work stressors. Work from home on an *ad hoc* basis, job share, a compressed work week, telecommuting and career break (work strategies) were not adopted by the municipality. This implies that at the municipality, personal and family demands (and stressors) of employees were better addressed by the strategies in place than work-related demands (and stressors). This highlighted the primary reason why WLB was not achieved by employees at the municipality, because addressing both dimensional needs may lead to satisfaction with a job and family situations (that is, WLB in this study).

The study further revealed that although a significant relationship exists between WLBS and stressors, WLBS predicted only 1.4% variations in stressors among professional level

employees at the municipality. This implies that WLBS merely addressed stressors at the municipality.

In addition, this study found that most professional level employees had strong SOC and that stressors strongly predicted SOC at the municipality. This means that employees were dispositional to addressing their work and family stressors due to their strong SOC.

Contrarily, WLBS did not statistically associate with SOC at the municipality. This means that the WLBS did not significantly influence the SOC levels at the municipality, leading to the conclusion that the strategies were either not designed with factors that enhance SOC in mind, or that an individual's lack of use of the WLBS predicted this outcome (no relationship between the two variables).

Similarly, SOC being the independent variable did not predict WLB (dependent variable) at the municipality, hence there was no statistically significant relationship between the two constructs. But the study found that employees at the municipality had strong SOC (Kinman, 2008) as shown in Table 8.12(b) which showed mean SOC as 30.665. However, WLB was not achieved by the employees, yet work and family stressors predicted 11.8% variations in SOC (see Table 8.21). This implies that employees' non-achievement of WLB was not explained by the strength of SOC; rather it seemed that employees channelled their strong SOC to managing stressors.

10.4 Synopsis of findings from the qualitative data

Most employees agreed that the municipality's WP comprised of three major themes that emerged from the qualitative data on SOC, as well as predictors, indicators and adverse conditions. Sub-themes from predictors of SOC are upbringing, support, beliefs and fitness exercises, while comprehension, coping and meaning emerged as sub-themes from indicators of SOC. Finally, the sub-themes that emerged from adverse conditions are function vagueness and role clash, absence of autonomy, financial insufficiency, stress and an unfriendly environment.

With respect to the work-stressors present at the municipality, the qualitative data revealed that the major work stressors were: function vagueness and role conflict, absence of management support, absence of autonomy, organisational structure (bureaucratic organisation), influence of politics and politicians. Others include: job stress, poor interpersonal relationships, work overload, time, gender, placement, and staffing, equity and fairness, leave and career path (sub-

themes: rewards and appreciations and promotions). Many individual employees indicated that they were highly involved with work but not satisfied with their work situations.

Furthermore, the qualitative data showed the following themes and sub-themes with respect to family stressors: alcohol and substance abuse, medical issues, lifestyle changes, parenting (single parents), finance and relationship issues (family time and extended family pressure). Most employees revealed that although they were not very involved with their families, they were satisfied with their family situations. The way individuals appraised family stressors seemed to be quite different from the way they expressed their appraisal of work stressors.

The qualitative data collected with respect to WLB showed the following themes indicating what employees understood as WLB: satisfaction, enjoyment, effectiveness, stability, subjectivity, time (demonstrated by involvement with work and family), and leaving the organisation if they were to achieve balance. The majority indicated that they had a need to reclaim balance while others indicated that they were dealing with their need to achieve WLB.

The qualitative data analysis was instrumental in clarifying the reasons why there were strong associations between SOC and work and family stressors and no associations between the SOC and WLB. Though employees had strong SOC, they did not achieve WLB but it seemed that they utilised their SOC in addressing work and family demands. Qualitative data analysis showed that employees were facing numerous work stressors such as absence of job autonomy, role ambiguity/role conflicts, job stress, influence of politics and politicians, an unfriendly work environment, staffing and job placement issues, interpersonal relationship challenges, time-related problems, work overload and absence of management support.

In addition, the demand, resource and strategies model (Voydanoff, 2005a, 2005b) and the COR theory (Hobfoll, 2001, 2011a) shed more light on the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The COR theory corroborated the findings of the quantitative data analysis by explaining how employees used their strong SOC to address stressors instead of directing them at achieving WLB, while the demands, resources and strategies theory supported that the WLBS in place at the municipality were not sufficient to assist employees to achieve WLB.

10.5 Chapter by chapter summary

Chapter one of this study presented a fundamental introduction based on the overarching objective of this study - to examine the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality

in the South African public sector. Discussions in this chapter centred around the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions and objectives as well as the motivation for the study. To fulfil the overarching objective of this study, six research questions and objectives were formulated.

The review of literature commenced in Chapter two. It examined the public sector in South Africa and the Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework (EHWSF) for the Public Service which was based on the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Plan of Action on Workers Health 2008-2017, the International Labour Organisation's (Kroll & Neri, 2009) Decent Work Agenda in Africa and the recommendations of the report of the WHO's Commission on Social Determinants of Health (DPSA, 2008). A brief historical perspective of the public sector, the objectives of the EHWSF and contributions made by the adoption of the employee health and wellness programmes were presented in Chapter two.

WLBS were discussed in Chapter three. Different types of strategies were examined based on their suitability to the study and background of the workplace investigated in this study. Some of the strategies adopted from De Cieri et al. (2005) like job share, domestic relationship counselling, stress management, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling and financial/debt counselling were presented and discussed.

Chapter four was a presentation of the review of the literature on SOC and work and family stressors. The meaning of SOC and how it is developed, as well as its roles were discussed in this chapter. In addition, some work stressors were examined in Chapter four such as job autonomy, function vagueness/role conflict and job stress. Family stressors were also generally investigated.

Chapter five presented the discussion on the WLB construct. Some definitions and perspectives of WLB as suggested by various scholars were discussed. Satisfaction balance was discussed to determine individual employee's satisfaction with their job and family situations. Balance was achieved where the individual achieved satisfaction with work and family situations simultaneously. Involvement (with job and family) was also discussed to ascertain from the literature how individual employees shared their limited resources between the work and family domain. The researcher proposed a definition for WLB from the review of the literature.

In Chapter six, the theoretical framework on the connection between WLB and SOC was presented. Three theories were examined namely, P-E fit, demand, resources and strategies

model and COR theory. The theories of WLB were also discussed in association with their contribution to WLBS and the achievement of WLB.

Chapter seven explained the methodology and research design and the reason for their choice. A discussion on the research philosophies that could be suitable to this study, as well as their strengths and limitations were presented. The pragmatic philosophy was ultimately adopted as the most suitable to this study. The present study adopted a non-experimental study design of ex post facto type, using multiple regressions to explain the level of association between the variables examined in the connection between WLB and SOC. A cross-sectional data collection approach was adopted based on the principle of sequential transformative mixed methods wherein equal priority was given to both the quantitative and qualitative data.

Chapter eight presented the analysis and interpretations of the findings of this study based on the information collected from study participants during the survey. The quantitative data was analysed and presented using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (IBM SPSS) version 22, while the qualitative data were analysed using NVivo 10. The IBM SPSS statistics were contributory to carrying out inferential and descriptive statistics like multiple regression and correlation analysis, exploratory factor analysis and determination of Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the variables examined. Tables, bar graphs and pie charts were used in presenting the findings as shown in figures and tables in this chapter. Similarly, models generated by the NVivo 10 software used in analysing qualitative data were used to pictorially showcase the findings of the qualitative data.

Chapter nine was a presentation of the detailed discussion of the results of this study on the basis of the evidence showcased in Chapter eight. All the discussions presented in this chapter were in relation to the research questions and objectives of this study. The reason for the discussion was to convey sufficient understanding of study respondents and management, as well as further the boundaries of knowledge in the work-family literature by examining WLB from both cognitive and behavioural perspectives in the light of SOC.

Chapter ten (this present chapter) gives a recapitulation of the whole study. It also provides a synopsis of the results, recommendations and conclusion of this study. The contribution of this research study to the knowledge and practice of HRM, as well as the work-family literature is outlined and presented. In addition, the limitations of the study and suggested areas for further research are similarly addressed.

10.6 Recommendations

Scholars and practitioners have engaged with WLB for the past two decades, yet not many people realise that ‘promoting WLB can be good for business’ (Atsumi, 2007). In this context, the following recommendations are suggested based on the findings of the present study.

First recommendation

The main essence of WLBS should be to reduce stressors that reduce employee satisfaction with work and family situations. Some of the stressors observed in this study are absence of job autonomy, role conflict, job stress resulting from the influence of politics and politicians in the workplace, organisational structure and time-related challenges. Primarily, it is recommended that management leads in championing the formulation, implementation (building WLBS portfolio) and promotion of WLBS at the municipality. This study has been able to identify some of the work stressors, but a more comprehensive scanning of the municipal environment to observe, assess and communicate relevant information from outside and within the municipality to decision making entities in the municipality is recommended. This will underpin the assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing WLBS, and create room for enhancement of strengths and improvement of the weaknesses through strategy formulation. Secondly, finding ways to modify the bureaucratic organisational structure at the municipality to a divisional organisational structure could reduce the issues of role conflict, influence of politics and politicians and possibly job stress. According to Fadeyi, Adegbuyi, Oke, and Ajagbe (2015), strategies are well managed when the workplace’s organisational structure is good. This may take time to implement but may be effective in achieving the objectives. Additionally, time-related challenges could be addressed by adopting and implementing such work strategies like job share, telecommuting and part-time work is recommended. The infrastructure (regional office buildings) and technological requirements needed to effectively implement the telecommuting strategy may be considered and budgeted for. This will portray management as being supportive of WLBS. This study also found that many professional level employees were not using the wellness programmes. It is recommended that management be seen promoting the programme through its involvement and engagement in wellness activities. When management endorsement is seen in the promotion of the policies (by way of campaigns, slogans, publicity and support), use by employees will be encouraged and possibly sustained.

Implementing initiatives seen to be addressing particular classes of individuals may disturb its use. This informed the recommendation to diversify the wellness portfolio to be an all-inclusive strategy that addresses both work and family needs of employees. Therefore the WLBS should be tailored to suit all categories of employees to avoid a one-size-fits-all method of designing workplace initiatives.

Second recommendation

This study revealed that employees at the municipality are confronted with numerous stressors daily, as well as work and family demands. Employees have limited resources of time and energy to share fairly and equitably among various work-life needs like parenting, caring for dependent elderly relations, personal development and challenges associated with commuting between work and home. Where the stressors confronting an employee are high, the manner in which such an individual will distribute the limited resources at their disposal could be traced to the level of SOC that the individual has. Stressors were revealed to have significant influence on employees' SOC in this study. Continued effects of stressors reduce the strength of SOC; therefore management should consciously address the work stressors revealed in this study with the aim of reducing the eroding effect these may have on employees' SOC. It is recommended that employees be posted to work in offices proximate to their homes to reduce travelling time and cost. This will also assist them in being on hand to attend to child and elder dependent relative emergencies without much stress. Reduction in these stressors by implementing the recommendations given here could enhance strong SOC in employees and possibly improve weak SOC among the employees having weak SOC.

Third recommendation

This study found that employees' SOC could influence their use or otherwise of workplace strategies adopted to assist employees in managing work and family stressors. It also confirmed that SOC can be enhanced, since it does not stabilise at age 30, according to the literature (Antonovsky, 1987, 1993; Antonovsky et al., 1990). The level of SOC continues to increase with time in adulthood regardless of age (Feldt et al., 2011). Sustained positive perceptions of the work environment and policies as well as family situations could lead to the enhancement of SOC. In order to enhance employee SOC at the municipality, the findings of this study recommend that strategies that could address stressors at the source and boost SOC be examined for adoption. Based on the suggestions by Antonovsky (1991) on ways to reinforce SOC, improved chances for involvement in decision-making (by increasing job autonomy) and

personal improvement (through further education, participation in courses and educational tours) may result in perceptions of more meaningfulness with respect to work. The demographic result of this study showed that most of the employees (32%) only had National Diplomas, while just 1% of them had Doctoral Degrees. This confirms the need for personal development among the employees at the municipality which could conversely improve and/or enhance SOC among the personnel. Sufficient social and management support, improved autonomy and better efficacy in work-load management could promote manageability. The reduction in role conflict, and the provision of an open, fair and equitable structure of remuneration could enhance comprehensibility. This could be communicated when a balance is struck between internal equity and external competitiveness and ensuring that the right people are placed in the right positions. When qualified individuals are employed to fill professional and technical situations, the baseline of such employment should be made known to them. Colleagues (with similar educational and work experience) in the same category of employment should not be paid discriminately, to avoid interpersonal conflicts. Organisations should consider these in formulating, adopting and implementing WLBS to assist employees to improve or enhance their SOC. Sabbatical leave, career break (to pursue further education) and examination leave (where necessary) could assist in enhancing the SOC of employees pursuing personal development (educational) activities.

Fourth recommendation

Communication at the municipal workplace seemed to be one of the key challenges among employees. This conversely affected the awareness of the WLBS adopted by the municipal workplace among employees. Many employees claimed that they were not aware of the WLBS in place at the municipality although flyers are distributed and information is posted online by the administrators of the WP from time to time. It is recommended that social arenas where employees could interact such as a cafeteria, gyms, and possibly sporting events be created at the municipality. Employees would speak about their experiences, workplace practices and programmes to one another when they have a common ground of meeting apart from work. These could be creative ways of generating awareness among employees concerning the WLBS adopted and the need to use them in addressing work and family-related challenges. Interestingly, the WP at the municipality was found to be stigmatised. Employees believe that only individual employees having HIV/AIDS, substance/alcohol abuse and domestic relationship problems use the programmes. This can be addressed by integrating other strategies such as flexible work arrangements, and various kinds of leave (paternal, sabbatical,

examination and study) into the programme portfolio. Additionally, the programme could be re-named and re-branded in order to delete the stigmatised impression of the WP. This could promote more usage among employees and conversely lead to the achievement of WLB.

Furthermore, a 'WLB culture' can be created and sustained at the municipality. Members of management may allow themselves to be seen as role models of WLB by openly engaging in WLB activities such as: supporting employees that have family emergencies by permitting them to take time off work, attending activities of the WP, allowing their personal experiences (successful ones) with the programmes to be disseminated and encouraging subordinates to attend the programmes (when necessary). Communication strategies like word of mouth, use of new technology and social media in communication, as well as regular bulletins on the initiative (WLBS) and testimonies of successful achievements are recommended. Unfortunately, interpersonal relationships among employees at the municipality were reported by most employees as being not too cordial. The municipal workplace is a diverse environment where people from various cultural and racial backgrounds meet daily to perform their work. Culture informs the way individuals behave, but being connected by work in the workplace demands that vital relational pillars be put in place. Such pillars include: tolerance, mutual respect, listening, friendship at work, team work, information and ideas sharing, which could be promoted through employee training.

Fifth recommendation

Management should consider a holistic review and evaluation of the existing wellness programmes at the municipality. This should revisit the circumstances that led to the introduction and adoption of the WP to appraise its relevance to the current workplace realities. Secondly, this study has confirmed that the WP is not a two-pronged initiative that has the capacity to address work-life demands of employees and lead them to achieve WLB. Therefore, management needs to evaluate the obvious gaps in the support provided by the municipality to employees and offer deserving priority to those areas needing improvement by possibly aligning them to the municipality's strategic objectives. It is further recommended that the management uses the findings of this study that are based on the way employees assessed the wellness programmes to create or renew the municipality's work-life practices. Based on good planning decisions, this may result in the achievement of WLBS portfolio that is harmonized, cohesive, tactical, directed and more accessible to all employees.

Sixth recommendation

It is recommended that management at the municipality be trained to hone in on the benefits of the wellness programme, which may be beneficial. Training management on domestic relationship counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling and aspects of financial management to further assist employees returning from the wellness programmes may be helpful. Additionally, content rich workplace relationship courses that should address some of the interpersonal issues among employees could be packaged and delivered to categories of employees. Although diversity training may have been on-going at the municipality, an evaluation of the content of such diversity training should be carried out to ascertain their efficacy at addressing the specific interpersonal challenges pertinent to employees at the municipality.

There seemed to be a demeaning of the ‘political bosses’ by the technocrats who seem to feel that these bosses are ill-equipped to handle their positions. It is recommended that mind-set training be conducted among the “political bosses” and that the administrative management align the mind-set of these players on the goals and objectives of the municipality. This training is not a team building initiative but content driven intervention to polish the minds of the top political and top management personnel from underlying psychological effects of apartheid which seem to blur the acceptance of realities and expectations among individuals. This could go a long way in settling the conflict between the political and administrative employees and possibly improve performance and WLB achievement among individuals.

10.7 General observations and recommendations

The researcher observed a level of disenchantment and stress among male employees as a result of what was said to be the ceiling put upon their promotions, because the female gender was more privileged as a result of affirmative action policies. Management should therefore investigate the effect of gender and affirmative action on employee morale and job stress. This may have a negative effect on employee performance and well-being.

Most vacant positions at the professional level of management were not filled. This could be an indicator that most employees at this level of employment are confronted with heavy workloads and job stress. This problem could be addressed by recruiting new employees or promoting competent employees already in the workforce to fill these vacant posts. This may be costly and require budgeting and planning to execute over time as promotions and new recruitments could be expensive. But systematically addressing this challenge would in the long run provide respite for the overloaded responsibility of the professional level employees.

On the other hand, the municipality may consider technology in solving some of the problems created by the existence of vacancies at the professional level of management. This may also require long term planning and budgeting.

This researcher noticed a prominent level of discrimination particularly among all races at the municipality. Employee association seemed to be on a clique basis. Fairness and equity seemed to be a serious issue, as well as the influence of politics in the workplace. One respondent summarised this in the following statement: *The work environment especially has become more volatile. I have an autistic child and cope better with the home stressors than I do the work stressors. There is a current sense of factions and cliques within the municipality, I am not part of. I strongly believe this underlying clique mentality adds exponentially to the sense of disorder and inequality. There is a clear lack of accountability and transparency at present and when politics mixes with administration, it makes the work environment very unclear and creates stressful and lawless space* (Respondent 291). This definitely has an adverse effect on individual wellness and performance, as well as overall organisational outcome. The Human Resource management should address this to improve relationships and employee wellness at the municipality. Great team building and content rich diversity interventions (tailored at addressing mind-set change) may go a long way in addressing these issues.

Issues associated with placement and rewards should also be addressed by the Human Resource department. The placement of 'round pegs into square holes' seemed to be evident and most employees seemed to be unhappy and stressed with the situation. Matters like these can easily be addressed by transparency in setting convincing, assessable and objective principles for recruitment, selection, remuneration and promotion.

10.8 Contribution to knowledge in work-life study and Human Resource management

Although WLB has been variously defined and attempts have been made by various scholars to examine the variables associated with the construct, there is a paucity of studies that examine the how and why individuals utilise or do not utilise personal and workplace resources. When this is ascertained, then the strategies to assist them in the way and manner to address their work and family demands can better be formulated and implemented. This will also help in conceptualising balance at the individual and organisational context.

This study furthers the boundaries of knowledge in the area of work and family and human resource management. This is based on the idea of categorising WLBS into two practical classifications that should assist policy makers and management to easily determine whether

employees are able to achieve WLB by using these strategies. It showed that a situation where the WLBS adopted addressed either work or family demands would present a situation of uneven resources. By examining WLB from cognitive and behavioural perspectives, it was found that work and family stressors influenced individual SOC. This study revealed that individuals appraised stressors as being more salient and requiring more attention than the achievement of WLB based on the uneven resource situation. This finding is supported by the COR theory and demand, resources and strategies model and indicates that employees faced with uneven supply of resources and constant demands will predictably conserve their resources.

The investigation of the linkage between WLBS and SOC as well as WLBS and work and family stressors also expanded knowledge in the work-family study by opening an area of research that has yet to be explored. This is to ascertain whether the WLBS in place at a municipality in the South African public sector helped in developing, enhancing or maintaining SOC. By discovering that there is no association between the variables, the study opened up the frontier of knowledge. The discovery that WLBS associated more with work strategies than life strategies is indicative that work stressors weighed more on individual employees than family stressors, and that the WP was effective in addressing family demands. This empirical result at the municipality in the South African public sector broadens knowledge in the study of work and family and human resource management.

10.9 Limitations and implications for further research

The result of this study is limited to the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. The results were based on the data collected from a municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. As a result of the demanding nature of work schedules and the rife political environment that genders unto suspicion and distrust, this research adopted sequential transformative mixed methods requiring a cross sectional method of collecting data. A level of care should be exercised with respect to the kind of conclusions made from the findings of this study due to the data's cross-sectional nature. By using cross-sectional data, conclusive statements concerning causation and direction are precluded.

It could be possible that use of WLBS rather than being antecedents of SOC, could in reality be the outcome of SOC. For instance the decision to use WLBS may be the result of the strength of individual employee's SOC.

This study examined the connection between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public sector. Future research could use a longitudinal approach to explain the connection between WLB and SOC among the general workers at the municipal, provincial or national level of the South African public sector. It could also be conducted among employees in the work place that were born after South Africa's independence in 1994 known as 'born frees' working at all the three-tiers of governmental (public sector) departments. This will facilitate the comparison of findings across the various levels of service in the South African public sector.

This research provided explanations on the connection between WLB and SOC; no mediating or moderating variables were used. Future research could reflect on using WLB and stressors as mediating and moderating variables respectively in order to give more detailed explanations on the interface between WLB and SOC at the other parastatals and levels of service organisations in the South African public sector. Additionally, to conduct a comparative enquiry into the influence of work and family stressors on SOC at least two more sectors of the South Africa economy is a daunting challenge which could be accepted by upcoming researchers. In addition, although this study had limited race and culture in the data collection process, further research can include culture and race in the survey to elicit the role that these variables may play in the connection between WLB and SOC among employees in any other sectorial workplace in South Africa. This may further the boundaries of knowledge.

This study examined the connection between WLB and SOC from the cognitive and behavioural viewpoints. Similarly, future research may examine the connection between achievement of WLB and SOC from other viewpoints. The overarching objective of this study was not to establish causality on the linkage between WLB and SOC. Therefore, future research may examine the causality on this linkage towards expanding the boundaries of knowledge in the present field of study.

Scholars have been proposing definitions of WLB from numerous perspectives, for example absence of conflict, equal involvement, achievement of effectiveness, enjoyment and satisfaction. This researcher suggested a definition that sees WLB as a journey with a destination to which an individual with a strong SOC would arrive at despite work and family stressors, so long as the individual is backed up by the support of the workplace and the family. Future research can test this definition for theoretical and practical implications to further the frontiers of knowledge in the field of WLB. The graphical conceptual framework shown in

Figure 10.1 below is recommended for testing in future research. The framework suggests that the individual can simultaneously take steps (work and family) towards the path of achieving satisfaction with both domains (WLB) by being adequately supported through organisational policies such as WLBS and support (from colleagues and family). The pictorial representation in Figure 10.1 provides clarification.

Figure 10.1 Proposed conceptual framework on the definition of work-life balance



10.10 Conclusion

All the objectives formulated and tested in this study were fully achieved using regression analysis. The worth of the findings of the present study was demonstrated through the recommendations proffered by the researcher.

First conclusion

The first objective of this study was to determine which WLBS were in place at the municipality. Ten WLBS were examined in this study. Through statistical deductions via exploratory factor analysis of the WLBS construct examined, this study found the emergence of two categories of strategies, namely work and life strategies respectively. The work strategies were: job share, telecommuting, working from home on an ad hoc basis, career break and a compressed work week. While life strategies included domestic relationship counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling, alcohol/substance abuse counselling, finance/debt counselling and stress management. Work strategies are those that associated with addressing work-related demands while life strategies addressed mainly personal and family-related demands. The wellness programmes adopted by the municipality investigated were clearly linked with life

strategies only. The study found that work strategies were not in place at the municipality. This led to the conclusion that the study's first objective was met and that only life strategies cannot assist employees in achieving WLB.

Second conclusion

The second objective of this study was to ascertain whether WLBS contributed to the WP adopted by the municipality. Empirical evidence showed that a significant relationship exists between the variables and that work and life strategies jointly predicted the WP at the municipality. However, work strategies made a more significant contribution to the model based on the Beta and corresponding P values. The study's second objective was achieved. This model revealed that WLBS are predicted 7.1% of the variations in the WP.

Third conclusion

This conclusion was based on the third objective of this study which sought to ascertain the influence that work and family stressors had on SOC. From the empirical evidence, work and family stressors strongly and significantly associated with SOC at the municipality investigated. SOC was jointly predicted by work and family stressors up to 11.8% of the variations in SOC. This confirmed the achievement of the study's fourth objective. Although causality of the influence was not assumed, the findings confirmed that an inverse relationship existed among the variables. The findings were supported in the literature and led to the conclusion that stressors strongly and contrarily affect a person's SOC. This result supported some of the conclusions arrived at by this study such as the suggestion that individual employees with strong SOC focused on coping with stressors and not the achievement of WLB at the municipality. Further clarity was provided through the qualitative data analysis with respect to the empirical evidence.

Fourth conclusion

The fourth objective of this study tested the influence of WLBS (independent variable) on stressors (dependent variable) at the municipality. A statistically significant association was found among the variables. The fourth objective was met. Despite the significant association among the variables, the degree of prediction of the variations in stressors by WLBS was meagre at 1.4%. The findings confirmed that WLBS were not sufficiently addressing stressors at the municipality confirming the findings of the first objective. The qualitative data analysis

contributed significantly in explaining the reasons for the minimal contribution in the prediction of stressors by the WLBS.

Fifth conclusion

The fifth conclusion of the present study associates with the fifth objective which sought to confirm the extent to which WLBS influenced WLB at the municipality in the South African public sector. The empirical evidence from this study showed that no statistically significant association existed between the two variables, although the Beta value showed that work strategies contributed more to the regression model. Objective five was achieved in this study. This corroborates the first conclusion that life strategies alone cannot assist employees in achieving WLB. Additionally, the explanations provided via qualitative data analysis shed more light on the reasons why the variables did not associate and why WLBS strategies adopted by the municipality did not assist employees in achieving WLB.

Sixth conclusion

This study initially assumed that a relationship existed between WLB (dependent variable) and SOC (independent variable) and formulated objective number six to investigate that assumption. But empirical evidence from the study revealed that no statistical association exists between the two constructs. The results of the regression model revealed that SOC predicted only 0.10% of the total variations in WLB at a municipality in the South African public sector. This confirmed that the sixth objective of this study was achieved. Descriptive statistics in Table 8.12 showed that 73.7% of the total respondents demonstrated strong SOC. But the effect of the strong SOC was not observed in the achievement of WLB. Empirical evidence leading to the third conclusion that employees used their strong SOC in coping with stressors is supported. In addition, qualitative data analysis proffered valuable explanations as to why employees, despite their high SOC could not achieve WLB.

10.11 Overall conclusion

This study provided explanations on the connections between WLB and SOC by integrating the examination of WLBS and stressors among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public sector. The study adopted both cognitive and behavioural perspectives in examining the interplay between WLB and SOC. Firstly all the WLBS adopted by the municipality were ascertained through exploratory factor analysis. The wellness programmes in place were found to be typical life strategies that addressed personal and family-

related demands, therefore, work strategies were confirmed to be absent from the workplace strategies in place at the municipality. Additionally WLBS predicted the WP by contributing 7.1% of the variations in wellness programmes at the municipality.

The study further revealed that work and family stressors had strong and inverse statistically significant association with, as well as predicted 11.8% variation in SOC at the municipality. This implied that employees utilised their strong SOC in addressing work and family stressors. However, empirical evidence showed that WLBS significantly associated with stressors, albeit its level of contribution to the variations in stressors was very minimal at 1.4%. Contrarily, no significant association was found between WLBS and WLB as well as WLB and SOC respectively. All the objectives of the study were met through regression analysis as presented in all the regression models in Chapter eight. From a behavioural and cognitive standpoint, this study showed how and why employees would, through their dispositional ability (strong SOC), address work and family stressors rather than seek to achieve WLB.

Additionally, this study suggested ways that the WLBS in place at the municipality can be improved, in order to reduce the stigmatisation attributed to it. Recommendations were also made as to how the wellness programmes could integrate other strategies in order to assist employees in addressing their work stressors and possibly achieve WLB. Ways of enhancing SOC through WLBS were also suggested. Finally, it was recommended that the municipal organisational structure could be redesigned to address the many work-stressors accruing from the bureaucratic organisation. This is to reduce work-stressors so that employees could use their strong SOC to achieve WLB. This study thus submitted that the WP adopted by the municipality to assist employees in managing their work and family-related challenges only addressed life (family) related challenges. Work and family stressors were found to have strong inverse influence on SOC. Finally, WLB and SOC were found to have no statistically significant connection at a municipality in the South African public sector.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance



25 May 2014

Mrs Ethel Ndindamuka Abe 213573838
School of Management, IT & Governance
Westville Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/MSB/0180
Project title: The connection between work-life balance (WLB) and a sense of coherence (SOC) at a municipality in the South African Public Sector.

Dear Mrs Abe

Expedited Approval

In response to your application dated 14 May 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the above-mentioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Key alterations 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 department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 5 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

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

Yours faithfully

Dr Sheelika Singh (Chair)

/s/

cc: Supervisor: Dr Zola Ndlovu
cc: Academic Leader Research: Professor B McArthur
cc: School Administrator: Ms Angela Penno

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Sheelika Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Convent Street Building

Postal Address: Private Bag 205400, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 2087/26020877 Fax: +27 (0)31 260 1600 Email: ethics@ukn.ac.za / ethics@ukn.ac.za / ethics@ukn.ac.za

Website: www.ukn.ac.za

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Appendix B: Survey instrument

Informed Consent Letter



College of Law and Management Studies

School of Management, IT and Governance, Westville Campus

Informed Consent Document for Participants in the study

Dear Respondent,

PhD Research Project

Researcher: ABE ETHEL N. (0747364359), E-mail: 213572835@stu.ukzn.ac.za

Supervisor: DR. ZISKA FIELDS (0312608103), E-mail: fields@ukzn.ac.za

I am **ABE, ETHEL NDIDIAMAKA**, a **PhD student**, at the **School of Management, IT & Governance**, of the University of KwaZulu Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “the connection between work-life balance (WLB) and a sense of coherence at a municipality in the South African Public Sector”. The aim of this study is to: **determine the connection between work-life balance (WLB) and sense of coherence (SOC) at a municipality in the South African public sector.**

Through your participation, I hope to understand the effect that the work-life balance strategies adopted by the municipality has on the achievement of work-life balance when a sense of coherence acts as a buffer against work and life stressors. The results of the survey will hopefully be a source of information on the issue of work-life balance to the public sector human resource management. It is hoped that the findings shall form the essential database for HR Departments to integrate the knowledge about SOC in formulating work-life balance strategies, especially in the African context.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from the project at any time with no negative consequence. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this survey. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the **School of Management, IT and Governance**, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about completing the questionnaire or about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

The survey should take you about **30** minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to complete this survey.

Sincerely



Researcher's signature:

Date 26th June 2014

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND GOVERNANCE

PhD (Management) Research Project

Researcher: Abe Ethel Ndidiamaka (+27747364359 or +27317014807)

Supervisor: Dr. Z. Fields (+27844343297)

CONSENT

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

1. Sex: Male Female

2. Date of birth: _____

3. Marital status:

Never married Widowed Divorced Separated Married/living as married

4. Ethekwini Municipality Clusters: Please tick the cluster in which you work

Safety & Social Services	Infrastructure	Human Settlement	HR	Governance	Finance & Procurement	Economic Development	Other (specify)
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5. Educational qualification

National Certificate	National Diploma	National 1 st Degree	Honours Degree	Professional Qualification	Master's degree.	Doctorate Degree
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6. Number of years in present position

1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15year	15-20 years
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7. Number of children:

No children currently living at home	No children	Youngest child over 18 years of age	Youngest child 13-18 years of age	Youngest child 6-12 years of age	Youngest child less than 6 years
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8. Job Title limited job

Head of Unit	Senior Manager	Manager	Coordinator	Supervisor	Other (specify)
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INSTRUCTIONS FOR SECTIONS B AND C

<p>Section B</p> <p>B.1 The section requires that you merely mark the option that best suits your opinion with an 'X', in accordance to the scale provided</p>	<p>Section C</p> <p>This section contains open-ended questions, and should be completed as honest and complete as possible.</p>
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B.2 Below is the list of responses and their corresponding rating.	
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SECTION B. 1:

This section contains a list of work-life balance strategies (benefits). You are required to identify those in place at the municipality by placing **X** under **YES** to represent the option that a benefit is adopted by the municipality and **X** under **NO** to represent the option that a benefit is not adopted by the municipality.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE STRATEGY (BENEFIT)	YES	NO
B.1.1 Stress Management		
B.1.2 Domestic relationship counselling		
B.1.3 Substance/alcohol abuse counselling		
B.1.4 HIV/AIDS counselling		
B.1.5 Financial/debt counselling		
B.1.6 Work from home on an ad hoc basis		
B.1.7 Job share		
B.1.8 Compressed work week		
B.1.9 Telecommuting		
B.1.10 Career break		

SECTION B. 2:

The following section contains statements about the municipality, in order to try and assess the type of work-life balance strategies (benefits) that the municipality adopts. Please mark with an **X** in the appropriate block. How can you rate the statements below? The following rating scale applies:

Rating system:

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

	Statements	1	2	3	4	5

B.2.1	I think that the municipality has put in place work-life balance strategies (benefits)	1	2	3	4	5
B.2.2	I make use of the work-life balance strategies	1	2	3	4	5
B.2.3	The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me cope with work-related issues like Job stress	1	2	3	4	5
B.2.4.	The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me cope with work-related issues like function vagueness	1	2	3	4	5
B.2.5.	The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me cope with work-related issues like absence of autonomy	1	2	3	4	5
B.2.6.	The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with my family related issues of parenting	1	2	3	4	5
B.2.7.	The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with my family related issues like elder care	1	2	3	4	5
B.2.8.	The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with my personal health issues	1	2	3	4	5
B.2.9.	The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with my finance/debt issues	1	2	3	4	5
B.2.10.	The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with time related challenges	1	2	3	4	5
B.2.11.	The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me to cope with my relational issues	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION C:

Please answer the following questions. Your responses are completely anonymous and confidential and will not be shown or seen by anyone. You can be completely honest in your answer.

YOUR OPINION AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUPPORTING THE MUNICIPALITY’S WORK-LIFE BALANCE STRATEGIES.

If the Municipality desires to strengthen and enhance employees’ work-life balance by reviewing her work-life balance strategies, and seeks your candid opinion and suggestions, please state below, your advice/ suggestion to the Municipality with respect to;

C.1. In my opinion, the municipality can help employees achieve work-life balance by:__

C.2. The wellness programmes can help employees achieve meaningful work-life balance if:

C.3 Which work-life balance strategies (benefits) practiced nationally or internationally do you think will be of most benefit to the professional level employees in the municipality? _____

C.4 Which work-life balance strategies practiced nationally or internationally can help you to meaningfully comprehend and manage your work stressors?

C.5 Which work-life balance strategies practiced nationally or internationally can help you to meaningfully comprehend and manage your family stressors?

SECTION D: ORIENTATION TO LIFE QUESTIONNAIRE

In this section are various questions that relate to aspects of our lives. Each of these questions has 7 likely responses (answers). Kindly please indicate the number which best describes your answer; numbers 1 and 7 are the extreme responses. In the case that the words ranked 1 are best suited and right for you, circle 1 and if the words ranked 7 are right and suit you, circle 7. If on the contrary, you feel differently from 1 or 7, circle the number that best describes your feeling. Please give one answer only to each of the questions.

Neutral

D.1 Do you have the feeling that you are in an unfamiliar situation and don't know what to do?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Often	usually often	Sometimes often	Neutral	Sometimes not often	Rarely often	Very seldom or never

D.2 Do you have very mixed-up feelings?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Often	usually often	Sometimes often	Neutral	Sometimes not often	Rarely often	Very seldom or never

D.3 Do you have very mixed-up ideas?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Often	usually often	Sometimes often	Neutral	Sometimes not often	Rarely often	Very seldom or never

D.4 Does it happen that you have feelings inside you would rather not feel?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very often						Very seldom or never

D.5 How often do you have the feeling that there's little meaning in the things you do in your daily life?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Often	usually often	Sometimes often	Neutral	Sometimes not often	Rarely often	Very seldom or never

D.6 How often do you have feelings that you're not sure you can keep under control?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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Very usually often Sometimes Neutral Sometimes not Rarely Very seldom or
Often often often often never

SECTION E: WORK STRESSORS

In this section, you are required to mark the option that best suits your opinion with an ‘X’, in accordance to the scale provided. The following rating scale applies:

JOB AUTONOMY SCALE (E.1)

Rating system:

1 Never 2 Rarely 3 Sometimes 4 Quite Often 5 Always

Use the rating system above to answer the questions below;

	Statements: In your present job, how often do you have to ask permission?	1	2	3	4	5
E.1.1	To leave early for the day?	1	2	3	4	5
E.1.2	To change the hours you work?	1	2	3	4	5
E.1.3	To leave my office or workstation?	1	2	3	4	5
E.1.4	To come late to work?	1	2	3	4	5
E.1.5	To take time off?	1	2	3	4	5

Rating system:

1 Never 2 Once or twice 3 Once or twice per month 4 Once or twice per week 5 Everyday

Use the rating system above to answer the questions below;

	Statements: How often do the following events occur in your present job?	1	2	3	4	5
E.1.6	How often does someone tell you what you are to do?	1	2	3	4	5
E.1.7	How often does someone tell you when you are to do your work?	1	2	3	4	5
E.1.8	How often does someone tell you how you are to do your work?	1	2	3	4	5

FUNCTION VAGUENESS/ROLE CONFLICT SCALE (E.2)

Rating system:

**1 Very false 2 False 3 Somewhat false 4 Neutral 5 Somewhat true
6 True 7 Very true**

Use the rating system above to answer the questions below;

	Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.1	Lack of policies and guidelines to help me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.2	Lack of guidelines to help me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.3	I work under incompatible policies and guidelines	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.4	I work under incompatible guidelines	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.5	I receive an assignment without the manpower to complete it	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.6	I know what my responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.7	I have to buck a rule or policy in order to carry out an assignment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.8	I work with two or more groups who operate quite differently	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.9	I have to “feel my way” in performing my duties	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.10	I receive incompatible requests from two or more people	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.11	I am uncertain as to how my job is linked	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.12	I work on unnecessary things	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E.2.13	I have to work under vague directives or orders.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION F: FAMILY STRESSORS

Rating System:

1. Causes no stress 2 Causes minimal stress 3 Undecided 4 Causes some stress
5 Causes high stress

Parental workload / Relationship tension (F.1)

	Statements: How much stress does making decisions on each of the following situations pose for you?	1	2	3	4	5
F.1.1.	Supporting your child (ren)’s recreational activities versus spending time on your own career development	1	2	3	4	5
F.1.2.	Spending most evenings on work-related activities versus spending most evenings with your family	1	2	3	4	5
F.1.3.	Your child (ren)’s requesting that you stay home with him/her (them) versus your following the routine of your usual work schedule	1	2	3	4	5
F.1.4.	Devoting a large percentage of your time to the raising of your family versus devoting a large percentage of your time to work	1	2	3	4	5

F.1.5.	Putting yourself first in terms of work versus your spouse putting himself/herself first in terms of his/her work	1	2	3	4	5
F.1.6	Feeling it is more important for your spouse to succeed versus feeling it is more important for you to succeed in your work	1	2	3	4	5
F.1.7	Devoting time to your work versus your spouse wanting you to spend time with him/her	1	2	3	4	5
F.1.8	Trying to be a "good" spouse versus being unwilling to risk taking the time from your work	1	2	3	4	5

Absence of spousal support (F.2)

Rating system:

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree.

	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
F.2.1.	I can count on my spouse to listen to me when I need to talk	1	2	3	4	5
F.2.2.	I can count on my spouse to go out of his/her way to help me in a crisis situation	1	2	3	4	5
F.2.3.	I can really count on my spouse to be dependable when I need help	1	2	3	4	5
F.2.4.	I can count on my spouse to console me when I am very upset	1	2	3	4	5

Level of misconduct by child (ren): F.3

Rating system:

**1 Never does 2 rarely does 3 Sometimes does but not often 4 Neutral
5 Sometimes does 6 usually does 7 Always Does**

	Statements: How often does your child (ren);	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.1.	Argue with friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.2.	Bite others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.3.	Cry for no reason	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.4.	Act defiantly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

F.3.5.	Act destructively	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.6.	Fight with friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.7.	Fight with siblings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.8.	Set-fires	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.9.	Hit others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.10.	Hurt pets or animals	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.11.	Act irritably	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.12.	Jump on furniture	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.13.	Kick others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.14.	Lie	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.15.	Nag	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.16.	Name call	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.17.	Act noisy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.18.	Behave noncompliant	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.19.	Not eat at meal time	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.20.	Push others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.21.	Pout	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.22.	Play roughly	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.23.	Run away	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.24.	Slam doors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.25.	Steal	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.26.	Talk back to adults	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.27.	Talk mean to others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.28.	Tease	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.29.	Throw temper tantrums	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.30.	Verbally threaten others	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.31.	Curse	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.32.	Whine	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
F.3.33.	Yell	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

F.5: Please answer the following questions. Your responses are completely anonymous and confidential and will not be shown or seen by anyone. You can be completely honest in your answer.

Please state your opinion about your answers to the **Orientation to Life Questionnaire, work and family stressors.**

F.5.1. In your opinion, do you think that you are able to cope with work stressors and life stressors?

.....
.....

F.5.2 Do you think that your upbringing is responsible for the reasons why you are able/unable to cope work stressors and life stressors?

.....
.....

5.3 Please state briefly how your work stressors affect the way you attach meaning to, comprehend and manage these stressors.

.....
.....

F.5.4 Please state briefly how your family stressors affect the way you attach meaning to, comprehend and manage these stressors.

.....
.....

F.5.5 Do you think that you can achieve meaningful work-life balance given your present circumstance at work? **Yes/No**

F.5.6 If No, please state briefly your reasons

.....
.....
.....

F.5.7 Do you think that you can achieve work-life balance given the present circumstance of your family? **Yes/No**

F.5.8 If No, please can you briefly give the reasons?

.....
.....
.....

SECTION G: WORK-LIFE BALANCE

JOB INVOLVEMENT SCALE: G.1

Rating system:

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
G.1.1	The major satisfaction in my life comes from my job	1	2	3	4	5
G.1.2	The most important things that happen to me involve my work	1	2	3	4	5
G.1.3	Most of my interests are centred around my job	1	2	3	4	5
G.1.4	I am very much involved in my job role	1	2	3	4	5

SATISFACTION WITH WORK SITUATION

Rating system:

1 Very false 2 False 3 Somewhat false 4 Neutral 5 Somewhat true
6 True 7 Very true

Use the rating system above to answer the questions below;

	Statements	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G.2.1	I perform tasks that are too easy	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
G.2.2	I perform tasks that are too boring	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION G.5:

Your personal assessment of work-life life balance.

Please answer the following questions. Your responses are completely anonymous and confidential and will not be shown or seen by anyone. You can be completely honest in your answer.

G.5.1 What do you understand by work-life balance?.....
.....

G.5.2 In your own opinion, have you ever achieved work-life balance?
.....

G.5.3 If yes, do you still have a work-life balance?
.....
.....
.....

G.5.4 If no, do you wish to reclaim balance?
.....
.....

G.5.5 How do you think you can achieve and maintain work-life balance?

.....

THANK YOU VERY MUCH

Appendix C: Semi-structured interview questions

GROUP A:

- Work-life balance strategies:

- The perception of employees about the work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality and the use thereof.
- The leader's or manager's (your) take on these responses.

For example:

A.1 What type of work-life balance strategies does the municipality adopt and why?

Response:

A.2 Do you think the employees of the organisation experience and accept the wellness programmes as they are intended to be perceived and adopted?

Response:

A.3 Do you think that the wellness programmes adopted by the municipality match best practices nationally and internationally?

Response:

A.4 Do you think that the wellness programmes can aid employees to achieve meaningful work-life balance?

Response:

GROUP B:

- **Sense of Coherence**

- The employees' coping abilities demonstrated through the results of the questionnaires
- The leader's or manager's take on these results.

For example:

B.1. Would you say that the professional level employees in the municipality exhibit coping skills when faced with stressors from work/home?

Response:

B.2. Do you think that the professional level employees at the municipality need more coping skills due the level of stress that they face at work/home?

Response: Sure, they do. Naturally, everyone needs help at one time or the other.

B.3. Do you think that professional level employees in the municipality will be able to achieve work-life balance amidst work and family stressors?

Response:

B.4. Do you agree that the wellness programmes are able to assist employees cope with work and family stressors?

Response:

B.5. Would you say that professional level employees in the municipality can meaningfully comprehend and manage stressors?

Response:

GROUP C:

- Work Stressors
- The stressors that employees are faced with as result of absence of autonomy, job stress, function vagueness/role conflict gleaned through the responses to the questionnaires
- The use of work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality by employees to improve coping abilities and manage the stressors
- The manager's view on these responses

For Example:

C.1 Would you say that the stressors faced by employees at the municipality stem from absence of autonomy, role ambiguity/role conflict and job stress?

Response:

C.2 Do you think that the work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality can help employees improve their coping abilities towards efficiently managing work and family stressors?

Response:

C.3 What in your opinion can be done to improve employees' ability to cope with stressors?

Response:

GROUP D:

- Family stressors

D.1 What the manager sees as the family stressors that affect employees

Response:

D.2 The use of work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality by employees to improve coping skills (abilities) and manage the family stressors?

Response:

GROUP E:

- Work-life balance

E.1 The employees perception of work-life balance variables demonstrated by their responses to job involvement , family involvement, satisfaction, time, effectiveness and stability

Response:

E.2 Do you think that professional level employees in the municipality have achieved work-life balance so far?

Response:

E.3 Would you say that the professional level employees are able to meaningfully comprehend and manage stressors and go on to achieve stable effectiveness and satisfaction at work and family respectively, with the work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality?

Response: E.4 The manager's take on these

Appendix D: Articles submitted for publication

- i. South African Journal of Human Resource Management*

**The efficacy of wellness programmes as work-life balance strategies
in the South African public service**

Ethel N. Abe, Ziska Fields*

*(*This paper is based on a PhD study at the University of KwaZulu-Natal supervised by Dr Ziska Fields, Academic Leader and Senior Lecturer, College of Law and Management. [Email:fields@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:fields@ukzn.ac.za), Telephone: +27312608103)*

The efficacy of wellness programmes as work-life balance strategies in the South African public service

Orientation: Understanding the effectiveness of wellness programmes as work-life balance strategies.

Research purpose: This study aimed to evaluate the wellness programmes adopted by the South African Public Service to ascertain their efficacy at addressing work-family challenges and aiding employees to achieve work-life balance.

Motivation: Many institutions have put in place work-life balance strategies, but discrepancies concerning definitions, formulation and implementation may make it impossible for them to fully reduce work-family challenges and assist employees in achieving the envisaged work-life balance.

Research approach: A sequential transformative mixed-methods research design was adopted. Data were collected using a self-report questionnaire administered to 307 individual managers. Additionally, 11 top management members were interviewed.

Main findings: The findings revealed that although a significant relationship exists between the wellness programmes and work-life balance strategies, the latter qualified to be addressed as life strategies since they did not address the work challenges faced by employees. Regression analysis showed that work-life balance strategies predicted only 7.1% of the variations in wellness programmes in the South African Public Service.

Practical/managerial implications: Due to the significant effect that work and family –related challenges have on employees, work-life balance strategists need to be pragmatic in formulating and designing work-life balance strategies that address domain-specific needs.

Contribution/value- add: The peculiarity and value of this article lies in the resolution of the assumption that work-life balance strategies adopted by organisations may not

address employee work and life challenges and assist them in achieving work-life balance.

Introduction

Substantial changes have been observed in the past decades in family life as a result of the increase in single-parent households and dual-earner families, concomitant with a rise in the number of workers confronted with the need to provide care for elderly and dependent relatives (Neal & Hammer, 2007; Seltzer *et al.*, 2005). This has led to the need for workers to find ways of managing paid employment and unpaid family duties (L. Duxbury & Dole, 2015; Hammer, Kossek, Anger, Bodner, & Zimmerman, 2011). In this context, Kossek, Pichler and Bodner (2011) report that the provision of crèches, as well as job-sharing and adaptable working arrangements have been designed to accommodate women entering the workforce in large numbers.

Work-life balance strategies (WLBS) have been defined as “those that enhance the autonomy of workers in the process of coordinating and integrating work and non-work aspects of their lives” (De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott & Pettit, 2005, p. 90). This definition allows for a wide range of practices or strategies to be accommodated as WLB initiatives. Darcy *et al.* (2012) view WLBS as those measures and practices initiated willingly by organisations for the facilitation of reconciliation between employees’ individual lives and their work.

The arrangements made by organisations towards employee wellbeing could possess WLB elements but may be unable to assist employees in achieving WLB regularly and consistently (Kossek, Lautsch & Eaton, 2006). Various studies have identified WLBS as work-life initiatives which focus on modifying workplace arrangements to adapt to the dynamic work-life demands of employees. Likewise, WLBS have been seen as compliant arrangements that public service organisations make in order to conform to legislative requirements to provide for dual-earner families and address gender issues. Examples of topics addressed in such studies are ‘work-family policies’ and

'employer work-life supports' (E. E. Kossek et al., 2006), as well as 'firms with good WLB and a poor or strong WLB strategy' (Bloom et al., 2011).

In accordance with a recommendation by Kelly *et al.* (2008) that researchers should engage more with multi-level studies that interpret WLBS as workplace interventions, this article investigated the wellness programmes to determine if they are WLBS that could assist employees in managing their work-life challenges. The aim was essentially to ascertain whether these programmes are effective at assisting employees in achieving meaningful WLB.

Objectives

The key objective of the research was to determine if the wellness programmes adopted by a municipality as a WLB strategy is able to assist employees in managing their work and family challenges and achieve WLB. This key objective was achieved via the secondary objectives stated below:

- Ascertain the strategies that made up the wellness programmes.
- Determine the contribution of WLBS to the wellness programmes.
- Examine the effect of WLBS on WLB.

Literature review

In this section, the literature on various variables that were relevant to the research on the efficacy of the wellness programmes as WLBS adopted by a municipality in South Africa. The aim of conducting a literature review was to assist in proffering appropriate examination, analysis and interpretation of the subject towards conceptualising suitable strategies for assisting employees in addressing work-life stressors and achieving meaningful WLB.

Work-life balance strategies

Research has revealed that family and work are interconnected, in the light of this, interest in the development of approaches to advance understanding into the interface

among them has grown among scholars and practitioners (Voydanoff, 2005b). The segmentation theory (O'Driscoll et al., 1992; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990; S. E. Zedeck, 1992), person-environment fit theory (Jeffery R Edwards et al., 1998; Jeffrey R Edwards & Cooper, 2013), conservation of resources (COR) theory (S. E. Hobfoll, 2001, 2011a; S. E. Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993) and the demands, resources and strategies model (Voydanoff, 2005a, 2005b) helped in providing useful conceptualisations.

Segmentation theory proposes that work and life are two mutual but exclusive spheres that do not influence each other (Guest, 2002; Sumer & Knight, 2001). This implies that strategies to address each domain's challenges could be crafted appropriately based on the challenges present in the domain. The person-environment fit theory is a double-barrel approach that focuses on the individual and environment in the study of stress to ascertain the features and influence of stress (Jeffery R Edwards et al., 1998; Endler & Magnusson, 1977; Pervin, 1989). It suggests that wellness, mannerisms and conduct are jointly influenced by the environment and the individual. The theory is core to studies in workplace behaviour, industrial psychology and management of human resources (Jeffrey R Edwards et al., 2006; Jeffery R Edwards et al., 1998; Holland, 1997; Kristof, 1996; Walsh et al., 2000).

COR theory predicts that the major determinant variable in stress development is the loss of resources (S. E. Hobfoll, 2001). Hobfoll (2001, p. 337) states that such resources 'are those objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued in their own right, or that are valued because they act as conduits to the achievement or protection of valued resources' The prediction of this theory is that stress is inevitable where resources are perceived to be vulnerable, lost, forfeited, and uneven; or if people as individuals or groups are unable to see the way of enhancing and securing their resources either by personal or collaborative efforts (S. E. Hobfoll, 2001). Since people try to receive, keep, enhance and secure everything that is maximally valuable (S. Hobfoll, 1998), the implication is that they will use important resources to manage

themselves, their engagements in social relationships as well as the way in which they arrange themselves to behave and align with the larger society (S. E. Hobfoll, 2011a).

The demands, resources and strategies model considers the fact that employees nowadays face numerous unavoidable challenges regarding WLB (Campione, 2008; Delgado & Canabal, 2006; Mauno & Rantanen, 2013; Minnotte, 2012; Voydanoff, 2005a). Therefore, employees look for ways and means of managing the demands at work and at home. It was assumed in the study that resources present at work – such as wellness programmes – could assist employees in managing work and family demands and achieve WLB.

When people perceive that the challenges in the environment are more than the resources available to manage them, the situation is appraised as being stressful (Crawford et al., 2010). Therefore, WLB could be derived from evaluating the relative challenges and resources pertaining to family and work responsibilities. Demands include those designed or mental claims that playing a particular role makes on an individual. Examples of demands are norms and expectations that a person is required to conform to in the course of performing a mental or physical task. Resources comprise those organised or mental assets which could be used in improving performance, reducing challenges or developing more resources (Voydanoff, 2004). The research on which this article is based aimed to ascertain if employees perceived that they achieved WLB by using the WLBS (in this case wellness programmes) in place at the municipality.

According to Kelly *et al.* (2008), WLBS are those intentional policies that organisations adopt to effect changes in practices, guidelines and/or culture so as to lessen the effect of work and family demands on the employees, as well to support workers outside the workplace. W. J. Casper and Harris (2008) suggest that although workplaces usually offer WLBS with the aim of promoting positive outcomes (Osterman, 1995), an understanding of the actual achievement of this goal is of paramount importance.

Echoing this view, Kelly *et al.* (2008) report that notwithstanding the spread of these strategies, abundance of literary work done on work- and family-related matters (Pitt-Catsouphes, Kossek, & Sweet, 2006), as well as the publicity that the subject is receiving from the media, organisations do not know which strategies to adopt in order to assist employees in managing their work and family demands.

WLBS can be classified into three groups: flexible working programmes (FWPs), family-friendly programmes, and health and wellness programmes. According to Caillier (2013), FWPs are those that offer workers the required flexibility to achieve WLB, for example telecommuting, a compressed workweek and flexi start and finish. Flexitime is the most commonly FWP adopted by organisations for reasons ranging from job satisfaction to performance (Baltes et al., 1999). Caillier (2013), reports that workplaces using FWPs could have their employees put in additional time at work including delivering services to citizens outside normal workday time. This suggests that flexitime would be appropriate to the needs of employees in the public service, especially municipalities. In a compressed workweek job schedules are compacted to permit employees to work fewer than 10 days every fortnight and particularly exceed eight hours per workday. It is different from flexible start and finish because time of work is aligned to the routine of starting and finishing times for all employees that participate in the arrangement (Caillier, 2013). Telecommuting refers to the arrangement where employees carry out some of their functions outside the contemporary office setting by using information and communication technology (ICT). This approach could result in work being done from home, at specific outposts in a region or any place where the employee has access to ICT (Baruch, 2001). Job sharing, part-time work, and maternal and paternal leave arrangements are other arrangements related to flexible time (Gunavathy, 2011)

The next group of WLBS, family-friendly benefits, include child and dependent-elderly relative care. In government organisations, child care in particular consists of assistance with on-site services, resource and referral services, and subsidies. The last

group of WLBS is health and wellness programmes. Health and wellness programmes include health carnivals, bulletins, preventive programmes, gymnasium, weight loss facilities, counselling, and stress management programmes (SHRM., 2009).

Fleetwood (2007), citing Gambles et al. (2006), reaffirms that even though various adaptable work programmes seem to have the potential to assist individuals in achieving WLB, a number of these practices restrain the successful achievement of WLB. The South African public service adopted wellness programmes as WLBS to assist the employees in managing their work-life challenges and possibly achieve WLB. This article examines the efficacy of the wellness programmes among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public service.

The South African public service inherited an institutional legacy from the apartheid government and a responsibility to help the government of the day to right the many wrongs of the apartheid era. As reported by May and Govender (1998), MirafTAB (2004) and Özler (2007), the apartheid regime had a discriminatory structure of labour which largely segregated the black and the coloured population of South Africa. The poverty rate during the apartheid era was approximately 68% among blacks (May & Govender, 1998; Özler, 2007). Children were unshielded from the violence of those days both at home and in the larger community; they were equally exposed to hunger, irregular nurturing and education (May & Govender, 1998). Most of the professional-level employees surveyed at the municipality seem to have been children raised during the apartheid years, as demonstrated by the demographic data collected for this article. Approximately 62.2% of respondents were aged between 36 and 55 years. By 1994, the emergent South African nation with its municipal administration was saddled with the responsibility of administering the local governments which formerly served a segmented (small) portion of the populace. With the transformation into a democratised era where metropolitan governments were the leading creation (Cameron, 2005; MirafTAB, 2004), most employees are confronted with the effects of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, chronic diseases, dependent-elderly relative and child care,

alcohol/substance abuse and debt-related challenges (life stressors) as well as too much work, absence of autonomy, job stress, and role ambiguity/function clash (work stressors). In order to cope with these challenges, resources in the workplace addressing both work- and family-related challenges are needed. To support employees and assist them in managing these challenges, the municipality adopted the wellness programmes as prescribed by the South African Department of Public Service.

Although a number of studies discovered that notable negative association exists between WLB and WLBS (Ezra & Deckman, 1996; Hill, 2005; Hill et al., 2003; Hill et al., 2004), some studies report that there were either non-existent or weak linkages among WLBS adopted by organisations and work-family clash (Anderson et al., 2002; Batt & Valcour, 2003; Haar & Spell, 2004) or satisfaction with work (Shinn et al., 1989). C. A. Thompson et al. (2004), found that aspects of WLBS associated positively with workers' emotional obligation to the organisation, but had no effect on family-work challenges.

The discussion of wellness programmes as WLBS is presented below.

The wellness programmes

There are fundamental assumptions underpinning the adoption of WLBS. Felstead et al. (2002) report on four theories that describe the elements underlying an organisation's adoption of WLBS. They are institutional theory, organisational adaptation theory, high commitment theory and situational theory (S. Wood, 1999). Institutional theory postulates that organisations mirror and adapt to the influence of societal norms, though to differing levels (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Oliver, 1991; W. Powell & DiMaggio, 2012). The need to sustain compliance with societal norms fuels the differences in the levels of adaptations. Large corporate sector organisations and the public sector institutions usually easily conform to regulations due to their visibility resulting from size, and accountability to their constituencies. Situational

theory is considered more practical in its method because it submits that workplaces merely respond and try to counter issues of stress as they emerge in their WLBS use. To Osterman (Osterman) this is known as the pragmatic reaction theory. This perspective views the adoption of WLBS by an organisation as emanating from neither variation in the national value structures as recommended in the institutional and organisational adaptation theories, nor the beginning of the ground-breaking human resources strategies as suggested by high commitment theory. Instead, it is founded on the establishment of defined challenges that threaten organisational performance and profit (Felstead *et al.*, 2002).

The municipality under study adopted wellness programmes in line with the Employee Health and Wellness Strategic Framework for the public service which was based on the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Plan of Action on Workers Health 2008-2017, the International Labour Organisation's (I L O) Decent Work Agenda in Africa and the recommendations of the report of the WHO's Commission on Social Determinants of Health (DPSA, 2008). The objective was to enable the formulation of strategies to manage HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis (TB), and wellness in the public service. The adoption of this programme as a WLB strategy may be attributed to the institutional and situational theories described above.

Sieberhagen *et al.* (2011) report that organisations are increasingly recognising the challenges relating to workers' wellbeing (Hooper, 2004) and that there is heightened public interest in the integration of wellness events and the responsibilities of the employers (Hillier *et al.*, 2005). Consequently, programmes such as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) and Employee Wellness programmes (EWPs) have been established to investigate matters regarding wellness of employees in the workplace (Frey *et al.*, 2015; Sieberhagen *et al.*, 2011). These scholars confirm that both EAPs and EWPs address wellness issues.

Traditionally, the reason for establishing EAPs was to assist employees with their domestic problems that had the potential to undermine their work performance. The

initial EAPs concentrated on addressing alcohol and substance misuse which negatively affected workers' performance. For example, a number of the first EAPs focused on addressing issues emanating from abuses relating to alcohol and substance which undermine employees' productivity. But in contemporary times, a number of EAPs integrated dependent-elderly relative care, domestic relationship counselling, stress management, legal advice, financial/debt counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling, and substance/alcohol abuse counselling (these are life strategies) to help workers address their personal life challenges (Benavides & David, 2010). The scholars are of the view that these interventions are formulated to detect, remedy and rehabilitate workers whose individual challenges are meddling with productivity at work. They further reported that employees perceived the programmes as having the objective of treating workers' personal problems so that they do not degenerate to the point of permanently affecting the employees' performance at work. EAPs are reactionary programmes intended to alleviate prevailing adverse situations by attending to core issues (subjective, psychological and medical) in the way they affect an employee's performance at work (Benavides & David, 2010).

Likewise, wellness programmes are designed to promote employees' awareness of their wellness needs as well as to facilitate personal psychological and physiological change towards promoting individual health and a supportive workplace. Leiter and Durup (1996) reported that EWP activities are particularly targeted towards providing relief to employees from stress emanating from substance/alcohol abuse, finance/debt issues, medical and chronic diseases, career crises and job demands (Tuwai, Kamau, & Kuria, 2015). Basically, most of the strategies adopted by EWPs are counselling-based and their use is voluntary. By their formulation and design, EWPs are not structured to address work-related issues (Reynolds & Bennett, 2015) such as job stress, function vagueness or role clash, and/or absence of autonomy and their outcomes on employees' stress levels. In addition, the services rendered through

wellness programmes to employees are targeted towards personal and health-related matters rather than work-related issues.

Participation in wellness programmes is limited by factors such as stigmatisation (Gerber, 1995; A. V. Naidoo, & Jano, R. , 2003a) as well as trust and confidentiality-related issues (Sieberhagen *et al.*, 2011). Also, according to Gunavathy (2011), although corresponding interventions appear to be under the umbrella of WLBS, sound knowledge of the concept *per se* is still grey.

The municipality (which, for the purpose of confidentiality, will not be named) in the South African public service investigated in this article adopted the wellness programmes as WLBS to assist employees in addressing their work- and family-related challenges.

Shamian and El-Jardali (2007) examination of the implementation of wellness programmes in the healthcare sector showed that the work environment had improved significantly due to legislation and governmental policy which combined empirical information and inculcated information from literature. Edries *et al.* (2013) found wellness useful in enhancing health-related manners and employees' perception of quality of life. H. E. Brown *et al.* (2011) and J. T. Ho (1997) reported that employees who participated in the wellness events showed greater levels of satisfaction with their jobs than those that did not participate. Després *et al.* (2014) suggest that a new breed of studies on the assessment and development in practices regarding employee health and wellness is needed.

In the context sketched above, this study was significant in assessing the work-life practices at the municipality and guiding the development of an effective WLB strategy that could address employees' work-life challenges and assist in the achievement of WLB. To achieve this objective, individual benefits were assessed in order to ascertain their efficacy. According to W. J. Casper and Buffardi (2004), the examination of the various strategies may have distinctive results on workplace

outcomes and possibly relate in predicting outcomes. The expected outcome of the study is that the adoption of WLBS could lead to reduction in work and family stress and the achievement of WLB by employees.

Work-life balance

The concept of balance has been seen and defined from numerous perspectives. While a number of scholars have written on WLB from the context of role conflict (Akanji, 2012; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Eagle et al., 1998; Eagle et al., 1997; Hobson, 2011; Jones et al., 2013; E. E. Kossek, Pichler, et al., 2011; Netemeyer et al., 1996), others like Staines (1980), Cushing (2004) and MacInnes (2005) have carried out the review of the literature in the area of connection amidst work and non-work (Wong & Ko, 2009). Their findings contribute to the debate on WLB; yet not much has been written on how WLB connects to other variables that could affect its achievement.

Darcy *et al.* (2012), report that WLB is not a “one size fits all” concept; rather, it is a subjective concept that should be designed by the individual to suit his/her objectives of achieving satisfaction, involvement and time balance. In line with Darcy *et al.* (2012), this article suggests that the peculiarity and dynamism of each individual’s person and situation at work and home define their satisfaction at any given time. An individual’s subjective feeling of satisfaction concerning personal time and involvement with work and family could be contrary to the satisfaction of his/her family members and employer and colleagues or possibly his/her health. Burke (2009) is of the opinion that most workers would rather work for shorter periods of time, even though only a few of them really understand what they prefer. Although this study did not examine the details of the effect of long hours of work and work addiction on employees’ work and/or family domain, it was concerned with the satisfaction that the individual derives from distributing his/her time and energy, highlighted by the level of involvement among the various work and family demands and roles.

Though the concept of WLB has been a subject of scholarly and political discussion (Felstead *et al.*, 2002) in Europe and America since the 1960s, it is comparatively new in the African context. However, Kalliath and Brough (2008) report that even though many conceptualisations of WLB exist in the literature, there is a scarceness of direct, properly established measures of the concept. In addition, the scholars suggest that, in the absence of direct assessment of WLB, it is tedious to evaluate the efficacy of WLBS on basic organisational and individual outcomes. Hence, there is worth in examining WLB by assessing the strategies in place at a workplace. The study on which this article is based examined the efficacy of wellness programmes as WLBS at a municipality in South Africa.

Methods and measurements

Being an exploratory study, a sequential transformative mixed methods research design was adopted. Both the quantitative and qualitative data collected concurrently (through the survey questionnaire) and sequentially (by in-depth interviews) were equally prioritised (Creswell & Garrett, 2008; Hanson *et al.*, 2005; D. L. Morgan, 2007). This is because the data collected from one-on-one interviews and open-ended questions were expected to disprove, validate or augment the data collected from the survey questionnaires. Therefore, the data collected and analysed in the study are based on the assumptions of Hanson *et al.* (2005) sequential transformative mixed methods.

Sample selection and questionnaire administration

The target population for this paper was 7 000 professional-level employees and the sample of participants in the study was 307 professional-level employees and 11 other members of the municipal top management that were interviewed. The sample respondents were drawn from the Safety and Social Services, Infrastructure, Human Settlement, HR, Governance, Finance and Procurement and Economic Development clusters of the municipality. Primary data were gathered from a survey of heads of

units, senior managers, managers, co-ordinators, and supervisors. Data were collected over a six-month period and the study recorded a response rate of approximately 84%. A factor analysis method was engaged in classifying the WLBS while descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analysing the extent to which WLBS contributed to the wellness programmes. To establish the strategies that made up the wellness programmes, 10 different WLBS were described in the survey instrument. Respondents marked 'yes' to concur with the adoption of a strategy and 'no' to signify that it was not adopted by the municipality. Through exploratory factor analysis, the 10 selected strategies were classified into two, namely life strategies (for strategies addressing life challenges) and work strategies (for strategies addressing work demands). Descriptive statistics was employed in determining the frequencies of the responses to items relating to the WLBS scale that was adopted.

Measures

The variables in this study were measured using responses from scales adapted to the study from validated measures that had been used previously. To measure WLBS, participants were asked to respond on a dual response 'Yes' and 'No' WLBS scale in order to establish the strategies in place at the municipality. A factor analysis was subsequently utilised to group the strategies according to their effectual patterns into two groups, namely life strategies and work strategies. The pattern that emerged categorically placed the WLBS into two distinct domains: work and life strategies.

The wellness programmes were assessed by using the work-life wellness scale adapted to the study. Respondents were asked to rank on a 5-point scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree; the effect of the wellness programmes in assisting them cope with various work and family-related challenges. Some of the items on this scale were 'The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me cope with work-related issues like function vagueness' and 'The work-life balance strategies in place at the municipality help me cope with my family related

issues of parenting.’ The researcher appraised all aspects of work- and family-related challenges examined in this study and included them as items in the scale so as to collect meaningful data.

WLB was measured as an outcome variable on a two-dimensional scale assessing job satisfaction and job involvement. The job satisfaction scale used in this study emerged from the factor analysis of the function vagueness/role conflict scale. Four scales were initially used to assess WLB, but after exploratory factor analysis, three scales, namely family involvement, satisfaction balance and time balance scales were discarded because they cross-loaded on other factors in the study. But the job satisfaction and job involvement scales used to assess WLB in this study exhibited high internal consistency and Cronbach’s alpha coefficient (α) were 0.938 and 0.794 respectively. Analysis relied fundamentally on individual self-reports to examine organisational and individual resources. Prior studies suggest that valid data providing useful insight into organisational properties could be collected from such data (Lincoln & Zeitz, 1980, cited in (Pandey & Wright, 2006).

Results

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the IBM SPSS version 22 to ascertain the validity of the instruments, correlation coefficient and regression analysis of the quantitative data. IBM NVivo was used in organising and analysing qualitative data. The results from the various variables are presented below.

Work-life balance strategies at the municipality

Table 1 presents an assessment of WLBS in place at the municipality by highlighting 10 distinct strategies and respondents’ views on their availability at the municipality.

TABLE 1: Frequencies and percentages of responses to items on the work-life balance strategies

Description	Frequency	Percentage
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	Yes	No	Yes	No
Stress management	223	84	72.63%	27.36%
Domestic relationship counselling	203	104	66.12%	33.88%
Substance/alcohol abuse counselling	271	36	88.27%	11.73%
HIV/AIDS counselling	278	29	90.55%	9.45%
Financial/debt counselling	235	72	76.55%	23.45%
Work from home on <i>ad hoc</i> basis	31	276	10.10%	89.90%
Job sharing	76	231	24.76%	75.24%
Compressed workweek	54	253	17.59%	82.41%
Telecommuting	91	216	29.64%	70.36%
Career break	67	240	21.82%	78.18%

The respondents that marked 'Yes' to the question eliciting information as to the availability of various strategies at the municipality, such as stress management, domestic relationship counselling, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling and financial/debt counselling, were 72.6%, 66.1%, 88.3%, 90.6% and 76.5% respectively. These results confirm that most respondents were of the opinion that the municipality had adopted stress management, domestic relationship counselling, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling and financial/debt counselling as WLBS. However, concerning work from home on an *ad hoc* basis, job share, compressed workweek, telecommuting and career break, the results indicate 89.9%, 75.2%, 82.4%, 70.4% and 78.2% respectively. These results show that most employees were of the opinion that these strategies were not adopted by the

municipality. In summary, the municipality adopted stress management, domestic relationship counselling, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling and financial/debt counselling. These strategies have been identified in the WLBS literature as health and wellness programmes (Caillier, 2013). Hence, the municipality's wellness programmes particularly addressed health and wellness issues [issues relating to life (family)]. However, work from home on an *ad hoc* basis, job share, compressed workweek, telecommuting and career break (Caillier, 2013) had not been adopted by the municipality in the South African public service as strategies to assist employees in coping with their work and family-related challenges.

Use of wellness as a work-life balance strategy to address work-related challenges

From the results presented in Table 2 below, it is evident that the majority of the respondents represented by 32.2% (99 respondents) took a neutral stand with respect to the question, while 67 respondents representing 21.8% of the participants disagreed strongly and 64 others (20.8) also disagreed that the wellness programmes assisted them in managing their work-related challenges. Sixty-six participants (21.5%) agreed that the wellness programmes helped them in managing their work-related issues and the remaining 3.6% strongly agreed with the statement. The feedback on the item yielded a mean of 2.64 and a standard deviation of 1.147. The results indicate that over 42% of the participants expressed the view that the wellness programmes did not assist them in coping with their work-related challenges, while 37% others agreed with the statement.

TABLE 2: Wellness programmes address work-related issues

	Freque ncy	Per cent	Valid Per cent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Strongly disagree	67	21.82	21.82	21.82
	Disagree	64	20.85	20.85	42.67
	Neutral	99	32.25	32.25	74.92
	Agree	66	21.50	21.50	96.42
	Strongly agree	11	3.58	3.58	100.00
	Total	307	100.00	100.00	

Use of wellness programmes as a work-life balance strategy to address family-related issues

The outcome presented in Table 3 indicate that 23.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed that the wellness programmes helped them in coping with their relational issues and 20.5% others also disagreed with the statement. By taking a neutral stand a total of 104 respondents representing 33.9% did not express any view on the statement while 19.2% and 2.6% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that the wellness programmes helped them in coping with their relational challenges. The mean and standard deviation derived from this item were 2.56 and 1.125 respectively. This result shows that 44.3% of the total respondents disagreed with the statement while 21.8% agreed that the wellness programmes assisted them in managing their relational challenges. Table 3 presents the outcomes of the responses to this item.

TABLE 3: Wellness programmes address family-related issues

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	73	23.78	23.78	23.78

	Disagree	63	20.52	20.52	44.30
	Neutral	104	33.88	33.88	78.18
	Agree	59	19.22	19.22	97.40
	Strongly agree	8	2.60	2.60	100.00
	Total	307	100.00	100.00	

This is an unexpected result because the majority of the respondents were married and according to the literature, wellness programmes are designed to address family-related demands. The reason for this result could be linked to the findings of the qualitative data analysis. Some of the findings are unawareness of the programme, inaccessibility to the programme, stigmatisation, confidentiality and trust issues, as well as cultural beliefs. These findings of the qualitative data analysis are substantiated in the literature by various scholars (Gunavathy, 2011; A. V. Naidoo, Jano, & 2003; Sieberhagen et al., 2011). This result could also be linked to the fact that the programme was an EAP, which the literature has shown to be a reactive strategy (Benavides & David, 2010). It is also corroborated by Kelly et al. (2008) supposition that workplaces that have adopted WLBS may be reacting to emerging viewpoints that suggest that good employers are those that adopt initiatives that are family-friendly.

Contribution of work-life balance strategies to the wellness programmes

Although the descriptive statistics presented in Tables 1, 2 and 3 showed that half of the number of WLBS adopted by the municipality identified more with life strategies addressing personal and family challenges, the inferential statistics results provide more clarity on the situation, as shown in Table 4.

The regression model presents an R square of 0.077 and adjusted R square of 0.071. This implies that the model (WLBS) predicts 7.1% of the variations in wellness programmes at a municipality in the South African public service. It is significant at $p < 0.01$ indicating that there is a substantial association between the independent variables at the two dimensions of WLBS and the wellness programmes (dependent variable).

These results led to the finding that WLBS contribute to wellness at the municipality in the South African public service. The standardised Beta and matching P values for life strategies and work strategies ($\beta = 150, p < .01$) and ($\beta = 235, p < .001$) respectively, indicate that work strategies made the most meaningful contributions to the model in comparison to life strategies. In addition, this confirms the descriptive statistics results that although the wellness programmes adopted at the municipality was more of an EAP (addressing life-related issues) than a holistic WLB strategy; its efficacy in addressing the employees' relational issues was negligible. The wellness programmes would have made meaningful contribution to assisting employees in addressing their work-life issues if the work strategies tested in the study were integrated into it. This is supported by Voydanoff's (2005a) border theory which postulates that work and family are inseparable spheres, therefore activities and resources need to be tailored to address them simultaneously.

TABLE 4: Work-life balance strategies as predictor of wellness programmes

Independent variable	R	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Beta	T	P
	.28	0.08	0.07	12.73			
Life strategies					150	2.73	.00
Work strategies					235	4.27	.00

Constant					-	12.01	.00
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Having established that there is a significant relationship between the wellness programmes and WLBS, it is necessary to ascertain if the WLBS assisted employees in achieving meaningful WLB.

Work-life balance

The outcome variable in this study is WLB indicated by satisfaction with work and family situations. The result of the effect of the WLBS on WLB is presented in the regression model below (Table 5). Consider the result of the R square at 0.003 and adjusted R square of 0.004. This shows that work and family strategies predict only 0.30% of the variations in WLB at a municipality in the South African public sector. This is insignificant at $p > 0.05$ confirming that there is no significant relationship between WLBS and WLB. The standardised Beta and corresponding P values for work strategies and family strategies ($\beta = 0.053$, $p > 0.05$) and ($\beta = 0.005$, $p > 0.05$) respectively. Although none of the independent variables (family and work strategies) contributed significantly to the model, family strategies were most insignificant.

TABLE 5: Effect of work-life balance strategies on work-life balance

Independent variables	R	R square	Adjusted R square	F	Beta	T	P-value
	.05	.00	.00	.43	-	-	.65
Work strategies					.05	.93	.36
Family strategies					.00	.09	.93

Constant						23.08	.00
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Discussion of findings and concluding remarks

The research reported in this article was designed to examine the efficacy of wellness programmes in addressing employee work-life challenges and achievement of WLB at a municipality in South Africa. The study combined 10 major work-life balance strategies [(1) life strategies: domestic relationship counselling, stress management, substance/alcohol abuse counselling, HIV/AIDS counselling, financial/debt counselling and (2) work strategies: work from home on an *ad hoc* basis, job share, compressed workweek, telecommuting and career break)] by integrating the segmentation theory (S. Zedeck, 1992) and the demands, resources and strategies model (Voydanoff, 2005a, 2005b) in assessing the wellness programme as a WLBS. This result (categorisation) is supported in the literature by C. Zheng, Kashi, et al. (2015, p. 11).

The outcome demonstrates that the wellness programme adopted as WLBS categorically addressed family-related demands; hence work strategies were not in place at the municipality in the South African public service. This result aligns to the segmentation theory's (Guest, 2002; S. J. Lambert, 1990; O'Driscoll et al., 1992; Staines, 1980; Sumer & Knight, 2001; S. Zedeck, 1992) assumptions that work and the non-work domain are dissimilar and have no relationship with one another; therefore, strategies addressing both domains could be distinctly formulated and implemented.

This finding is in line with conventional research on HR policies in explaining the characteristics of WLBS in place in the South African public service (De Cieri et al., 2005; E. E. Kossek et al., 2006; E. E. Kossek & Ozeki, 1999). Additionally, it confirms that the wellness programmes adopted by the public service are clearly health and wellness programmes (Caillier, 2013). Health and wellness, according to S. E. Hobfoll (2011a) conservation of resources theory are of primary value to the individual.

Therefore this result supports the use of salience as moderator in person-environment and stress studies of satisfaction and wellness (Judge et al., 1998; Locke, 1976; Rice et al., 1985). The non-adoption of work strategies by the municipality corroborates Ngo et al. (2009) citation of Poelman and Saibzada (2004) and confirms that wellness programmes were not holistic WLBS since only life-related issues and not work-related demands (J. Kim & Wiggins, 2011) were addressed. This result is consistent with the literature and qualifies the wellness programme as an EAP (Benavides & David, 2010). However, C. Zheng, Molineux, et al. (2015) reported that flexible work practices were more beneficial in aiding employees to develop their coping strategies than health and wellness programmes. Yet, these strategies were not adopted by the municipality. Therefore, employees did not achieve WLB at the municipality by using wellness programmes.

Qualitative data provided more substantive information on the effect of the non-adoption of work strategies by the public service. The data confirmed that employees wished that strategies like telecommuting, job share, work from home on ad hoc basis and part-time work could be implemented at the municipal workplace. Additionally, the qualitative data supported the claim that wellness programmes at the municipality could not be addressed as holistic WLBS because they did not enhance employees' experiences with work and family domains as supported in the literature (Felstead et al., 2002; Alma McCarthy et al., 2010; C. A. Thompson et al., 1999). The findings of this study also support the claims of Valcour and Batt (2003, p. 329) that the challenges of work and life domains could not be solely tackled through initiatives that are crafted to give flexibility and restrict general work demands. This result is beneficial in predicting outcomes and this is supported in the literature (Arthur, 2003; W. J. Casper & Buffardi, 2004; Grover & Crooker, 1995; E. E. Kossek, Baltes, et al., 2011). It also furthers knowledge in the study of wellness programmes by ascertaining that wellness programmes are life strategies. This highlights the need to formulate domain-based WLBS to address pertinent workplace and family-related challenges.

For the purpose of advising prospective practices to improve employees' work-life experiences in the South African public sector, the following discussion provides the appraisal of the findings regarding wellness and WLBS. To find the extent to which work-life strategies (work strategies and life strategies in this study) predicted wellness programmes at the municipality in the South African public service, the strategies (work and life strategies) were subjected to a regression model. The adjusted R square showed that the WLBS were responsible for 7.1% of the variations in wellness programme at the municipality. This is not surprising because, in line with Caillier (2013, p. 342) categorisation of WLBS, wellness programme as one of the sub-categories of the construct is designed to assist employees with health and wellness issues. Incidentally, in this study, work strategies made a more important contribution to the model than life (family) strategies, indicating that if work strategies were integrated into the wellness programmes, employees' achievement of WLB could be influenced in a more meaningful way (Guest, 2002; Voydanoff, 2005b). Furthermore, C. Zheng, Kashi, et al. (2015) submission in the literature was also corroborated by the findings of this study.

This study revealed that work strategies and family strategies jointly predicted wellness programmes at the municipality, therefore the finding is useful in bridging the gap in the literature, as suggested by Skinner and Chapman (2013, p. 11), by evaluating the practice at the municipality in the South African public service. This result, therefore, has satisfied the second objective of this paper. The result confirms the novelty of this study in classifying WLBS into two distinct and practical categories (work strategies and life strategies) and furthers knowledge on the efficacy of wellness programmes as WLBS.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

The research reported in this article examined the efficacy of the wellness programmes as WLBS in a municipality at the South African public service. The results are limited to the municipality in the South African public service, but comparable studies could

be conducted at the provincial and the national levels of the South African public service for triangulation. In agreement with Després *et al.* (2014), further research is recommended into the effect of wellness programmes for the purpose of improving workplace environments. The primary data collected are the result of personal responses from participants.

A further limitation is that the research did not investigate the mechanisms underpinning the linkages between the uses of wellness programmes and achievement of satisfaction with the family situation. It is suggested that future research could address this gap by studying the intervening processes. Researchers could possibly examine how to align work and family strategies to address the work and family needs of employees towards assisting them in achieving meaningful balance. Although several scholars have written on the achievement of WLB and the use of various WLBS (Darcy *et al.*, 2012; De Cieri *et al.*, 2005; J. H. Greenhaus *et al.*, 2012), the concept of alignment of strategies is new to the field of study and needs to be studied further. Such research may identify practical characteristics of work and life strategies that provide further evidence of peculiarity in addressing effectively work and family challenges and assisting employees in achieving WLB. Also, this study was of a cross-sectional design, therefore the results may not be construed to be directly supporting Jeffrey R Edwards and Rothbard (2000) 'cross-domain processes that include resource drain, resource generation, and positive and negative spillover' cause and effect rendition. Although there may be certain theoretical assumptions that support the supposed cause and effect relationship, experimental research (wherein resource drain and resource generation are manipulated) may be needed to make such strong inferences about causality.

Implications for practice

The main aim of WLBS should be to reduce stressors that reduce employee satisfaction with work and family situations. Therefore, it is recommended that management lead in championing the formulation, implementation (building WLBS portfolio) and

promotion of WLBS at the municipality. This way, the strategies best suited to workplace stressors and employees' work and family demands will be formulated and implemented. Effectively crafting a WLBS portfolio demands various skills, including aspects of management (change, project, communication), as well as strategic planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes. Management need to be seen (not just heard) as being supportive of WLBS. When management endorsement is seen in the promotion of the policies (by way of campaigns, slogans, publicity and support), use by employees will be encouraged and possibly sustained.

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INFLUENCE OF SENSE OF COHERENCE ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE AT THE

SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC SERVICE

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Mrs. E.N. Abe

School of Management, IT & Governance, College of Law & Management Studies University

of KwaZulu-Natal, Varsity Road, Westville Durban South Africa

E-mail: ethelabe@gmail.com; Cell: +27747364359

Dr. Z. Fields

School of Management, IT & Governance, College of Law & Management Studies

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Varsity Road, Westville Durban South Africa

E-mail: fields@ukzn.ac.za; Phone: +27312608103

Dr. S.O. Atiku

School of Management, IT & Governance, College of Law & Management Studies

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Varsity Road, Westville Durban South Africa

E-mail: atiku@ukzn.ac.za; Cell: +27844360270

Corresponding Author:

Dr. Z. Fields

School of Management, IT & Governance, College of Law & Management Studies

University of KwaZulu-Natal, Varsity Road, Westville Durban South Africa

E-mail address: Fields@ukzn.ac.za; Telephone number: +27 31 701 8103

ABSTRACT

Workers' inability to achieve balance between work and family responsibilities has led to heightened incidence of stress-related illnesses. This paper aims to investigate the role of Sense of Coherence (SOC) on work life balance (WLB) among managers at a municipality in South Africa. Challenges like HIV/AIDs, relational tension, single parenthood, child /elder care, alcohol /substance abuse, absence of job autonomy, function vagueness / role conflict and job stress confront these managers. A sequential transformative mixed methods research design was adopted. Data was collected using self-report questionnaire administered to 364 respondents; eleven individuals were interviewed. Quantitative data was analysed using the IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. NVIVO was used in organising qualitative data for ease of content analysis. The findings show that adverse conditions during infancy and adolescence did not account for SOC levels and presence of strong SOC did not lead to the achievement of WLB.

Key words: Sense of coherence; work-life balance, work-family demands, stressors.

INFLUENCE OF SENSE OF COHERENCE ON WORK-LIFE BALANCE

INTRODUCTION

According to reports, South Africa recorded a consolidated loss in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from particularly heart problems, stroke and diabetes during the period between 2006 and 2015 (Abegunde, Mathers, Adam, Ortegon, & Strong, 2007; Hofman, 2014). The cost of these to the nation was an estimated USD 1.8 billion. Hofman (2014) reports that the implication of these to employers is increased absenteeism and high rate of employee turnover intentions as a result of death and or morbidity among the working population (Van Nuys et al., 2014). Scholars attribute the inability of workers to achieve balance between work and family responsibilities as being instrumental to heightened incidence of illnesses associated with stress (Yuile, Chang, Gudmundsson, & Sawang, 2012).

An individual's ability to manage work and family stressors, and equally distribute personal resources could be largely dependent on the level of the individual's SOC. Scholars

have explored the positive interaction between work and family through terms like *enrichment*, *facilitation*, and *positive spillover* (Grzywacz & Butler, 2005; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; G. C. Hanson & Hammer, 2006). These studies focused on the work-family conflict perspective. Other aspects of WLB have been researched into including workplace strategies implemented to help employees in coping with the challenges arising from the incompatible demands of life (Casper & Harris, 2008; Ezra & Deckman, 1996; McCarthy, Darcy, & Grady, 2010).

This paper examines the role of SOC in assisting employees assess, comprehend and manage work-life in order to achieve WLB. SOC could be a factor that is acquired from infancy through adolescence to help individuals comprehend, manage and attach meaning to life situations and events (Antonovsky, 1993; Eriksson & Lindström, 2005, 2007). In line with Grawitch, Barber, and Justice (2010)'s *personal resource allocation (PRA) approach* and Hobfoll (2011)'s *Conservation of Resources theory (COR)*, this paper is conceptualised. PRA conceptualises how individuals manage their personal resources in responding to work-life demands continuously by possibly utilising available interventions in the process. While COR focuses on understanding the way that individuals withstand the adverse effects of stress and manage their resources in addressing stressors.

According to Ferguson, Carlson, Zivnuska, and Whitten (2012), the relevant outcomes associated with work and family (e.g. satisfaction with family, job satisfaction, citizenship behaviour, and performance at work and non-work spheres), linked to WLB make the concept important (Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009). In the context of the foregoing, Trefalt, Drnovšek, Svetina-Nabergoj, and Adlešič (2013), report that researchers in the area of work-life are gradually growing in their appreciation of the importance that consequences of countrywide circumstance (e.g. apartheid) have on the experiences of individuals. This has led to the first assumption in this paper, that apartheid may have had adverse effect on the SOC of individuals born and raised during the era. The second assumption is that, employees manage

their work and family stressors based on the level of their SOC. This is in line with scholars' suggestion that individual employees use more of their personal resources (i.e. SOC) in coping with stressors although organisations adopt policies to assist them in managing these stressors (Garrosa, Rainho, Moreno-Jiménez, & Monteiro, 2010; Moos, 2013; Xiao & Cooke, 2012).

Considering the foregoing, this paper aims to examine the influence of SOC on WLB among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public service. This is based on the assumption that SOC could influence WLB positively.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous literature on variables pertinent to the role of SOC on WLB are expounded and presented in this section.

Sense of Coherence (SOC)

SOC as a concept was proposed by Antonovsky (1979, 1987a) as a buffering disposition that shields individuals from the unwanted results of life stressors (Eriksson & Lindström, 2006; Feldt, Leskinen, Kinnunen, & Ruoppila, 2003; Nielsen & Hansson, 2007; C. G. Richardson & Ratner, 2005). It is a pressure- managing ability which only starts working in the face of pressure (Togari, Yamazaki, Takayama, Yamaki, & Nakayama, 2008), but continued experience of stress lessens the strength of SOC among individuals .

SOC is a universal inclination of an individual to appraise the world through three dimensions namely; 1) meaningfulness (an interpretation of stressors as meaningful demands that deserve to be handled), 2) manageability (perception that the person has sufficient resources to manage the environment in which one finds him/herself) and 3) comprehensibility (a case of perceiving an environment as being explainable, organised and predictable) (Feldt et al., 2003; Kivimäki et al., 2002). Scholars agree that the three components of SOC are greatly interconnected (Antonovsky, 1987; Bishop, 1993; Feldt, Leskinen, Kinnunen, & Mauno, 2000; Feldt & Rasku, 1998; Gana & Garnier, 2001; Hart, Hittner, & Paras, 1991; Petrie & Brook,

1992). According to Feldt *et al* (2003), an individual who ranks highly in all of the three dimensions of SOC will be said to have strong SOC and enjoy well-ness as well as good health.

Factors such as wealth, religious beliefs, peace and stability in the environment where an individual was nurtured have been identified as contributors to the source of strong or weak SOC (Antonovsky, 1979, 1987). Latendresse (2009), agrees with Antonovsky (1987), that a person's peculiar nature (i.e. ways of appraising stressor, coping abilities, and mannerisms) and situations of life (e.g. lack and support systems in the environment of an individual's upbringing) are responsible for strong or weak SOC.

Cederblad, Ruksachatkunakorn, Boripunkul, Intraprasert, and Höök (2003), report that people with high SOC are able to simplify and organise stressors with the belief and motivation that the relevant coping resources are accessible and could be easily mobilised to successfully manage the stressor. Diraz et al (2003) confirm that a person having strong SOC has the ability and confidence to confront challenges and difficult situations with the assured expectation that everything would turn out right within reasonable prospect. Contrarily, persons with low SOC are unable to manage everyday challenges of life. Kinman (2008), reports that personnel with strong SOC showed more protection from the negative effects of work stressors than those with weaker SOC. This is further supported by Feldt (1997)'s submission that personnel with high SOC indicated better protection from adverse effect of time and negative workplace environment (work-related stressors) and Albertsen, Nielsen, and Borg (2001)'s, report that personnel with high SOC coped effectively better with work stressors. This paper assumes that high SOC may influence the achievement of WLB.

Lustig and Strauser (2002), submit that SOC was found to be the differentiating factor among fulfilled/competent employees and unfulfilled/incompetent employees. Kinman (2008), conducted a cross sectional study among 465 academics (60% male) in the United Kingdom and found prevalent low SOC among those academics, hence, no relationship exists between

SOC and educational level (Larsson & Kallenberg, 1996; Nilsson, Holmgren, & Westman, 2000). Contrarily, SOC demonstrates high association to job-related mental and environmental factors, as well as common support, but, it did not associate with sociodemographic variables (Holmberg, Thelin, & Stiernström, 2004). Holmberg et al. (2004), report that the level of job training associated strongly to SOC with both male and female workers.

Critics of the SOC theory suggest that the concept is a feature associated with cultured and influential people in society (Geyer, 1997); even though some studies found weak constructive association with level of academic qualification (Callahan & Pincus, 1995; A. Richardson, Adner, & Nordström, 2001). Another very critical factor in the definition of SOC is the assumption that it is a stable personality trait (Antonovsky, 1987; Antonovsky, Sagy, Adler, & Visel, 1990; Sagy, Antonovsky, & Adler, 1990). Feldt et al. (2003), conducted a study to test the stability of SOC in a 5-year longitudinal study among two different age categories of a sample of 352 Finnish technical designer. It was found that age played no part in the constancy, degree of or average modification in SOC, meaning that SOC does not grow and stabilise in adulthood (Feldt et al., 2003). But Feldt et al. (2007), report that SOC was observed as showing better stability amidst respondents who were older than 30 years (constancy factor 0.81) than amidst those adults younger than 30 years (stability factor 0.70); supporting the notion that SOC is more stable in the course of maturity. In addition, Kinman (2008), report that SOC fluctuated among employees in the occupational setting due to drastic change in workplace environment, interpersonal relationships, tasks and uncertainty about job insecurity (Albertsen et al., 2001; Antonovsky, 1987; Carmel & Bernstein, 1989; Feldt et al., 2000).

However, SOC has not been researched in the context of WLB. Therefore, focusing on SOC to ascertain its influence on WLB is a novel perspective and may offer contribution to existing literature.

Work-life balance (WLB)

Work-life balance has been a topical issue of debate across boardrooms, classrooms and the political arenas for a long time with most people wondering what ‘balance’ really is. Scholars have defined WLB from the role, involvement and stability, satisfaction and efficiency perspectives respectively (Clark, 2000; Crooker, Smith, & Tabak, 2002; J. Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Marks & MacDermid, 1996). While others report that a universally recognized definition for the concept remains elusive (Guest, 2002; Kalliath & Brough, 2008).

Clark (2000: 751), defined WLB as *satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home*. This suggests that employees have need to find ways of satisfactorily managing work and domestic aspects of their lives (Kossek & Ozeki, 1999; Sturges, 2012), in order to achieve WLB. Similarly, Kirchmeyer (2000) sees a balanced living as; an achievement of satisfaction in every area of life, the attainment of which depends on individual endowments like time, vitality, and a sense of obligation to ensure equal distribution through all areas of life.

Greenhaus and Allen (2011) define WLB, as total assessment to determine the degree that a person’s efficiency and fulfilment with work and life (family) aligns with the price that the person places on life within a given period of time. They further suggest that individuals appraise their efficiency in individual roles alongside in-built measures that ascertain accomplishment and satisfaction obtained from each role performance. This measure also establishes if the achieved efficiency and fulfilment is in line with the importance that the individual assigns to the role performed. This definition considers the person in the midst of work and life and the value that s/he assigns to life’s overall roles played in the work and family domain. But Darcy, McCarthy, Hill, and Grady (2012) report that WLB is not a *one size fits all* concept; rather, it is a subjective concept that should be designed by the individual to suit his/her objectives of achieving satisfaction, involvement and time balance. However, this paper

views WLB from the satisfaction perspective, by examining individual employee's satisfaction with work and family situations.

Research has shown that although WLB has been a subject of scholarly and political discussions (Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea, & Walters, 2002) in Europe and America since the 1960's and 1970's, It is comparatively new in the African context. However some studies on WLB have been conducted in South Africa among police officers, educators and mineworkers (Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010), call centre employees (Potgieter & Barnard, 2010) and MBA students (Muteswa & Ortlepp, 2011). There is a dearth of literature examining the influence of SOC on WLB, hence the novelty of this study among professional level employees in the South African public service.

RESEARCH METHODS

This section describes the methodology adopted in the study to pragmatically examine the influence of SOC on WLB at a municipality in the South African public service. The selected study design, sampling methods, survey instruments, and methods of data analysis using statistical tools, significantly influence the outcomes of the research.

Sampling

This paper adopts a sequential transformative mixed methods (W. E. Hanson, Creswell, Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005; Kroll & Neri, 2009) research design. The aim of mixed methods research is to harness the educational benefits and minimise the weaknesses of both the qualitative and quantitative research in one study and across studies and not to substitute any of these methods (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). The population of this study includes all heads of units, managers, supervisors and coordinators at the municipality and the required sample was 364 in line with Wilson (2010). Data was collected using a self-report questionnaire (Casper, Eby, Bordeaux, Lockwood, & Lambert, 2007; Spector & Fox, 2003)

administered to 370 individual managers while eleven members of top management staff were interviewed.

Measures

To measure SOC, the SOC-13 version of *Orientation to Life Questionnaire* designed by Antonovsky (1987) was used. An additional item measuring meaningfulness was introduced into the *OLQ*. Participants responded on a 7-point semantic differential *scale* with dual anchoring sayings. The *OLQ* is a three dimensional scale with five items measuring *comprehensibility*. Responses ranged from 1 (Very often) to 7 (Very seldom or never). The second dimension measured *manageability* with responses ranging from 1 (*Never happened*) to 7 (*Always happened*). The third dimension of the scale measured and *meaningfulness* responses ranging from: 1 (*very seldom or never*) to 7 (*Very often*) (Feldt et al, 2003). One of the items measuring comprehensibility is, *do you have the feeling that you are in an unfamiliar situation and do not know what to do?* An example of items assessing manageability among others is *how often do you have feelings that you're not sure you can keep under control?* One of the items measuring meaningfulness is *how often do you have the feelings that there's little meaning in the things you do in your daily life?* Five items on the scale carry reversed scores in the negative word; the overall sum of the scores could range from 14 (weak SOC) to 98 (strong SOC). Higher scores of the taken mean indicates strong SOC (Kinman, 2008). According to Eriksson and Lindström (2005), the mean and standard deviation of the SOC-13 version of the *OLQ* reported in 127 studies were from 35.39 (SD 0.10) to 77.60 (SD 13.80) respectively. After the exploratory factor analysis in this paper, nine of the items were dropped for cross-loading. The Cronbach alpha coefficient of the *OLQ* in this study was 0.795.

WLB was assessed using a three dimensional scale with 12 items. The items examined satisfaction with family situation and satisfaction with job situation respectively. The scales were; Job involvement scale, family involvement scale and job satisfaction scale. Job

involvement denotes the extent that an individual holds his/her job as being integral to his/her personality or *sense of identity* (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Kanungo, 1982). To assess this construct, 5 items adapted from a scale designed by Kanungo (1982) was used. Response to the items on this scale were based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The original scale was based on a 6-point agree/disagree Likert scale (Frone et al, 1992). The Cronbach alpha coefficient noted for the scale in this paper was an acceptable 0.794.

Family involvement was measured by altering the job involvement items to denote *spouse* (Frone et al, 1992), using Kanungo (1982a, 1982b)'s job involvement scale. This technique was successfully utilised in past work-family research (Frone & Rice, 1987). Items from the scale include, *the major satisfaction in my life comes from my family*" and *"I am very much involved in my role as a spouse"*. This scale was not recognised in the exploratory factor analysis as all the items cross-loaded on other variables in the study. To ascertain satisfaction with family situation among respondents, descriptive statistics was engaged. The item *"The major satisfaction in my life comes from my family"* was examined.

Satisfaction with work situation was measured using a two item measure. The measure was adapted from a 2-item scale developed from the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) of this study. Response on the two item scale was based on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Items from the scale include *"I perform tasks that are too easy or boring"*. Items from the scale include *"I perform tasks that are too easy or boring"*. The scale's internal consistency was $\alpha = 0.938$. From the rule of the thumb, this level of internal consistency is acceptable (George & Mallery, 2003; Pallant, 2011).

Data Collection and Analysis

Open-ended questions were included in the survey instrument to enable respondents express their views. Subsequently, in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted among

11 members of the top management. The collected quantitative data was analysed using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 to test for bivariate associations between the variables, as well as the validity and reliability of the evaluating measures. NVIVO was used in organising the collected qualitative data for ease of content analysis.

Descriptive statistics was engaged in examining the connection between SOC and WLB as presented in Table 1. Table 2, shows the regression model (inferential statistics) while Table 3 and Figure 1 display the test result of SOC as illustrated in this section.

Table 1 here

Table 1 shows that most respondents (81.43%) of employees who strongly agreed and agreed respectively were satisfied with their family situations but fewer respondents (32.58%) were satisfied with their work situations. Table 1 further shows that 73.62% of the respondents had high SOC since they attached meaning to their daily engagements. It could therefore be realistically concluded that high SOC had an association with satisfaction with family and did not associate with satisfaction with work at the municipality investigated. WLB is achieved when individuals achieve satisfaction with work and family simultaneously and not when satisfaction is loaded at one side of the continuum (J. Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Therefore, although the level of SOC seemed to be high at the municipality, yet, it did not associate positively with the achievement of WLB.

Table 2 here

The result of the descriptive statistics was further subjected to regression analysis. The regression model in Table 2 shows an R square of .002 and adjusted R square of .001; indicating that the model SOC predicts 0.10% of the variations in WLB at the municipality in the South

African public service. The standardised Beta and matching P values for SOC ($\beta = .049$, $p > 0.05$) imply that there is no significant relationship between the independent variable, SOC and the dependent variable (WLB). These outcomes explain the achievement of the objective of this study by establishing that there is no statistical relationship between WLB and SOC at a municipality in the South African public service. This means that SOC played no influential role in the achievement of WLB at the municipality.

Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics on SOC. The mean SOC for the sample was 31.0 indicating that employees had strong SOC as reported by Kinman (2008) and Eriksson and Lindström (2005).

Table 3 here

To further clarify the result from Table 3, Figure 1 is a graphical presentation of the mean distribution of SOC among professional level employees at the municipality.

Figure 1 here

Findings of qualitative data

SOC: Most employees attributed the strength of their SOC to their upbringing, religious beliefs, support and fitness. With respect to their responses to questions about the source of their coping abilities (SOC), some of their comments are as follows;

“Yes, I believe my upbringing in part is part of the reason for me being able to cope”
(Respondent 009).

“I am capable of coping with work and life stressors. I have a strong spiritual foundation which helps me cope with the trials and tribulations of life” (Respondent 071)

“Nothing much stresses me at home. I have a great child and supportive partner” (Respondent 058).

Some other factors culled from responses to what constitutes adverse condition to employee SOC, include absence of autonomy, job stress, role ambiguity and conflict, influence of politics and politicians, work overload, bureaucratic structure of the organisation and over-indulgence with meetings.

WLB: Employees demonstrated understanding of the concept of WLB through responses such as; satisfaction, subjective, effectiveness, time, involvement, and enjoyment, to the question *what do you understand by work-life balance?* Most respondents were of the opinion that balance is subjective and depends on the individual, while some felt that they needed to reclaim balance, deal with balance or leave the organisation so as to achieve balance. Many employees thought that balance is not achievable because of numerous work stressors.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This paper explains the influence of SOC on WLB at a municipality. It highlights the findings of numerous scholars on these study areas as well as the findings of this paper among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public service. The mean SOC among employees indicates that most employees had strong SOC in line with (Kinman, 2008), though majority of the employees were not satisfied with their work situation. This finding that professional level employees at the municipality had high SOC is opposite to the assumptions of Antonovsky (1987) and Latendresse (2009). The scholars assume that adverse environment of upbringing influences weak individual SOC. But the demographics of the sample of this study shows that majority of the employees were born and raised during the apartheid era in South Africa when unfavourable circumstances prevailed in the society (Cameron, 2005).

On the other hand, this result could be an indication that even if the employees had weak SOC as a result of adverse conditions prevalent during their nurturing years, the weak individual SOC may have improved as a result of factors other than those present during their infant and adolescent years. This may support Feldt et al. (2003)'s and Feldt et al. (2007)'s findings that SOC could still be improved on after age 30.

Moreover, this finding does not support Antonovsky (1987) and this paper's assumption that high SOC would influence employee achievement of WLB. On the other hand, the findings support Antonovsky (1987) submission that individuals with high SOC would find their surroundings more *comprehensible, meaningful* and *manageable* and have a lower likelihood of assessing stimuli as stressful.

The Pearson's correlation coefficient between WLB and SOC reveals a non-significant association in the South African public service. The adjusted R square indicates that SOC was responsible for only 0.10% variations in WLB. The Beta value and P value in the linear regression model confirmed that SOC did not statistically make any significant contribution to WLB in the South African public service. However, the finding that employees demonstrated high SOC but did not achieve WLB could mean that the SOC was dedicated to managing stressors and not achieving WLB in line with Hobfoll (2011) *conservation of resources theory*. This finding is also in opposition to the findings of scholars in the literature. For instance, SOC was found to associate significantly and positively with job satisfaction (Kalimo & Vuori, 1990; Lustig & Strauser, 2002; Strümpfer, 1997; Strümpfer, Fritz, & Page, 1991), but similar result is not obtained in this paper. The fact that the variables (i.e. SOC and WLB) are not significantly associated is suggestive of further investigation and supports James, Pitt-Catsouphes, McNamara, Snow, and Johnson (2015).

The qualitative data analysed in this study provides vital explanation for the reasons why WLB did not interact with SOC at the municipality in the South African public service.

Although employees were found to have reasonably high SOC, qualitative data shows that high work stressors were present in the municipal workplace. Literature reveals that continuous exposure to stressors reduces the strength of SOC among individuals (Wolff & Ratner, 1999), and is supported by Hobfoll (2011)'s conservation of resources theory. As individuals assess their resources and the stressors, their decision to manage continued stressors could weaken the resolution to meaningfully seek ways of achieving WLB.

In addition, it is reported that the continued effect of adverse conditions like function vagueness, absence of autonomy, unfriendly work environment, job stress (Guest, 2002; Jones, Burke, & Westman, 2013) and financial insufficiency could negatively impact the achievement of WLB. Impliedly, individual employees may have allocated much of the strong SOC to addressing work stressors rather than to achieving satisfaction with work and family situations. This supports Lyness and Judiesch (2008) and Kirchmeyer (2000).

Moreover, this paper examined WLB in the context of satisfaction with work and family situations (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Lyness & Judiesch, 2008), but most employees viewed WLB as; enjoyment, effectiveness (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011), stability (Crooker et al., 2002), time (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 1999) and subjective (Darcy et al., 2012; Goodman, 2012). Other employees wished they could reclaim balance while others indicated their intention to leave the organisation and suggested that only then could balance be achieved. From these findings, it could be seen that the concept of WLB meant various things for individual employees. This may have influence on the negative achievement of WLB in this paper and further confirms the view of scholars that defining WLB has been difficult (Darcy et al., 2012; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Guest, 2002), because the concept is subjective.

The outcome of the qualitative and quantitative data analysis in this paper confirms and highlights the importance of using mixed methods (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004) in the

present study. The limitations of quantitative data (i.e. non-significant association among SOC and WLB) are clarified through the qualitative data.

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper examined the influence of SOC on WLB among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public service. Hence, care must be exercised in generalizing the findings to other categories of employees at the municipality as well as other municipalities in South Africa. Secondly, the paper limits WLB to satisfaction with work and satisfaction with family situations respectively, since there is no consensus among scholars on a generally accepted definition of the concept. This might have had an effect on the result of this paper since WLB is a subjective phenomenon viewed by individuals from subjective perspectives. Additionally, what constitutes balance for one person may be different for another person. Finally, a better definition of what constitutes balance to individuals and its implication on organisational policies addressing work-life needs of the employees may help in explaining the complicated matters surrounding achievement of WLB among individual employees.

Even though strong SOC was found among employees, the cross-sectional design of the paper and dependence on self-reporting survey instrument used may have impaired the tracking of causality. To obtain the direction of causality therefore, a longitudinal study to collect relevant data is recommended. The use of diaries to ascertain SOC's role in the achievement of WLB and possibly the work and family stressors that individuals contend with might be a suitable approach. This may take the study to a more thorough level of analysis. The possibility that achievement of WLB over time could be linked to SOC might be verified through such an approach. Further studies could use matched data collected from spouses/partners, colleagues or superiors to corroborate self-reports from participants in order to make the findings generalizable to the broader Municipal population as was done in Ferguson et al. (2012).

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

WLB is a world-wide issue, but the local environment, history, diversity, and mind-set should be considered in adopting and implementing suitable strategies to assist employees in achieving WLB. WLB is important according to Ferguson et al. (2012) because of the vital role it plays among the work and family domains.

The findings of this paper suggest that most professional employees at the municipality have strong SOC but did not achieve work-life balance. Qualitative data explains that employees were exposed to work stressors like function vagueness, job stress, role conflict, and absence of autonomy. Literature has shown that continued exposure to stressors reduces the strength of individuals' SOC (Wolff & Ratner, 1999). These work stressors could be addressed by the public service administration by readdressing the issues of organisational structure (i.e. by possibly dismantling bureaucracy), simplifying the work environment. Such simplification could be by the removal of complicated or ineffective arrangements and practices that hinder employee focus and performance and considering the use of simple and working technological solutions that provide support to employees as at when needed. There is also the need to ensure that the administration is committed to the simplification process.

While scholars have recommended ways of enhancing SOC through the implementation of strategies addressing work stressors from the source (Kinman, 2008), investigations on how to maintain strong SOC and channel same to the achievement of WLB has yet to be conducted by scholars. The findings of this study have both explored and highlighted the interface between WLB and individual SOC at a municipality. Together, these results indicate that the achievement of WLB is possible at the municipality since most employees have strong SOC. WLB could be achieved if the administration reduces work stressors and promotes WLB concept as useful and beneficial to employee wellness, job satisfaction and family satisfaction. The public service can promote a culture of balance among

employees by adopting and fully supporting initiatives that enhance SOC and address WLB challenges. In addition, reducing function ambiguity and role conflict by clearly specifying job responsibilities and consistently adhering to the same may improve comprehensibility (Antonovsky, 1991). Creating and sustaining chances for personal development and greater involvement in decision –making by granting more control of job to employees could result in more meaningfulness and manageability with respect to the job (Kinman, 2008).

The findings of this paper have the potential of expanding the work-family literature for scholars in this area beyond looking at WLB from the behavioural to integrating the cognitive perspective. Additionally, by identifying work stressors and highlighting their influence of individual employee's SOC and achievement of WLB, the findings of this paper could meaningfully impact municipal and public service administration globally to simplify work environment, re-address the issue of organisational structure and implement effective work-life balance strategies.

CONCLUSION

The strength of this paper lies in the fact that it brings a peculiar perspective to the study of WLB by investigating the achievement of WLB from the influence of the individual's SOC that is by examining both the individual behavioural and cognitive dimensions. This paper was designed to investigate the influence of SOC on the achievement of WLB among professional level employees at a municipality in the South African public service. The *13-item version Orientation of Life Questionnaire* designed by Antonovsky (1987) was adapted to this paper by adding an additional item to measure SOC while WLB was determined from satisfaction with work and satisfaction with family situations. The findings of this paper were used in achieving its main objective, which was to ascertain if SOC played a role in the achievement of WLB among employees at a municipality in the South African public service. The result shows that there was no statistically significant relationship between SOC and WLB; hence

SOC did not predict WLB among employees at the municipality. It was also found that employees had high levels of SOC. This result may not be surprising as it supports one of the theories underpinning the conceptualisation of this study, which is the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 2001).

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Appendix F: Proof of language editing

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To whom it may concern

This is to certify that I have proof read the PhD dissertation by Ethel Abe entitled: "The connection between work-life balance and a sense of coherence at a municipality in the South African public sector."

I have made any corrections to grammar and spelling which I felt necessary.

Regards,

Lauren Walford
084 240 9326
laurenb@dbn.caxton.co.za

