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# **Women professionals in South Africa: The interaction between work life balance and organisational commitment**

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the research is to investigate the possibility that women are committed to their professional lives (work) and their family/social life (home), and that this commitment to both work and home results in the proposed fifth level of commitment; polarised commitment. People are now working harder and longer than ever before due to globalisation, the 24 hour market place and the compression of time and space by information and communication technology. The boundary between paid work and personal lives is becoming more blurred (Lewis, 2003). Work and family commitments are time greedy in nature and are fundamentally difficult to reconcile.

A questionnaire consisting out of a demographics section, Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) and the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) was sent out to participants via a snowball sampling method. In order to support the proposed fifth level of commitment; polarised commitment, a Pearson's correlation test was performed on the results obtained for the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) and the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005). Even though literature supports polarised commitment, the results were inconclusive. It is therefore recommended to conduct further research utilising different methods to support polarised commitment theory.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Master of Business Administration for the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

Name.....

Date.....

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To my dear husband; thank you for your undying love, support and the words of wisdom and encouragement in the tough times. My parents, thank you for your love and providing me with a great foundation, without this I would not have been able to reach my dreams. To the rest of my family and friends, thank you very much!

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Liezel, Annelize, Marion, Carla, Sone, Zelda and all the women professionals who participated in this research project; thank you for your time, the results truly prove that you are “Super Women”.

*“Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that frightens us. We ask ourselves, who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous. Actually, who are we not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn’t serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won’t feel insecure around you. We are born to make and manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us, it’s in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fears, our presence automatically liberates other”- Marianne Williamson as quoted by Nelson Mandela in his inaugural speech, 1994*

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## Chapter 1

### 1. Definition of the Problem and Purpose

#### 1.1 Introduction

“By working faithfully eight hours a day, you may eventually get to be the boss and work twelve hours a day” Robert Frost (1875-1963).

People are now working harder and longer than ever before due to globalisation, the 24 hour market place and the compression of time and space by information and communication technology. The boundary between paid work and personal lives is becoming more blurred (Lewis, 2003). Work and family commitments are time greedy in nature and are fundamentally difficult to reconcile. It is therefore inevitable that women will experience work-family conflict as they attempt to master both (Scheibl, 1999; Franzway, 2000).

The question now remains, ‘Why do women continue to work when they are faced with these immense challenges?’ At a very basic level the answer seems to be that women work in order to support the material needs of the household. At a higher level it appears that women are committed to work for reasons other than material enrichment (Scheibl, 1999). Some see work as a challenge, absorbing and increasingly interesting with the potential to improve positive well being, but for others, time spent at work is ever increasingly encroaching on personal and leisure time (Lewis, 2003).

Numerous studies to date have clearly shown that men and women alike face similar challenges regarding work life balance. However social expectations link this challenge mainly to women, purely based on the social context of the family (Butler and Skattebo, 2004). Work life balance programmes have very little to do with the fact that organisations are now employing more women, or are in actual fact trying to reduce turnover and absenteeism. Work life balance programmes are directly linked to “high commitment work systems” that make use of knowledge workers and are directly linked to employee input, ideas, initiative and loyalty to ensure organisational success (Lambert, 2000).

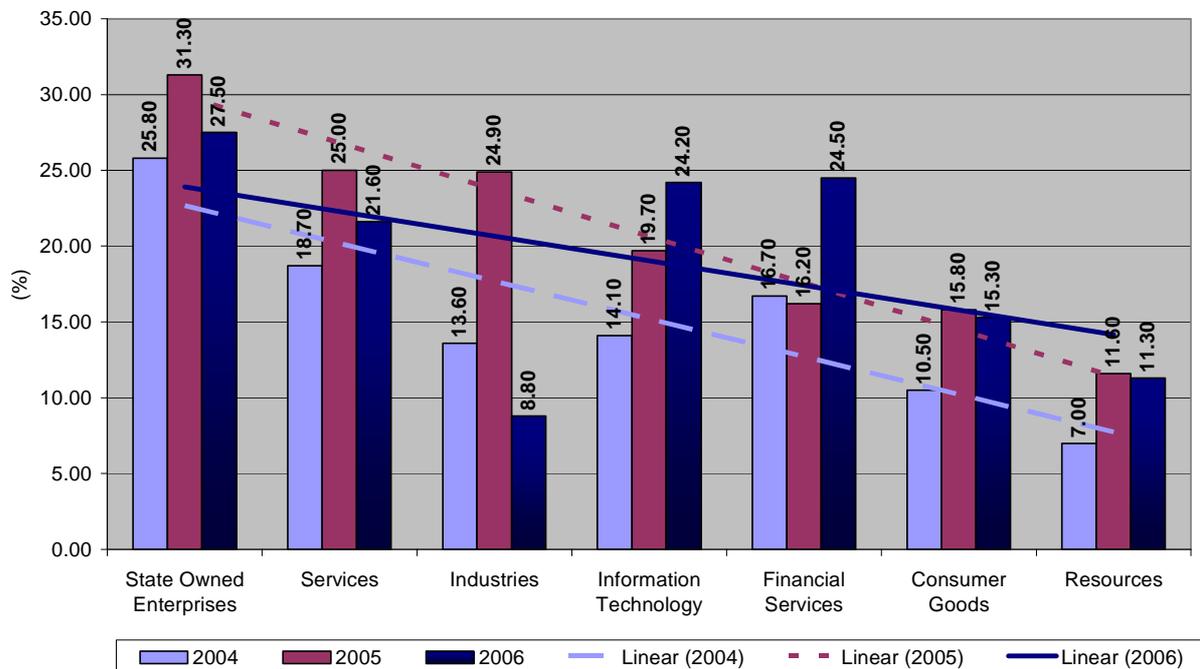
In this chapter the possible link between commitment and work life balance, and the impact thereof on women professionals will be investigated. First, it needs to be determined if women professionals have work life balance? Secondly, whether or not women professionals are committed to their organisations? And thirdly what exactly the link is between work life balance and commitment? The more committed an individual is to an organisation, the more they feel a psychological bond with the organisation, resulting in an increase in tenure. As part of the initial investigation into the correlation between tenure and commitment, the rate of retention, by industry, of women executives in South Africa was investigated.

### ***1.2 Women in South African Businesses***

The Business Women of South Africa (BWASA) 2006 Census indicates that while women make up 52% of the adult population in South Africa, only 41% forms part of the

working population, and of this only 16.4% is represented at executive managerial level. This section specifically deals with industries listed on the JSE. As per FTSE-JSE classification this encompasses both professional and non-professional organisations and indicates the level of commitment of women executives over the last three years.

**Figure 1: Women Executive Managers per Sector**



(BWASA Census, 2007)

Only 14.7% of women are represented at executive management level, and further 7.1% were represented at director level in 2004. In 2005, there was a 5.1% and 3.6% increase respectively. In 2008, the percentage of women directors increased by a further 0.8%. Even though the overall percentage of women executives decreased by 3% from 2005, the absolute number of women executive managers increased from

1,102 to 1,323 in 2006 (as depicted by the trend line for 2006). It is furthermore unclear as to what exactly resulted in the dramatic decrease in women representation at executive level, specifically in the industries sector (BWASA Census, 2007).

It can therefore be deduced from the data that these women executives are fairly committed to their specific sectors in South Africa. It will furthermore be interesting to see if women professionals in general remain fairly committed to either their professions or their organisations, and what influence the work life balance will have on their commitment in future. Before a deeper understanding can be gained of the relationship between work life balance and commitment, the challenges that women professionals face on a day to day basis should also be investigated.

### ***1.3 The Challenges Faced by Women Professionals in Business***

International research has shown that the structure of work, even in our modern organisations is far more suited to men than it is to women (Drew and Murtagh, 2004, De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott and Pettit, 2005). In actual fact the entire managerial career, based on a hierarchical model of continued service with regular promotions in a particular organisation is more suited to men than women. Managerial culture therefore impacts negatively on a woman professional's advancement in the following aspects:

- It totally ignores a woman's responsibilities towards her family, as most men have a home where the wife acts as the primary care giver.
- Organisational culture focuses on the positive rewards of working long hours as it is perceived to depict high organisational commitment.

- The life-cycle of management and childbearing is adversely associated with each other as the career stage during which most women professionals are most likely to excel and their perceived commitment is the highest and coincides with their peak in childbearing and rearing years.
- Senior management involved in recruitment prefer to employ personal with perceived similar qualities as themselves (homo-sociability) (Drew and Murtagh, 2004, De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott and Pettit, 2005).

Even though the managerial hierarchical model is more suited to men than women, there are an ever increasing number of women migrating into senior management and executive level. The constraint that women professionals continue to face is the conflict of both work and home. In this chapter the possibility of having a dual commitment, work and home is further explored.

#### ***1.4 Problem Identification: The Polarised Commitment Level***

Literature, however, clearly indicates that there is a fifth level of commitment into which women in organisations fall. Catherin Hakim tried to investigate this fifth level of commitment through her theory on “heterogeneity of women”. Hakim’s research in Procter and Padfield (1999) on the topic of “heterogeneity of women” has been met with extensive criticism as she tried to place women into two main categories of life choices; they are either committed to work – “ideal worker” or to their families – “grateful slaves” (Procter and Padfield, 1999; Scheibl, 1999).

Procter and Padfield (1999) as well as Scheibl (1999) criticised the set categorisation of women into “ideal workers” and “grateful slaves” on the following basis:

- The majority of the women interviewed wanted both; they are equally committed to work and their families. “There was a sense amongst these women that it was not their muddled brains which led them to ‘want their cake and eat it’, but social expectations for women to be both worker and mother” (Procter and Padfield 1999, p. 156). Freedom of choice comes into play here, as the freedom to choose is the privilege of an autonomous individual (Brannen and Nilsen, 2005).
- More women have become “ideal workers”, they are still performing “double shifts at work and home” and therefore do not meet the criteria as set out by Hakim. Preference shape choices; women professionals prefer to continue to work and preferences therefore do not determine choices as per Hakim (Doorewaard, Hendrickx and Verschuren, 2004).
- Hakim also fails to successfully explain woman’s commitment in general to work and home because they are treated as “ideal workers” (Scheibl, 1999).

Literature thus proves that women are not the “grateful slaves” or “ideal workers” as suggested by Hakim, but they in actual fact free to choose commitment to their organisations and work life balance and therefore brings the possible fifth level of commitment to the forefront.

### ***1.5 Purpose of the Research***

The purpose of the research is to investigate the possibility that women are committed to their professional lives (work) and their family/social life (home), and that this commitment to both work and home results in the proposed fifth level of commitment; polarised commitment. Specific focus will be placed on:



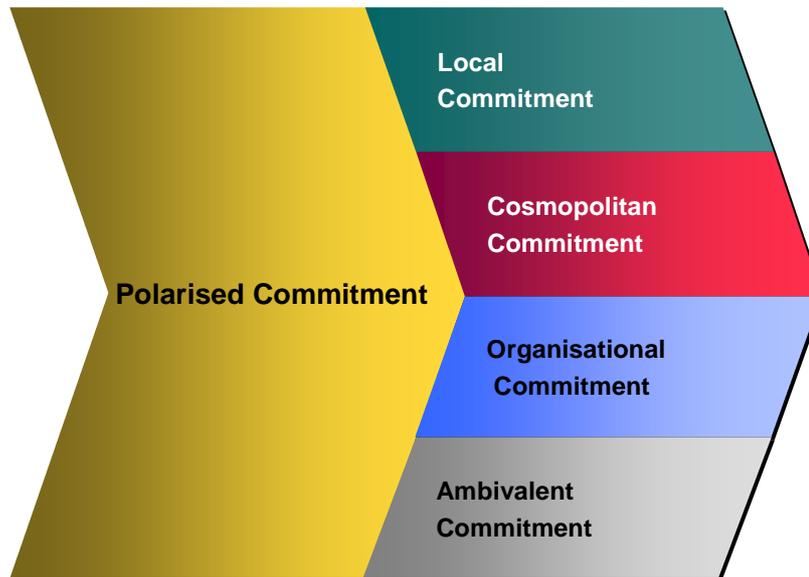
- Work life balance
- Organisational commitment
- Possibility that women professionals are committed to both work and home, resulting in a possible fifth level of commitment.

This fifth level of commitment is in actual fact not a fifth level, but an over-arching level that encompasses all four levels of commitment from a professional woman's perspective to successfully support the findings by Procter and Padfield (1999) as well as Scheibl (1999). Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer and King (2002) further explored the potential benefits of this multiple role interaction on the basis of psychological functioning and leadership competencies. This over-arching level can be considered a polarisation level of work and home and was first suggested by Procter and Padfield (1999) in their conclusion. "Polarisation of work orientations between one of the two categories is deceptively inadequate in that it excludes the possibility that some combination of both (work and home) is empirically, theoretically and indeed practically significant" Procter and Padfield (1999, p. 160).

The commitment to multiple roles in the case of the proposed polarised commitment will include roles both outside and inside the current women professionals' occupation, including, but not limited to, the commitment to parent and spouse roles (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer and King, 2002). Ruderman *et al's* (2002) findings are further supported by the "role enhancement theory", that suggests that individuals can benefit from multiple role commitments and the resource transfer between these multiple roles

(Ruderman *et al's*, 2002; Burchielli, Bartram and Thanacoody, 2008). This research will therefore aim to further understand the overarching Polarisation Commitment level.

**Figure 1.1: Overarching Polarised Commitment Level**



Source: Authors own.

The ideal commitment in any organisation is the organisational commitment, as these individuals will improve themselves for the greater good of the organisation. If we then take the Polarisation Commitment into consideration in combination with Organisational Committed women professionals can be accommodated in such a way that their work-life is in balance. This will then successfully link with Kabanoff's Theory of "spill-over" that will be discussed in the literature review. Women are after all the "reserve army".

It is important to approach the research from all possible angles and doing so the disadvantages of multiple roles should also be taken into consideration. The idea that

women experience work life conflict could be considered an outdated paradigm. The fact that “role scarcity” however exists should be considered in place of work life conflict. The argument around “role scarcity” is directly linked to the amount of expendable energy each person has, and each role requires a certain amount of energy. Commitment to one role will utilise the energy resources available for another. Commitment is thus time and energy greedy. Each role would like to extract the maximum value out of the person, and the “role” can now be redefined as a greedy institution” regardless of the fact that it might be work or home. Multiple roles can provide immense enrichment if there is some similarity between the interacting roles, rather than conflict (Ruderman *et al*’s, 2002; Burchielli, Bartram and Thanacoody, 2008).

“A whole person is more than the sum of its parts” Ruderman *et al*’s (2002, p. 370).

Ranson (2007) concludes that in order to fully understand the constraints of work life balance, the total constraint between work and life can be defined as one single term being that of the “total responsibility burden”. This aspect should also be taken into consideration when studying Polarisation Commitment as it takes aspects of both work and home into consideration. “Total responsibility burden” defines the boundaries between work and home and is defined as follows:

**Table 1: Key Elements that Comprise “Total Responsibility Burden”**

Type	Sub-Type	Utility	Motivation Driver
Work	Formal paid employment or work that is conducted in return for remuneration.	Extrinsic focus, resulting in practical outcomes.	Objective, imposed and forced.
Recreational Work	Everything outside formal remuneration. Recreational work can be considered as community activities, leisure and relaxation.	Intrinsic focus, resulting in psychological well being.	Subjective, chosen and voluntary.

Ranson (2007, p. 377).

### ***1.6 The Scope of the Research into Polarised Commitment Theory***

The scope of the research on hand is to gain a better understanding of the link – proposed polarised commitment - between work life balance and organisational commitment for women professionals. Organisational commitment is defined as the individuals level of identification and involvement with her organisation, and can be characterised by at least three related factors; first, a strong belief and acceptance of the organisations goals and values, secondly, a willingness to exert extra effort on behalf of the organisation, and thirdly a strong desire to maintain membership of the particular organisation (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979). Specific focus will be placed on; the individual driver of choice regarding work life balance, what the main motivating factors are for women professionals, the benefits of sharing skills and resources between multiple roles as well as the financial contribution that multiple role commitment can make to the organisation.

The research will not investigate the possibility of polarised commitment in men and women in general, but will only focus on women professionals. The research will furthermore only briefly touch on the aspects that constrain work life balance in order to gain a better understanding. Work life balance policies will not be investigated in depth, and the two most frequently used work life balance policies; flexitime and telecommuting, will be discussed in some detail in order to obtain a better understanding of both the benefits and constraints that these work life balance policies bring. Work life conflict will also not be investigated in depth, but it is important to understand the constraints of work life balance that can lead to work life conflict.

### **1.7 Conclusion**

Women's careers and work lives are not divorced from one another, and cannot be fully understood if the "whole" is not examined (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002), and this forms the basis of the investigation into polarised commitment Theory. If understood and managed correctly by both women professionals and their organisations it can only result in positive outcomes for both parties. The literature review will focus on breaking down polarised commitment Theory into its individual building blocks of work life balance and commitment, as well as the different aspects associated with each of these individual building blocks.

## Chapter 2

### 2. Theory and Literature Review

In this chapter various aspects of work life balance and commitment will be explored in order to gain a better understanding of each individual aspect. The first part of the chapter deals with a broad literary overview of work life balance and commitment specifically focusing on the benefits thereof for organisations. The second part of the chapter will focus on an in depth look in to work life balance, and the positive and negative aspects thereof. The last part of the chapter will delve into the different levels of commitment, and will also present a literary overview of the proposed Polarisation Commitment.

#### ***2.1 Business Imperative: Organisational Commitment and Work life balance***

Women are considered to be the “reserve army” of labour as well as the occupants of the “secondary labour market” (Procter and Padfield, 1999). The traditional way of seeing women as the “grateful slaves” started during the industrial revolution with the separation of the public and private domains. The revolution saw work and family roles being defined by sex, men were drawn to the public domain to earn money while the women remained within the private domain as caregivers, of home and children. This resulted in the cultural assumption that men have the right to work and women have the right to be the caregivers to the household, thus becoming the “grateful slaves” (Scheibl, 1999).

More and more women are however entering the workforce globally and moving into management roles thus contributing to the changes in the actual conceptualisation of

what the woman's position in society is (Kark 2004). The important purpose of employment equity is to ensure that people are not discriminated against based on either being a "man" or a "woman". The problem in our society arises when certain assumptions are made on this basis (Lowe, Mills and Mullen 2002). Men have traditionally been treated as preservers of their own "self-interests", and women as "others", with their interests largely ignored or violated (Bristor and Fischer 1993). This clearly links back to the problem identification and that is that women are committed to both work and home and that this fundamental concept of commitment is not fully understood.

The effect of work life balance came to the forefront in the 1990's with more strain arising from job insecurity, increase in overall workload, marital breakdown, globalisation, deregulation of the labour market as well as an ever increasing pressure on organisations to cut costs and increase profit. Couple these general market changes with an increase in single parents as well as a further demand for parents to be more involved with their children and the concern of work life balance becomes not only an organisational issue, but a Governmental one as well (Dex and Bond, 2004; Burchielli *et al's*, 2008). The concern regarding work life balance has reached such a point that the British Department of Trade and Industry developed a green paper that will specifically look at organisational policies in order to improve work life balance. Even though the notion of work life balance encompasses a family-friendly environment cognisance should be taken that the same applies for all employees irrespective of the marital or parental status. The aim is thus to improve the fit between professional and private lives (White, Hill, McGovern, Mills and Smeaton, 2003).

Social exchange theory clearly explains the relationship between work life balance and commitment. This theory supports the possibility that work life balance policies promote employee participation in the organisation to the extent that the employees feel obligated to exert “extra effort” in return for these “extra benefits”. These are extra role activities that employees perform and are not mandated to do, but are beneficial towards the organisation, is a further indication of their organisational commitment (Lambert, 2000). Commitment in an organisational sense is then the “totality of internalised normative pressures to act in a way that meets organisational goals and interests” (Mckenzie, Truc and Winkelen 2001, p. 116). Any sufficiently competent woman can now succeed, providing that she is prepared to play by the rules of the game dictated by the organisation to which she is committed (Chiu and Ng, 1999; Liff and Ward, 2001).

In the first part of the chapter the valuable contribution that women professionals make towards their organisations, the HR implications of work life balance and commitment, the benefits that the organisation can gain from having work life balance policies in place and the paramount importance of talent retention will be explored.

### 2.1.1 Women Professionals and their Contribution to the Organisation

As the demand for leadership talent increases globally, it is paramount for organisations to realise the true value in talent, skills and abilities that women can bring to the leadership realm. These are the types of skills that women sharpen on a daily basis

outside the boardroom (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002). Drawing from the Social Identity Theory it can be further argued that the inclusion of women in management positions can actually confer numerous benefits for the organisation:

- Women are more likely than men to be perceived as leaders in organisations that rely on social interactions, specifically in today's global economy.
- Women face a great deal of challenges in ascending the corporate ladder, thus equipping them with skills to cope with uncertainties.
- Women have survived the effects of male dominated organisations. This unique combination of technical and survival skills could give women a psychological advantage of their male counterparts, thereby improving their interaction with their peers and subordinates.
- Women are more likely to possess a “feeling” cognitive management style that emphasises harmony, compared to their male counterparts.
- Women are furthermore more likely to adapt a “learning” approach to their networking strategies (Krishnan and Park 2005).
- Multiple role participation provides women with the opportunity to transfer skills learned in the one role to another (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002).

Tension furthermore arises between the traditional view of women and their specific qualities as leaders. Women often experience disapproval for their more masculine behaviour when asserting clear-cut authority, and feminine behaviour especially when they are supporting others. Resulting in a management style that seeks to find the middle ground between masculinity and femininity that is effective and that is neither

“acceptably masculine nor unacceptably feminine” (Eagly 2007, p. 4). Women professionals therefore have a very valuable role to play in the organisation. The question now remains as to what specifically are the HR implications of bringing work life balance policies into play and what effect they will have on the level of organisational commitment for women professionals?

### 2.1.2 HR Implications of Work Life Balance and Commitment

Organisations are multi levelled systems in by nature. From an HR perspective it is paramount to fully understand and ensure the mechanisms that can successfully link individuals and the organisation that will ultimately result in organisational performance. HR practices should therefore be visible, legitimate in their level of authority, understandable and relevant. Thus the implementation of strong HR systems can improve organisational performance through the link to strategic organisational goals. If the HR systems are weak, they will result in an ambiguous message that can be interpreted in various ways by the individual, therefore resulting in inconsistency of the individual’s performance (Bartram, Stanton, Leggat, Casimir and Fraser, 2007). What exactly does the future hold for South African HR systems?

#### **2.1.2.1 South African HR Predictions and International Findings**

Grobler, Wörnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hatfield (2006) have compiled a list of “The 60 HR Predictions for 2008”. Some of the challenges mentioned here have a direct link to work life balance. The following seven points will cross reference Grobler, Wörnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hatfield’s (2006) findings with South African and international literature that support their “HR Predictions for 2008”.

1. Creative employment will include flexibility in working hours and location through technological job aids (Grobler *et al's*, 2006).

Grobler *et al's* (2006) prediction is supported by work life balance and commitment literature. Geographical location of work, flexitime and telecommuting are just a few of the over 100 work life balance policies that have come in practice. Work life balance policies lead to an increase in organisational commitment. Employers are focusing more on the interest of the employee as the organisation searches for different options in order to avoid a potential loss of creativity and organisational commitment (Rau and Hyland, 2002; White, Hill, McGovern, Mills and Smeaton, 2003; Birt, Wallis and Winternitz, 2004; De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott and Pettit, 2005).

2. Family and life interest will play a far greater role in employees' choice of work with a total change from a "live to work" to a "work to live" mentality (Grobler *et al's*, 2006).

This prediction as per Grobler *et al's* (2006) is furthermore supported by work life balance and commitment literature. Employees that demand work life balance policies are far more likely to exert extra effort when awarded with work life balance policies (Drew and Murtagh, 2004). Employees will thus perceive the organisation as providing them with greater support in balancing work and home, and will exhibit higher levels of organisational commitment (Burchielli *et al's*, 2008).

3. Families will return as the centre of focus in society. The work will change to a source for cultural connections, learning and collegiality mentality (Grobler *et al's*, 2006).

Grobler *et al's* (2006) prediction regarding the importance of, family, is supported by work life balance and commitment literature in the sense that work life balance policies are an important aspect of today's society and are currently receiving attention not only in the popular media, but also on Governmental and organisational levels. As work life balance policies attract and retain high calibre staff members there is an increase in the perceived organisational support, resulting in an increase in organisation commitment. (Drew and Murtagh, 2004; de Cieri, Holmes, Abbott and Pettit, 2005 Koppelman, Prottas, Thompson and Jahn, 2006). Collegiality is important in the sense that it preserves the sense of community, professionalism as well as a feeling of contributing to the collective experience of the team. Advancement opportunities through career development further contribute towards organisational commitment (Wallace, 1995).

4. Employees will continue the struggle of work life balance and it will become worse (Grobler *et al's*, 2006).

The prediction made by Grobler *et al's* (2006) regarding the work life balance conflict is supported by work life balance and commitment literature in the sense that the work life balance concept is never far from the public eye, specifically

now with the focus on what damage extended working hours is doing to families (White, Hill, McGovern, Mills and Smeaton, 2003). “Technology has made work more portable and ubiquitous”, Eaton (2003, p.146), thus resulting in the blurring of the boundaries between work and home. High commitment and high performance management practices will have an ever increasing negative effect on work life balance (in this case increase work life conflict), to such an extent that these practices are designed to extract greater discretionary effort in pursuit of the organisational goals (White *et al's*, 2003).

5. Organisations will change the reward system from the “value of the job” to the “value of the person” (Grobler *et al's*, 2006).

Grobler *et al's* (2006) prediction is supported by commitment literature in the sense that organisational commitment is further enhanced by the actions, or even perceived actions of the organisation, that signals to the employee that she is particularly valued by the organisation. This only occurs when the action is both discretionary and directed at the individual feels that her specific contribution to the organisation is valued, the individual will be more committed to the organisation. (Lambert, 2002; Birt *et al's*, 2004).

6. The team concept will come more to the forefront. These teams will specifically focus on tasks (moving away from hierarchy) (Grobler *et al's*, 2006).

Grobler *et al's* (2006) prediction regarding the importance of the team concept is supported by commitment literature in the sense that commitment is far easier to establish between individuals than between an individual and an organisation. The individual members of the team work hard, because they do not want to let the team down. The more accountability is given to the team the greater the peer pressure is to make sacrifices for the team (Cappelli, 2000a)

7. Employees will become more independent and will be able to move between different organisational projects (Grobler *et al's*, 2006).

Grobler *et al's* (2006) prediction regarding organisational mobility is supported by work life balance and commitment literature in the sense that women professionals with multiple role, resources and talent will be able to better handle difficult environmental situations and will ensure a smooth transition between roles (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002). Commitment is influenced by new opportunities and challenges within the organisation and if employees have more autonomy over “pieces of work”, they have greater commitment in seeing them completed (Cappelli, 2000a; Birt *et al's*, 2004).

Judging by these seven “HR Predictions” made by Grobler *et al's* (2006) it is clear that HR, work life balance and organisational commitment are aspects that are interlinked and cannot be considered in isolation, as the one flows into the other.

**Figure 2.1: Interaction between HR Policies, Work life balance and Organisational Commitment**



Source: Authors own

HR policies are instrumental in the creation of work life balance policies that according to all the literature findings as discussed in conjunction with Grobler *et al's* (2006) result in an increase in organisational commitment. The congruency aspect of these three interrelated points will be discussed in more depth in the next section.

### 2.1.3 Organisational Benefit in Work life balance Policies and Commitment

There is an increasing awareness by employers to provide more flexible HR strategies to employees. Environmental demands on balancing both work and life responsibilities are becoming more difficult (De Cieri *et al's*, 2005). Various publications have supported the fact that women professionals are constantly being torn between their managerial and personal roles, leaving them chronically exhausted and frustrated (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer and King, 2002). The main drivers behind these flexible HR strategies

that aim to support work life balance are; a sense of intense competitiveness between organisations, a response to more flexible opening times, the desperate need of organisations to retain skilled and knowledge workers and the need for commitment (Greenhill and Wilson, 2005).

Research found the following top five intrinsic focus points to improve organisational commitment and retention:

- Challenging and meaningful work.
- Advancement opportunities.
- Integrity and quality of management as well as trust in management.
- Empowerment and responsibility through improved autonomy as to decide on the integration of work and non-work aspects of life.
- New opportunities and challenges.

Organisations should treat employees as clients. Organisations that actively seek to improve employee morale, commitment and job satisfaction as well as aim at reducing sources of stress both at work and home through work life balance policies, will improve their ability to become the employer of choice as well as retain talent (Wallace, 1995; Eaton, 2003; Birt *et al's*, 2004; De Cieri *et al's*, 2005; Macky and Boxall, 2007). What is meant by “becoming the employer of choice” is that their organisational practices, employment terms and conditions are generous enough to attract employees away from their competitors and keep their own employees from leaving the organisation (Cappelli, 2000b). Why is it so important for organisations to be the “employer of choice” and retain talent in this day and age?

#### 2.1.4 Talent Retention: Why Work life balance and Commitment are so Critical

Work life balance has emerged as a strategic issue for organisations, and a key element to ensuring employee retention through organisational awareness of what aspects of work life balance are required by their employees (De Cieri *et al's*, 2005).

“Employment relationships based on mutual commitment between employer and employee are no longer the norm in the market place” Birt, Wallis and Winternitz (2004, p. 25). One of the key drivers in the employer employee relationship change has been as a result of the economic changes in the 1990's. This period was marred by downsizing in an effort to cope with the changes in the market, as well as to improve organisational flexibility. This change in the relationship between employer and employee has led to a powershift, where the power is now in the hands of the employee, and not in the hands of the employer anymore (Cappelli, 2000b; Birt *et al's*, 2004). Employees have embraced the new career model as it provides them with more freedom, as knowledge workers who have sought after skills or knowledge are in great demand. Knowledge can be retained within organisational data repositories, but systems understanding, creativity and motivation can only be contributed by an employee. Employees can therefore solve complex problems by looking at the cause and effect relationship, adding to their motivation, it is therefore clear that organisations need knowledge workers more than they need organisations (Birt *et al's*, 2004). This new deal between employer and employee has resulted in more focus on HR systems to ensure better employee retention and commitment (Cappelli, 2000b). Organisational

commitment is inversely related to both the intent to search for other employment. A further benefit of organisational commitment is that it thus reduces the turnover frequency (Fiorito, Bozeman, Young and Meurs, 2007).

It is open season in the labour market! Blatant head hunting of other company's employees, once a rarity, is now an open and even accepted business practice. Executives are aware that fast moving markets require even faster moving organisations that continue to refresh themselves with the best talent. To head hunt is fine, but to be head hunted is not. Executives judge themselves by the level of loyalty and commitment that they instil in their employees and take it very personal if trusted employees leave. The market determines that organisations' focus should change from a broad based retention programme that includes items such as; increased compensation, career path focus and training efforts, to a highly targeted focus, specifically looking at identifying key individuals that can contribute to the overall success of the organisation (Cappelli, 2000a).

The challenge for organisations thus remains how they can successfully develop a unique organisational strategy that will attract as well as retain, highly skilled, adaptive and flexible workforces, specifically valuable at managerial level (De Cieri *et al's*, 2005). The challenges faced by organisations are not only to ensure that they retain the desired talent, it is also the financial implications that should be considered if they are not "the employer of choice" and the effect that this lack of commitment will have financially on the organisation.

### 2.1.5 The Financial Impact on the Organisation

Organisations can be viewed as a constituency of stakeholder interest that demands organisational effectiveness. Although the relationship with various stakeholders may vary, ignoring the demands of the stakeholders may have a negative effect on future performance as well as the possibility of sustaining a competitive advantage (de Cieri *et al's*, 2005). An organisation's competitive advantage is often dependent on the specialised skills and knowledge of its employees. From a Human Relationship Management (HRM) perspective it is paramount to understand that employees in actual fact carry their skills and knowledge "between their ears" and therefore retaining these valuable employees should become an HRM Strategy rather than just an HR Policy (Birt *et al's*, 2004). Employee commitment is influenced by both extrinsic e.g. performance based pay and stock options, as well as intrinsic factors e.g. meaningful and intellectually stimulating work, great management and development opportunities. Intrinsic factors contribute the most to organisational commitment, as they lead to a stronger support of the organisational goals and values by the individual as well as the willingness to exert extra effort for the organisation for which no compensation is required. The level of employee commitment to the organisation will further predict performance, absenteeism as well as work force stability (lower levels of commitment are positively associated with high employee turnover) (Cappelli, 2000a; Birt *et al's*, 2004; Fiorito, Bozeman, Young and Meurs, 2007). Organisations with a higher level of organisational commitment will outperform an organisation with lower commitment by 200%, by only focusing on intrinsic factors to retain their talent (Birt *et al's*, 2004). There is a strong positive correlation between job satisfaction and employee commitment that

have a positive effect on the overall organisational performance. Committed employees are less counter productive and are prepared to exert positive extra role effort as well as better quality in-role behaviour for their organisation (Macky and Boxall, 2007). Women's commitment to multiple roles may contribute to work effectiveness and overall performance improvements due to intra role skills transfer and general psychological well being (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002).

Organisational commitment can therefore be summarised into three related factors. The employee:

- Exhibits a strong belief in the organisations goals and values.
- Is more than willing to make an extra effort on behalf of the organisation (extra role effort).
- Exhibits a very strong desire to retain membership of the organisation (Fiorito, *et al's*, 2007).

Whether it is termed commitment or performance management practices, both employee and employer can benefit from these. The employer will gain through improved quality of work, productivity and financial returns, while the employee benefits from both extrinsic and intrinsic factors, such as higher wages and job satisfaction (White *et al's*, 2003; Birt *et al's*, 2004). These extrinsic and intrinsic policies are achieved by a desire of the organisation to improve the financial standing of the employee, skills level through various opportunities, motivation and empowerment through greater participation in decision making processes, related to organisational

goals as well as personal goals (White *et al's*, 2003). Kabanoff's Theory is utilised to delve into these intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors in greater details.

#### 2.1.6 Kabanoff's Theory

Kabanoff's theory may further assist with the research regarding the link between work life balance and commitment in order to support the proposed polarised commitment Theory as it takes into consideration three mechanisms that link people's satisfaction with work and non-work domains:

- Compensation: a high satisfaction in one domain may compensate for lower satisfaction in another.
- Spill-over: high satisfaction or dissatisfaction in the one domain may spill over to the other.
- Segmentation: the levels of satisfaction in the two domains are independent of each other (Chang and Choi, 2007).

Extensive research into the field of work life conflict has indicated that employees who continuously work long hours have a greater degree of work life conflict, while managers, specifically women, have an even greater work life conflict. Quality of work, and not necessarily the quantity of work, is important in the spill over effect between work and home (Dex and Bond, 2005). Boundaries between work and home are relatively weak and spill over into the home or work environment triggered by stress can easily occur (Lewis, 2003). From an organisational point of view, Kabanoff's positive spill over theory can have a direct influence on the financial well being of the

organisation as well. A satisfied employee will have a spill over effect to their customers as well. Satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal to that specific organisation, recommending the organisation as well as returning for repeat business (Macky and Boxall, 2007).

A woman's commitment to multiple roles provides the opportunity for positive self experience and personal validation. This improves self motivation and as with Kabanoff's spill over theory, the positive experience gained from one role may influence the experience in another. Women involved in multiple role transactions have more opportunities to feel good about themselves as well as their accomplishments. This, store of self esteem, may enable them to successfully weather harsh times (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002). A positive spill over effect can also be achieved by flexible working conditions that take into consideration the importance of achieving work life balance (Burchielli *et al's*, 2008).

In the second part of this chapter various aspects of work life balance will be explored, for the definition of work and leisure to the constraints of the most popular work life balance policies.

## **2.2 The Characteristics of Work life balance**

In order to understand how the boundaries between work and leisure have been blurred in today's competitive environment, work and leisure should first be defined.

### 2.2.1 Definition of Work

People are driven to work in order to satisfy multiple needs ranging from; earning money, developing specific skills, as well as gaining knowledge, developing their careers and status, interaction with other people as well as care taking responsibilities, as work becomes an ever more seductive practice, so too are the boundaries between work and leisure blurred even more (Lewis, 2003; Doorewaard, Hendrickx and Verschuren, 2004). Work in this case is defined as obligated time spent performing a certain activity, whether compensation or not is received. In this research project, specific attention is given to the working practices of knowledge workers (productivity is based purely on the application of knowledge to a certain problem rather than the physical production of goods) (Lewis, 2003; Ranson, 2007). The level of work has also intensified to the extent that employees are not only working harder but also longer. The intensification of work is defined as “work effort” and is directly linked to performance as well as changes in job design and skills improvement. This intensification of work unfortunately can also have a negative effect in the sense that it results in an increase in job stress, burnout, decline in employee’s health and general well being (Burchielli *et al’s*, 2008).

The need to work is directly linked to “own choice” and motivation, that can be constrained by situations in which the individual lives and works. Motivation to work can thus be broadly classified into three categories:

- Social (extrinsic motivation) – meeting and interaction with others.
- Developmental (intrinsic motivation) – furthering ones education/skills and talents

- Financial (extrinsic motivation) – status, achievement related.

In general, men have a more financial motivation to work than women. Women on the other hand have more social and developmental orientation towards work. Education plays a major role as in whether or not women are motivated by extrinsic or intrinsic factors. Research has indicated that the more highly educated the woman is, the less the motivation to work is based on money, and the more on social and developmental factors (Doorewaard *et al's*, 2004).

### 2.2.2 Definition of Leisure

“Leisure is often constructed as the antithesis of work”, Lewis (2003, p. 345). Leisure time is therefore considered to be freely chosen activities, even a relief from work that is positively associated with a sense of enjoyment which falls within the realm of family or home life. Women, specifically with family commitments are often reluctant to take “leisure time” for themselves and consider all the free time that they have as “family time” (Lewis, 2003; Ranson, 2007).

### 2.2.3 Blurring of the Boundaries between “Work” and “Leisure”

Active integration between work and non-work lives, or the general search for meaning in all this, is becoming more difficult. The boundaries between work and life are becoming ever more blurred due to the advancement of technology. The internet can be utilised for work and leisure, at the work place for leisure, and at home for work (Lewis, 2003). The boundary theory is used in an attempt to separate home, work and other places by either spatial or temporal boundaries. The boundary theory thus assumes that

the individual will seek ways in which to minimise the transition, frequency, and the amount of energy involved in moving between boundaries, in order to increase efficiency within the individual roles (Rau and Hyland, 2002). The work life balance policies that organisations implement, desperately aims to reduce the energy transition between work and leisure, however, some of the policies implemented bring their own constraints further complicating work life balance.

#### 2.2.4 Work life balance and the Constraints thereof

Organisations have tried in the past to include work life balance policies in their HR practices. Some of these work life balance policies that aim at addressing the issue are aspects such as “flexitime”, “telecommuting”, support for child care as well as other benefits that support an employee’s personal well being, professional development, psychological counselling and tuition reimbursements (Lambert, 2000; Butler and Skattebo, 2004). Over 100 types of work life balance policies exist clearly indicating that many strategies have been created and implemented. These strategies, however, do not equally benefit both parties, and are more focused on serving the economic purposes of the employer, such as a focus on cost reduction and improved productivity, rather than the general well being of the employee (De Cieri *et al*’s, 2005).

One of the policies that has led to discrimination against women and further placing the issue of “lack of work life balance” purely on the working mothers’ shoulders is “mommy track”. The “mommy track” is a side track to their careers leading to low level, dead end jobs with limited or no upward mobility (Butler and Skattebo, 2004; Doorewaard *et al*’s,

2004). As with the “mommy track”, men that take time off from work due to family conflict may be evaluated negatively by their peers, because they are violating society’s expectation that work life conflict is a problem only associated with women (Eaton, 2003; Butler and Skattebo, 2004). Even though some organisations have work life balance policies in place, managers can make it very costly for the employees who make use of these policies as they can be effectively discriminated against by being removed from the “fast track” (Kopelman, Prottas, Thompson and Jahn, 2006).

Work life conflict is defined as inner role conflict, in which different life roles such as work and other life roles are either totally or partially incompatible; whereby participation in one role is made more difficult by the participation in another (de Cieri *et al's*, 2005), resulting in a negative spill over between the two domains as per Kabanoff’s theory. Emotional stress occurs when the environment is constrained and the resources available are perceived inadequate to handle certain situations, and that is exactly what happens in work life conflict situations. On the other hand in work life balance situations, the resources available are perceived to be more than adequate to handle the environment (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002). Work life conflict can be further broken down into different dimensions; work-to-family (WTF), family-to-work (FTW) and work-to-school (WTS), specifically for employees who are working full/part time and studying part/full time (Rau and Hyland, 2002)

A further constraint to the work life balance policies is the fact that employers are raising the red flag against them. They are concerned that this will open a “flood gate” of requests that cannot be met from an organisational perspective. A further concern is

that some employees might take advantage of these work life balance policies for which no return to the organisation is required. Some organisations have even gone so far as to claim that there is no demand for work life balance policies amongst their employees. This claim by organisations have however been found groundless as further research into this field has proven that employees are looking for the options of work life balance policies, this is strongly supported by business cases, and the relatively low take up of these policies by organisations (Drew and Murtagh, 2005).

Some literature supports the fact that senior managers can actually benefit more from work life balance, because they can afford luxuries such as child care, house keepers and additional support structures. In harsh contrast to these findings, more and more literature is emerging stating that managers- and professional women actually face more work life conflict due to the fact that management positions actually suite men more than women (Burchielli *et al's*, 2008). What is the main contributing factor to work life conflict?

#### **2.2.4.1 Greedy Institution**

An ever growing number of people are reporting that they are having feelings of general busyness due to the fast pace environment as well as additional pressures on their time (Lewis, Gambles and Rapoport, 2007).The concept of the “greedy institution” suggests that its members commit their time and loyalties fully to the institution. These institutions will lay full claim on their members’ time and energy, which is now seen as a fixed cost, requires compliance from their members through loyalty and commitment. Work and the family are both “greedy institutions”, but only one institution can be served at a time

resulting in the work life conflict (Scheibl, 1999; Franzway, 2000; White *et al's*, 2003; Burchielli *et al's*, 2008). The result of this is that, little, or no energy is available at the end of the day for other activities or sources of enjoyment and satisfaction (Lewis, 2003). Research amongst US employees found that they are spending an additional 163 hours, roughly equating to almost an additional month per annum at work. The increase in hours for women in this case is three times greater than amongst men, thus resulting in a further “time squeeze” ( White *et al's*, 2003). The pure nature of the “greedy institution” is such that due to excessive work place demands, even employees with greater autonomy and access to resources will feel constrained (Burchielli *et al's*, 2008). The main intent of work life balance policies such as flexitime is specifically aimed at alleviating time and energy scarcity that result in work life conflict (Rau and Hyland, 2002). This underlying conflict between the two “greedy institutions” will form the basis of understanding the proposed polarised commitment theory.

The team concept practised throughout organisations can also contribute negatively to the “freedom of choice” that an individual exhibits. Lewis *et al's* (2007) further found in their study of South African Gold Mines, that due to the practice of rewarding financially for targets achieved, peer pressure will force the individual to “choose” infavour of commitment to the team rather than to his/her own choices. What is furthermore interesting to note is that “team concept” forms part of Grobler, Wörnich, Carrel, Elbert and Hatfield's (2006) list of “The 60 HR Predictions for 2008”. A further constraint that should be taken into consideration is the lack of women professional representation at senior management and even board level.



#### 2.2.4.2 “The Glass Ceiling”

International literature dealing with the migration of women into management positions is continuously still finding evidence of discrimination (McKenna, 2003; Burchielli *et al's*, 2008). Even though there is evidence available that clearly indicates that the gender gap is decreasing, the levels of discrimination and inequalities are still ever present. Even though leadership is not a gender aspect, as many great women leaders have shown over the ages, the discrimination is a societal condition. A woman's place within society is depicted from an early age on, as one of being nurturing and collaborating. While these qualities are not the total antithesis of leadership, they often stand in harsh contrast to the exercise and pursuit of power required to be a leader (McKenna, 2003; Burchielli *et al's*, 2008).

The metaphor of the “glass ceiling”, “glass wall” or “barrier to entry” that depicts the under representation of women in senior management positions still exists (Connell, 2006; Burchielli *et al's*, 2008). There are a few key elements that should be considered with the “glass ceiling” metaphor, and that is:

- Women have been discriminated against through unequal access to the top.
- It is an irrational action, as it leads to the underutilisation of women's skills and knowledge.
- The “glass ceiling” can be broken by organisational measures, such as the removal of prejudice as well as employment policy changes.

Even with the international drive to improve equity within the work place, in most spheres within the public and administrative domains, women remain under represented

(Connell, 2006). Only 16.3% of all legislators internationally are women, and an even smaller number is represented in world leaders and government ministers. A similar picture appears within business, as only 2% of the Fortune 1000 CEO's and less than 14% on these organisations' executive boards are women (McKenna, 2003).

The discrimination and inequalities that are still present is the fact that women are still carrying the "care responsibility" burden with them. Even though the rate of change in the work place has sped up, the rate of change of sharing of household tasks within the family still greatly lags behind. It can therefore be concluded that this gender issue lies at the heart of work-family conflict (Burchielli *et al's*, 2008). A further constraint lies within the work life balance policies that companies implement, are they in actual fact contributing to work life balance or work life conflict?

## 2.2.5 The Constraints of Work life balance Policies

### 2.2.5.1 "Flexitime"

Building on boundary theory, flexitime will result in a looser temporal boundary. The temporal boundary for work used to be defined by "9-5, Monday to Friday" Employers believe that flexible work arrangements will be popular with current as well as future employees based on the assumption of an increase in the temporal boundary (when the actual work is performed), thus resulting in a more work life balance (Rau and Hyland, 2002). Employers and employees alike feel that the introduction of flexible working times will in fact increase the work load on the remaining employees (Drew and Murtagh, 2004). The formal offering of flexibility by the employer is also not an indication

of the actual availability of flexitime within departments (Eaton, 2003). What was very interesting to note is the fact that employees are far less concerned about the perceived inequalities that will arise from flexible working hours, than what the employers are (Drew and Murtagh, 2004). It is furthermore important to note that flexibility is constrained by the task at hand, e.g. hospitals, 24 hour factories and police departments cannot make use of flexitime as well as telecommuting (cannot take your patient home). Informal flexibility, whereby the manager or supervisor who makes special allowances for personnel have in actual fact made a greater contribution towards organisational commitment than formal flexibility (Eaton, 2003).

The pure nature of managerial work is such that the quality and productivity thereof is extremely difficult to assess. Commitment to managerial work is measured in terms of the “hours spent” at the work place and in meetings. American’s fondly refer to this as “face time” , and these long hours have unfortunately become a “badge of status”, directly linked to managerial success and commitment towards the organisation (Drew and Murtagh, 2004; Lewis, Gambles and Rapoport, 2007). Therefore even though organisations have work life balance policies like “flexitime in place” very few women professionals will make use of it as it indicates their lack of commitment towards the organisation and therefore restricts their possible enhancement options (Drew and Murtagh, 2004). Thus further supporting Lewis *et al’s* (2007) findings that this perceived “high level of commitment” further constrains and manipulate the choices of the individual.

### 2.2.5.2 “Telecommuting”

Telecommuting refers to the utilisation of information and communication technology in order to be able to conduct work from various places, including home (spatial and temporal boundary blurring) (Rau and Hyland, 2002). One of the main reasons why telecommuting is as popular work life balance policy as flexitime is, from which both organisations and employees can benefit as telecommuting:

- Eliminates time wasted by commuting to and from work.
- Reduces organisational expenses as less office space is required.
- Improves of work life balance.
- Enables flexible working times (Grobler *et al's*, 2006).

Even in light of all these benefits, it can in actual fact contribute to work life conflict, as, people have the feeling of being isolated from the organisation, a sense of stagnation, partners and children do not respect the boundaries of the home workers' office time, being less visible to the organisation, and even a compulsive overworking. This can increase stress as the boundaries between work and family life becomes even more blurred (Rau and Hyland, 2002; Grobler *et al's*, 2006).

The last part of this chapter will provide a in depth look at various levels of commitment and what each individual level means to the organisation.

### **2.3 Definition of Commitment**

“Commitment is a state of being in which an individual becomes bound by his actions and through these actions to beliefs that sustain the activities and his own involvement. Commitment is ubiquitous, so common that we are often unaware of its constraining effects and its subtle control over our beliefs” Solanick (1977, p. 62).

Commitment is something more far reaching than general appreciation for an individual’s efforts. Commitment has a direct link to the general attitudes and behaviour that individuals exhibit regarding job satisfaction, motivation, job involvement, rate of absenteeism, performance and turnover (Chang and Choi, 2007; Fiorito, Bozeman, Young and Meurs, 2007).

What can therefore be considered the main drivers of commitment?

- An internal belief in something.
- Personal values based on loyalty, honour and responsibility
- An external motivation force that compels an individual to act in a certain way (Mckenzie, Truc and Winkelen, 2001).

The level to which an individual is committed to an organisation therefore depends on the psychological relationship that that individual has with the organisation (van Knippenberg and Sleebos, 2006).

There are currently four different levels of commitment that have been identified:

- Locals: these are individuals who identify with their organisation and are highly committed to that particular organisation.

- Cosmopolitans: these are individuals who are highly committed to their profession.
- Organisational commitment: these are individuals who are committed to their profession as well as to that particular organisation and the reference group associated with that organisation.
- Ambivalent: (which will not be focused on in this research) these individuals are neither committed to their organisation nor to their chosen profession (Tuma and Grimes, 1981; TNS Research, 2003; Chang and Choi, 2007).

### 2.3.1 Different Commitment Theories

There are at least three theories that are quoted on a regular basis to support commitment. The first and most common of all three is the Social Exchange Theory.

This is a relationship based on mutually contingent, tangible and intangible exchanges on the notion of what the individuals perceived as favourable outcomes for their individual inputs and which are reciprocated by the organisation (Lambert, 2000; Haar and Spell, 2004; Fiorito *et al's*, 2007). If the relationship between the individuals, being it employer and employee or an associated peer group, is reciprocated with similar, though not identical actions and even in some instances to a lesser extent, the parties involved in the exchange become committed to each other (generation of organisations citizen ship) (Lambert, 2000).

The second is perceived as organisational support, specifically looking at the way in which the organisation is perceived by the individual to be committed to her individual

well being. Benefits such as retirement benefits that are not directly linked to performance and are available to all employees will have no real effect on perceived organisational support as they are not aimed at the individual (Lambert 2000). A general trust in management and the employee's belief that the manager is taking her best interest at heart also improved organisational commitment as part of perceived organisational support. A trust relationship is based on the perceived actions of others and should either be beneficial or at least not harmful to one Trust in management is paramount, as this ensures that managers are perceived to be competent, and that management's actions, in order to realise organisational goals, will ultimately have a positive effect on the employees (Mckay and Boxall, 2007).

The third theory is the Psychological Contract, which refers to implicit, obligational and reciprocal rights that the individual perceives to be gained from the exchange relationship. Commitment is therefore based on the perceived value gained by each party (Haar and Spell, 2004; van Kippenberg and Sleebos, 2006). The reciprocation factor touched on by both Social Exchange Theory and Psychological Contract has been used to distinguish between local and cosmopolitan commitment (Tuma and Grimes, 1981; Haar and Spell, 2004). Perceived organisational support, is however just as relevant as this has been used as a transitional theory for changing cosmopolitan commitment into organisational commitment (Van Kippenberg and Sleebos, 2006).

### **2.3.1.1 Local Commitment Theory**

The term "local" was first introduced by Gouldner in (1957), and further expanded in the research conducted by Tuma and Grimes (1981). Local commitment or organisational

identification, as it is more commonly known, refers to the individual's psychological attachment to, and identification with that particular organisation. This social identification of an individual with the organisation implies the merging of the self with the organisation (Van Kippenberg and Sleebos, 2006; Chang and Choi, 2007). TNS Intersearch (2003), refers to this group as "company orientated", and sees this segment as "solid corporate citizens". These individuals focus more on "what they can give" to the organisation.

### **2.3.1.2 Cosmopolitan Commitment Theory**

The term "cosmopolitan" was first introduced by Gouldner in (1957), and further expanded in the research conducted by Tuma and Grimes (1981). Cosmopolitan or Professional Commitment is based on a psychological attachment to the individuals profession rather than the organisation in which that individual is employed. Cosmopolitan commitment is associated with job involvement, improved attention and customer centricity as well as technical performance. Cosmopolitan commitment is therefore rooted in an exchange between the individual and the organisation linked directly to perceived organisational support. The higher perceived organisational support is the more that individual will be committed to the organisation (Haar and Spell, 2004; Van Kippenberg and Sleebos, 2006; Chang and Choi, 2007). TNS Intersearch (2003) refers to this group as "career orientated", which consists of very strong performers. They are more focused on "Do I belong?" Cosmopolitans will therefore care more about furthering their career, than about the organisation.

### **2.3.1.3 Organisational Commitment Theory**

The term “cosmopolitan-local” was first introduced by Gouldner in (1957). Tuma and Grimes (1981) further built on this research and indicate that organisational commitment is influenced by three variables; commitment of the individual to her professional skills and values, loyalty to the particular organisation and a specific reference group orientation. TNS Intersearch (2003) further builds on this concept and refers to this group as “ambassadors”. Cosmopolitan-locals are the most committed segment. They are all top performers, and are purely focused on their careers within the larger organisation. They are more team orientated, and they specifically focus on “how can we grow?”

### **2.3.1.4 Polarised Commitment Theory**

This theory is purely based on literature and is the main focus for this research. Unlike men, women have two choices; whether their lives’ main activity will be career or family orientated. Women want both, work and a family as stated previously (Procter and Padfield, 1999). The polarised commitment theory therefore focuses on the actual choice of participating in both work and home. There is however underlying theories that should be taken into consideration when building this theory. One is the work-family conflict and the second aspect is the emotional interrelation between work and family.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The literature now begins to answer the link between work life balance and organisational commitment. Through the literature research the probability that polarised commitment does exist became clear. Multiple roles can contribute

successfully to the overall psychological well being of women professionals resulting in positive spill over effect if managed correctly. The battle between the “greedy institutions” will continue, but the forces that can result in polarised commitment being a benefit to all parties of the institution should be further investigated, specifically the benefits that can be gained from the organisational perspective through stronger commitment from the individual. The more the organisation is perceived to support the challenges faced by ensuring work life balance, the more the employee will be committed to the organisation.

In the following chapter research questions and a hypothesis will be posed in order to determine that the proposed fifth level of commitment; polarised commitment, does exist.

## Chapter 3

### 3 Research Questions and Hypothesis

#### 3.1 Introduction

The aim of the following research questions and hypothesis is to further expand on the knowledge base, and in some instances, to even challenge the status quo regarding the current view on work life balance and commitment in light of the new proposed polarised commitment theory.

#### 3.2 Research Questions and Hypothesis

The research questions and hypothesis are grounded in the following theory: Social Exchange Theory, Kabanoff's positive spill over theory and Boundary Theory. Research questions 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 are linked and are supported by literature below.

*3.2.1 Do women professionals in South Africa have a sense of work life balance?*

*3.2.2 Do women professionals in South Africa have a sense of organisational commitment?*

Based on the social exchange theory, if employees perceive that they have more organisational support through work life balance policies, the organisation will benefit from higher levels of organisational commitment, increase in productivity, reduced levels of turnover, lower levels of job related stress and burnout and higher levels of job satisfaction (Burchielli *et al's*, 2008). Almost all work life balance policies are positively

associated with perceived organisational and family support as well as organisational commitment (Koppelman *et al's*, 2006).

Policy makers should ensure that employees genuinely feel that they have some control over the boundaries of work and the rights to exercise flexibility in order to ensure work life balance (Eaton, 2003). In ensuring some control, whether it is forced by the organisation or out of own free will, the woman professional will feel that the organisation has her best interest at heart by either forcing her to take time off for the family/home or giving her the autonomy to make her own decisions. Employees who perceive that the organisation provides them with greater support in balancing work and home, will exhibit higher levels of organisational commitment (Burchielli *et al's*, 2008).

Freedom of choice comes into play here, as the freedom to choose is the privilege of an autonomous individual (Brannen and Nilsen, 2005). The personal control of time discourse specifically focuses on the choices made, e.g. work longer and harder or prioritise different aspects of life and personal responsibility in order to achieve a better balance (Lewis *et al's* , 2007).

### 3.2.3 Hypothesis 1

H0: There is no correlation between work life balance and organisational commitment

H1: There is a positive correlation between work life balance and organisational commitment

Women's careers and work lives are not divorced from one another and cannot be understood if the "whole" is not examined (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002). Ruderman *et al's*

(2002) findings are further supported by the “role enhancement theory”, that suggests that individuals can benefit from multiple role commitments and the resource transfer between these multiple roles (Burchielli *et al's*, 2008). When considering Kabanoff’s positive spill over theory, multiple roles cannot only contribute to a positive relationship between employee and employer, it can also have a positive effect on the customer.

#### 3.2.4 *Does work permeate more easily into the family role than vice versa?*

Flexible working hours and telecommuting, as work life balance policies are in actual fact infringing more on work life balance. Organisations should enforce stricter control on working hours (forcing them to work life balance). Research conducted by White *et al's* (2003) indicates that work life conflict increased with additional hours worked, for both men and women. Employees, as crucial stakeholders of the organisation expect their employers to be more responsive in their needs to balance work and life (de Cieri *et al's*, 2005). Managers and professional women were actually faced with more work life conflict than work life balance despite the high levels of resources and work life balance policies at their disposal (Burchielli *et al's*, 2008).

The Boundary theory explains the reduction of transition costs between one boundary and the next, whether that boundary is temporal (working time) or spatial (place of work). “Telecommuting eases transition between different roles more readily than flexitime does. It also allows for more permeation between the spatial and temporal boundaries” (Rau and Hyland, 2002 p. 120). Blurring of the roles in telecommuting is much more likely to occur as there is no set time for either work or leisure. Only where role conflict is high e.g. children or other responsibilities are present, telecommuting will

have a negative effect e.g. inter role interruptions due to accessibility (Rau and Hyland, 2002).

### **3.3 Conclusion**

In order to successfully substantiate the research questions and hypothesis proposed during this chapter the research methodology as well as the questionnaire formulation should be considered in greater detail and will be discussed in depth during the next chapter.

## **Chapter 4**

### **4 Research Methodology**

#### ***4.1 Introduction***

In this chapter the methodology and questionnaire design utilised in order to support the three research questions and hypothesis raised in Chapter 3 will be discussed in detail. The research was of a descriptive nature, as it aimed at clarifying the characteristics of the population, in this case, that of work life balance and organisational commitment as experienced by women professionals in South Africa. Secondary data was obtained from literature in Chapter 2 and further explored as a support basis. The main aim of the research was to collect primary data to support the proposed fifth level of commitment; polarised commitment. Data was collected via a snowball sampling technique. The collection method used was an online questionnaire and was conducted via a quantitative approach.

#### ***4.2 Purpose of the Research***

The purpose of the research as discussed in Chapter 1 was to investigate the possibility that women were committed both to their professional lives (work) and their family/social lives (home). It was furthermore proposed that this commitment to both work and home resulted in the fifth level of commitment: polarised commitment. Specific focus was placed on whether or not women professionals in South Africa have a work life balance and a sense of organisational commitment. It was furthermore proposed that there was a correlation between work life balance and organisational commitment. In gaining a better understanding of the literature in Chapter 2 an additional research question was

included, with specific focus on the aspect that work is time greedy in nature and that it permeated more readily into the family role than vice versa. Utilisation of the correct sampling method will ensure that the purpose of the research is supported.

#### **4.3 Sample**

The snowball sampling technique was utilised. The negative aspect of this was that there was no real control over the sample selection and the probability that the sample will therefore not be representative of the population as a whole is high. Future generalisation of the research will therefore be low (Page and Meyer, 2005). With the snowball sampling technique the initial members of the population were selected via probability methods, and the additional respondents were obtained from information provided by the initial members of the population (Zikmund, 2003).

The sample size proposed was a minimum of 50 participants, however, the sample size obtained was that of 230 women professionals. What was, however, important to take into consideration was that the larger the sample size compared to the proposed sample size, the less the sampling error would be. A point of concern was that with a larger sample the possibility of obtaining an increase in the non-response error would increase (Albright, Winston and Zappe, 2006). Now that the sampling process has been identified, the population from which this sample has been taken should be described in great detail as this ensures that the desired participants were included.

#### **4.4 Proposed Population**

The proposed population consisted of professional women. The exact target population for the research was defined as professional women who:

- Have at least one formal qualification.
- If the participant had no formal qualification, but worked for the organisation for longer than five years.
- Were entrepreneurs in control of her own company or managing a division of an entrepreneurial organisation, if she does not have a formal qualification.
- Were working for either a Private or Public organisation.

The following variables did not have an effect on whether the member was included or excluded from the research.

- Married or not married.
- Children or no children.
- Age.
- Race and religion were not considered to be a constraint and any woman professional could participate.

The geographical boundaries of the population were that of the South African borders.

In order to obtain the desired information from the clearly defined population, the correct measuring instruments had to be defined.

#### **4.5 Measuring Instrument**

An online questionnaire was utilised to study the proposed population. The questionnaire made use of a 7 point Likert Scale as this measured the degree of

agreement or disagreement with a variety of statements (Page and Meyer 2005). The questionnaire consisted of the following three main areas:

#### 4.5.1 Demographics

The demographics section of the questionnaire was formulated to include only participants from the proposed population (questions 1 – 12, in Annexure 1). This section included aspects such as: gender, date of birth, ethnicity, marital status, whether the participant have any children, education, employment record, whether or not the participant was living and working in South Africa at the time of completing the questionnaire and the average amount of time that the participant spent at work or on work related aspects. The last question was specifically included in order to determine whether or not work permeated more readily into family role than vice versa.

#### 4.5.2 Organisational Commitment

There were two main levels of commitment that were measured by the measuring instrument; organisational commitment and cosmopolitan commitment. The research question in Chapter 3 specifically focused on only one level of commitment; organisational commitment:

*Do women professionals in South Africa have a sense of organisational commitment?*

Tuma and Grimes (1981) indicated that organisational commitment was influenced by three variables; commitment of the individual to her professional skills and values, loyalty to the particular organisation and a specific reference group orientation. TNS Intersearch (2003) further built on this concept and referred to this group as “ambassadors”. Organisational commitment is therefore more a feeling of a

psychological bond with the organisation that can result in an increase in tenure. However, as stated in the beginning of this section, the measuring instrument also provided results for the level of cosmopolitan commitment. Cosmopolitan or professional commitment is based on a psychological attachment to the individuals' profession rather than the organisation in which that individual was employed. Cosmopolitan commitment is associated with job involvement, improved attention and customer centricity as well as technical performance. Cosmopolitan commitment is therefore rooted in an exchange between the individual and the organisation linked directly to perceived organisational support (Haar and Spell, 2004; Van Kippenberg and Sleebos, 2006; Chang and Choi, 2007).

The questionnaire selected to specifically measure organisational commitment was included to determine the level of commitment towards the organisation – questions 13 – 27 in the questionnaire, Annexure 1. Mowday, Steers and Porter (1979) tested the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979) on 2 635 employees in a wide variety of jobs that worked in nine different organisations. The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire presented relatively strong evidence of, internal consistency, homogeneity as well as acceptable levels of convergent, discriminant and predictive validity (Mowday *et al's*, 1979). Some of the statements in the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) have been negatively phrased, the reason was that once all the data were collected for the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) it would have resulted in fairly consistent levels of organisational commitment for most employees (Mowday *et al's*, 1979). The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et*

*al's*, 1979) was also used by Chang and Choi (2007) as well as Taylor, Levy, Boyacigiller and Beechler (2008) to measure levels of organisational commitment.

The Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) specifically utilised statements that invoked different attitudinal orientation towards the questionnaire's statements (measured by the 7 point Likert scale). Statements such as: willingness to exert extra effort for the organisation, informing friends and family about the organisation, level of loyalty to the organisation, commitment to the organisation or to the profession within the organisation, organisational values, pride in being associated with the organisation, personal gain by remaining with the organisation and the choice of organisation to work for were either a mistake or the best thing that could have happened, forms part of the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) . The complete Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) can be found in Annexure 1.

#### 4.5.3 Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005).

Work life balance is not only an ideal that women professionals aim to achieve, but organisations are striving towards the implementation of work life balance policies to try and assist women professionals in achieving this ideal. Organisations that actively seek to improve employee morale, commitment and job satisfaction as well as aim at reducing sources of stress both at work and home through work life balance policies, will improve their ability to become the employer of choice as well as retain talent (Wallace, 1995; Eaton, 2003; Birt *et al's*, 2004; De Cieri *et al's*, 2005; Macky and Boxall,

2007). The Industrial Society's Work Life Check List was included to support the research questions in Chapter 3:

*Does work permeate more easily into the family role than vice versa?*

*Do women professionals in South Africa have a sense of work life balance?*

The level of Work life balance was measured by the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List – questions 28 – 38 in Annexure 1 (Dex and Bond, 2005). The Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) was a continuation of the research conducted by Daniels and McCarraher (2002) that was administered to six different organisations. Dex and Bond (2005) further refined the check list in their research to eliminate the non-response errors by rephrasing questions two, seven and eight in such a way that respondents could truthfully answer the questions whether or not they had any family responsibilities. The questionnaire for the purpose of this research was further adjusted to accommodate a 7 point Liker Scale. Dex and Bond (2005) used a simple three point scale where the participant had the choice of the following; agree (scored 3), sometimes agree (scored 2) and disagreed (scored 1).

The Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) specifically used statements that would invoke a different attitudinal orientation to each statement made. Statements such as; working long hours due to work demands, lack of time to socialise and relax due to work demands, the effects of high work loads on health, relationships with partner/friends/family suffered due to work load and forgetting about work issues were difficult, formed part of the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) .

Question 38, however, did not form part of the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005), but was added based on literature discussed in Chapter 2 regarding the "greedy institution". This question specifically acted as the link between the two research questions posed at the beginning of this section.

The results obtained from both the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) and the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) were utilised for the hypothesis testing as raised in Chapter 3:

H0: There is no correlation between work life balance and organisational commitment

H1: There is a positive correlation between work life balance and organisational commitment

The demographics section, Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) and the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) were combined into one questionnaire (Annexure 1) that was distributed to various participants as part of the data gathering procedure.

#### **4.6 Data Gathering Procedure**

The method utilised during the data collection phase was a snowball sampling method. A website link was sent out to 60 possible candidates by the author, where it was requested that these recipients should send it to women professionals that they knew,

who in turn were requested to distribute it further, thus becoming a non probability sample that finally resulted in 278 responses being obtained within the two calendar week period. The demographics section was used as a filter and participants that did not fall into the specified population were excluded from the final sample. Participants e.g. neither men nor women outside South African borders who completed the questionnaire, were deleted from the sample base (refer to Annexure 2 for summary data). This resulted in a final sample size of 230 participants.

#### **4.7 Data Analysis**

Data analysis was done utilising the following statistic methods:

- Descriptive statistics; with specific focus on frequency tables, that should be read in conjunction with the histograms in order to gain a better understanding of the frequency in which participants agreed with a certain attitude.
- Summary statistics; that provide the mean, median, standard deviation and variance of each of the questions.

The mean provides a measure of the central tendency of the data, thus indicating the point around which the data is spread out. A median on the other hand provides the middle observation; this is the point above and below which half of the observations lie. If the mean and median are close together, it indicates that the responses are reasonably evenly spread about the mean value. However, in cases where the mean and median differ greatly, it indicates that the distribution about the mean is not symmetrical, but skewed. The standard deviation of each question was also calculated, this provides a quantitative index of the distribution's spread or variation from the mean.

- In order to support the hypothesis test, a bivariate analysis was conducted, utilising the Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient,  $r$ . Pearson's correlation coefficient is thus utilised to measure the association between two variables. In this case, the association between the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) and the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005). The Pearson's correlation coefficient,  $r$ , ranges between +1.0 and -1.0. If the result was equal to 1.0, then there is a perfect positive linear relationship, in case the result was equal to -1.0, then there is a perfect negative linear relationship. If  $r$  was equal to 0, then there is no correlation (Zikmund, 2003; Page and Meyer, 2005).

The data was also represented in Histograms, in order to gain visual representation of the data collected.

The sampling method, target population, measurement instruments and the data analysis process were clearly defined in this process.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter the proposed research methodology was discussed in detail to ensure that the process could be completely generalised. Specific focus was placed on the population definition, research instrument design, data collection method as well as the statistical methods. The results obtained during the data collection and analysis process will be discussed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 5

### 5. Results

#### 5.1 Introduction

In this Chapter, the results that were obtained from the online questionnaire will be reviewed. In order to gain a better understanding, the results in this chapter will be presented visually in the form of histograms for each of the measuring instruments, as this usually provides more information than just a basic study of the numbers. Significant numbers will however be discussed in conjunction with each graph where appropriate.

The next three sections will specifically look at the results obtained for the demographics section as well as the two individual measuring instruments. The results obtained for the two individual measuring instruments; Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) and the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) are represented in the form of histograms. The y axis represents 7 points on the 7 point Likert scale. Neutral (point four) results will not be discussed as it is considered to be statistically insignificant. The remaining points on the y axis therefore represent the following levels of agreement: one, strongly disagree; two, disagree; three, slightly disagree; five, slightly agree; six, agree and seven, strongly agree. There are some questions in the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) section that have been reverse coded, each of these questions are marked with an X next to the question number on the figure. The points represented on the y axis therefore change as follows: seven, strongly disagree; six, disagree; five,

slightly disagree; three, slightly agree; two, agree and one, strongly agree. The results obtained for the mean, median and standard deviation will not be discussed as the median and standard deviation are an indication of the data spread around the mean. There is however a graphical representation of each of these points for the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) and the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) in Annexure 2.

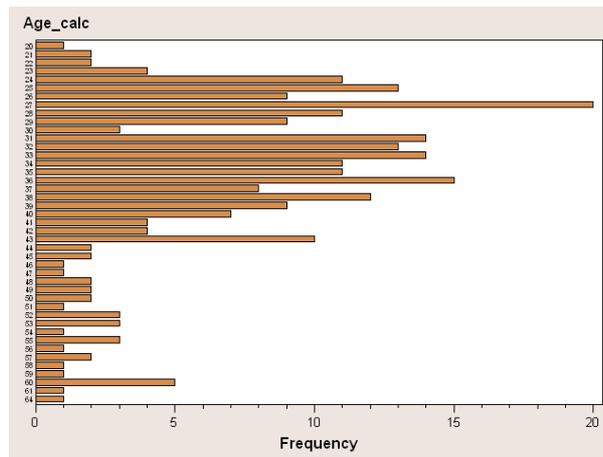
The results will be described in percentage format in conjunction with each histogram. Where the results are dominant in one specific attitude, e.g. agree and strongly agree, the results will be lumped together and will be indicated as such. At the end of each section the results obtained will be summarised.

## ***5.2 Results Obtained: Measuring Instrument link to Research Questions and Hypothesis***

### 5.2.1 Demographics Results

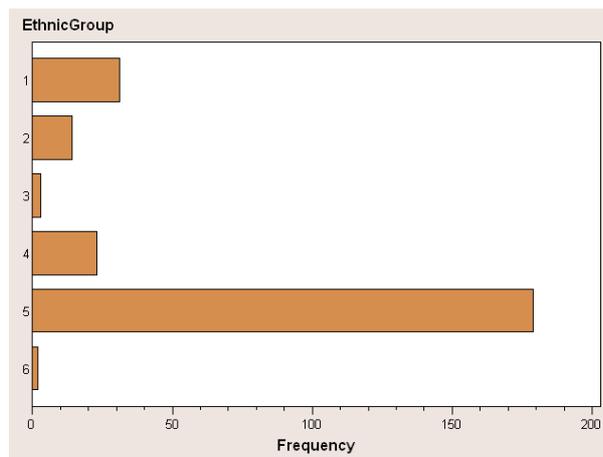
The demographics section has been included to ensure that the results in the final analysis reflect the altitudinal orientation of the desired population as stipulated in Chapter 4.

**Figure 5.1: Age**



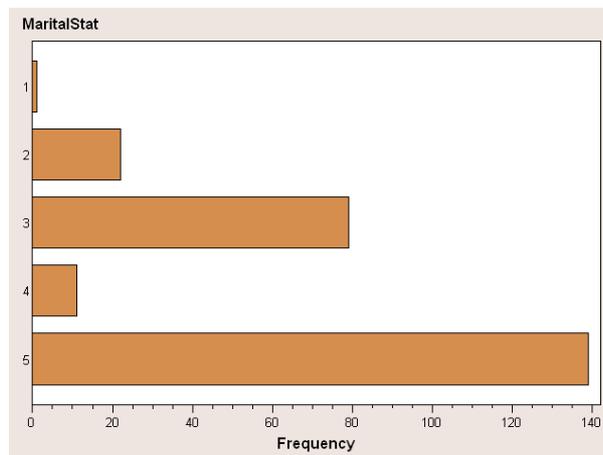
The average age of the women professionals were obtained from the question related to the date of birth. 68.27% of the women professionals that participated in the questionnaire are between 25 and 39 years of age.

**Figure 5.2: Ethnic Group**



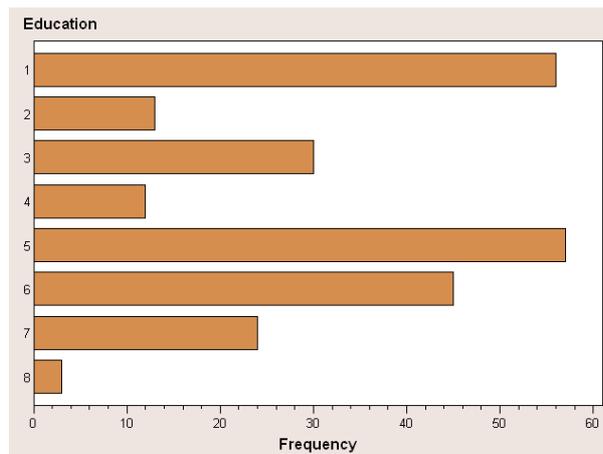
The ethnicity of the women professionals that participated in the questionnaire is unfortunately not a true reflection of the South African population. Point five on the y axis represents white women professionals and they made up 71.03% of the sample, point three represents black women professionals and they made up 12.30% of the sample.

**Figure 5.3: Marital Status**



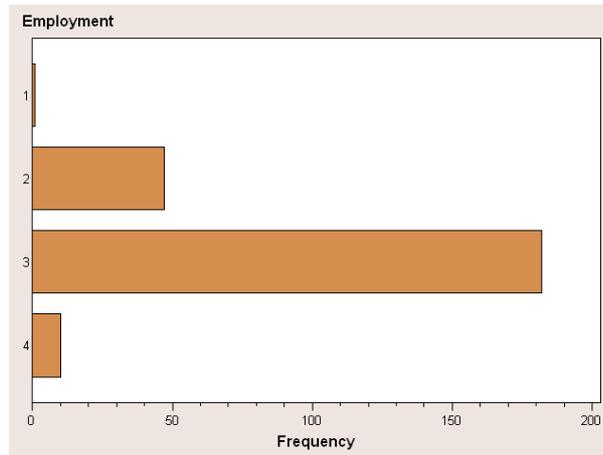
Even though marital status does not form part of the pre-requisite to be included or excluded from the research, in order to eliminate possible confusion between the questions: “life partner” and “married”, the two values were added together under “married”: and comprise of 59.52% of the sample.

**Figure 5.4: Level of Education**



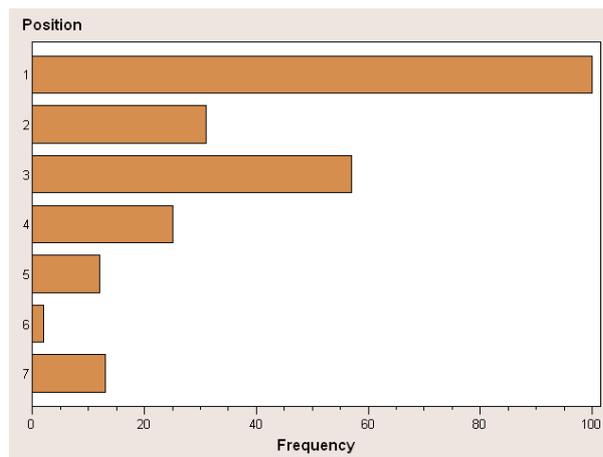
In figure 5.4, point number one, indicates that 23.33% of the women professionals only had matric. However, 58.75% of the women professionals fall within point number three that indicates members of the sample that hold a National Higher Diploma, to point number eight that indicates PhD level.

**Figure 5.5: Employment**



The y axis in Figure 5.5 represents the following: point one, indicates unemployed participants; point two, public sector; point three, private sector and point four, entrepreneurs. As can be seen from point three, 75.83% of the women professionals work in the private sector and 19.58% (point two) of the women professionals work within the public sector in South Africa.

**Figure 5.6: Position within the Organisation**



Even though it appears as if the larger section of the sample in Figure 5.6 are employees (41.67%), as depicted by point number one. Point number two to point number six represent from supervisor to board of director level. This part of the sample

equates 52.92%. Point seven indicates the number of business owners within the sample, and that equates up to 5.42% of the sample.

**Figure 5.7: Time in Current Position**

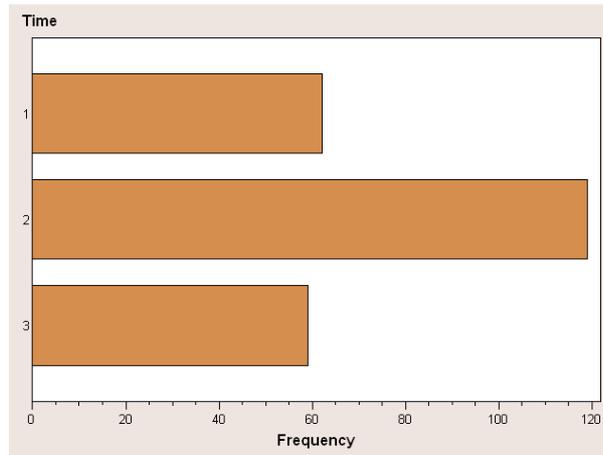
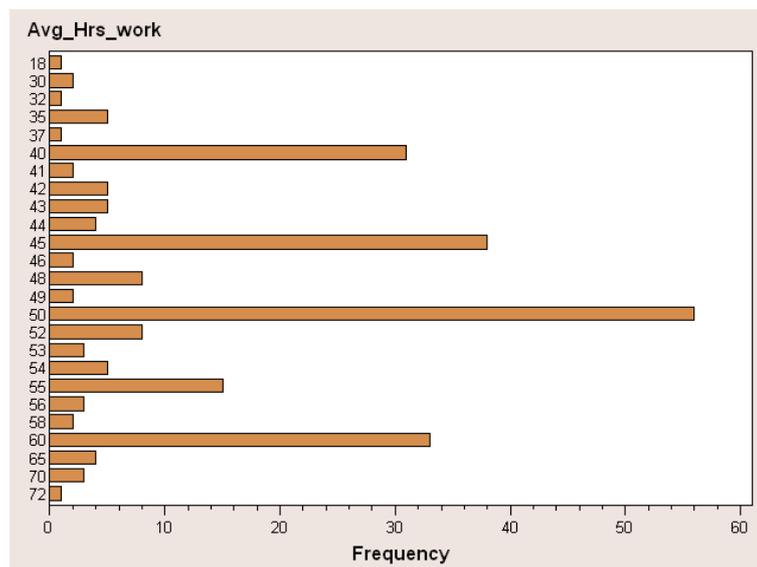


Figure 5.7 gives a distribution of the average amount of time spent in the current position, ranging from less than one year for point number one; one to five years for point number two and more than five years for point number three. 49.58% of the participants have been in their current positions between one and five years.

**Figure 5.8: Average Number of Hours Spent Working**



50.81% of the participants spent between 45-54 hours per week on work or work related activities. A further point of interest in Figure 5.8 is that 25.42% of the women professionals spend in excess of 55 hours per week on work or work related activities.

### 5.2.2 Summary of the Demographics Results

In summary, the demographics results indicate that the predominant sample of women professionals are:

- Between the ages of 25 to 39.
- White.
- Married.
- Educated, with more than half of the sample having a formal qualification.
- Employed in the private sector, either in supervisory or managerial roles within their respective organisations.
- Have been with the organisations on average between one and five years, and work in excess of 45 hours per week on work or work related activities.
- The question related to children was not discussed in the previous section; results however, indicate that 50.79% of the women professionals do not have children while 49.21% have.

The next section will specifically focus on the results that were obtained for the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979).

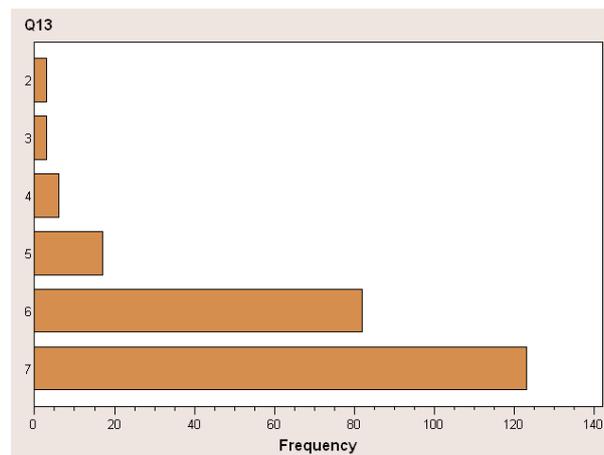
### 5.2.3 Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979).

The aim of the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) is to specifically focus on the research question posed in Chapters 3:

*Do women professionals in South Africa have a sense of organisational commitment?*

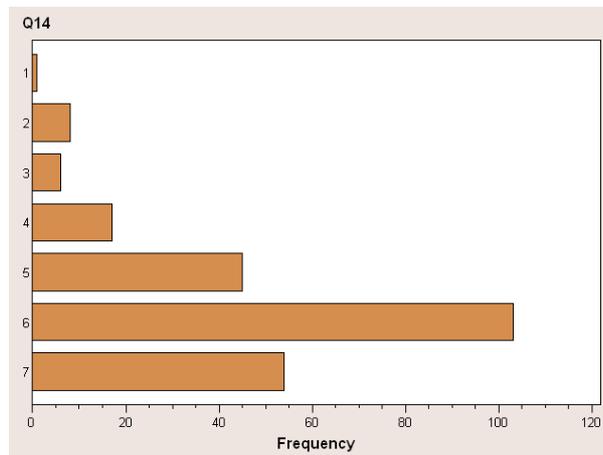
In order to gain a better understanding of all the results obtained for the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) and how the results are linked to the research question above, the results are represented in visual format in the following histograms.

**Figure 5.9: Extra Effort for the Organisation**



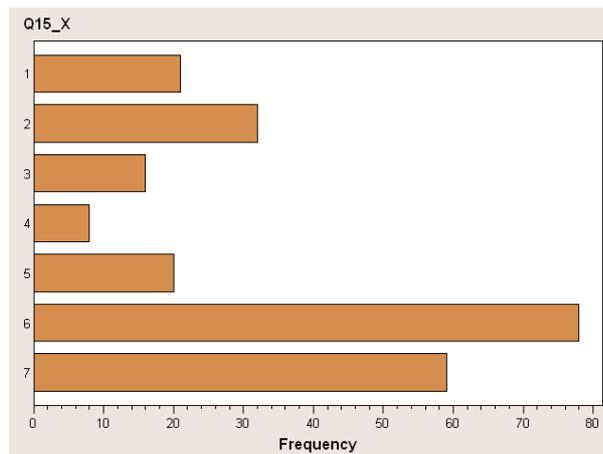
52.56% of the participants strongly agreed that they are prepared to exert extra effort for their organisation in order to ensure that their organisation succeeds. A further 35.04% agreed with the statement. 87.6% therefore agreed (in some form or another) with the statement.

**Figure 5.10: Proud to be Associated with the Organisation**



44.02% of the participants agreed that they informed friends and family about the great organisation that they worked for. Figure 5.10 indicates that the sample show a significant positive relationship to their organisations as a total of 86.33% agreed with the statement in some form or another.

**Figure 5.11: Lack of Organisational Loyalty**



As indicated in Figure 5.11 by the X, the results represented in this figure are reverse coded. 67.09% of the participants disagree with the statement in some form or another, indicating that these women professionals do in actual fact have a feeling of loyalty towards their organisations. It is however, important to note that 29.49% of the

participants also agreed with the statement in some form or another (Figure 5.11, points one to three).

**Figure 5.12: Any Kind of Job as Long as it is for this Organisation**

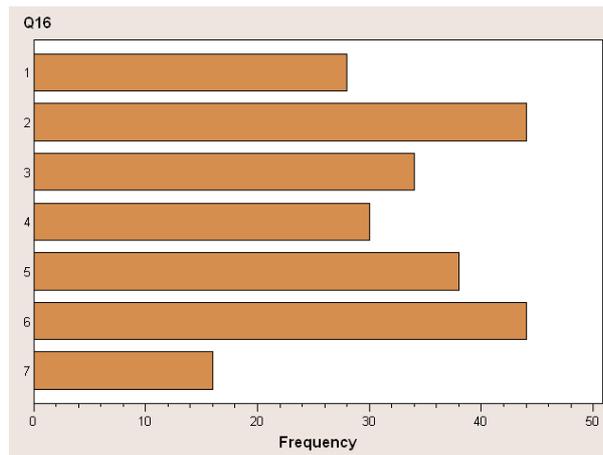
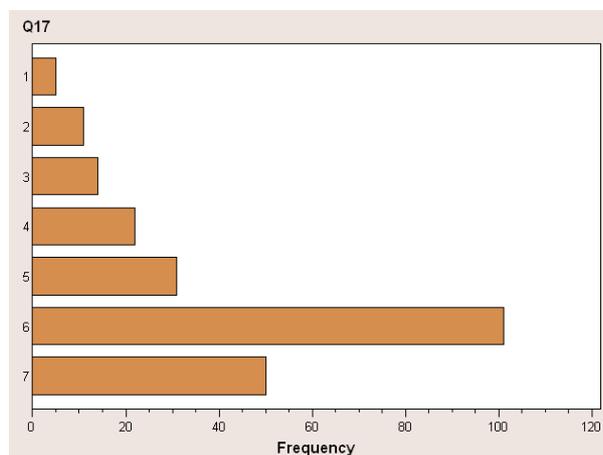


Figure 5.12 indicates a more even spread across the different attitudes. 18.8% of the total population either agreed or disagreed with the statement that they would accept any job within the organisation in order to maintain a membership of that particular organisation. However, if the total results for slightly disagree, disagree and strongly disagree are taken into consideration, 45.3% of the participants disagreed with the statement in some form or another.

**Figure 5.13: Organisational Value Match**



As can be seen from Figure 5.13, 77.78% of the participants agreed in some form or another that their values matched that of the organisation that they are currently working for.

**Figure 5.14: Great Organisation to Work for**

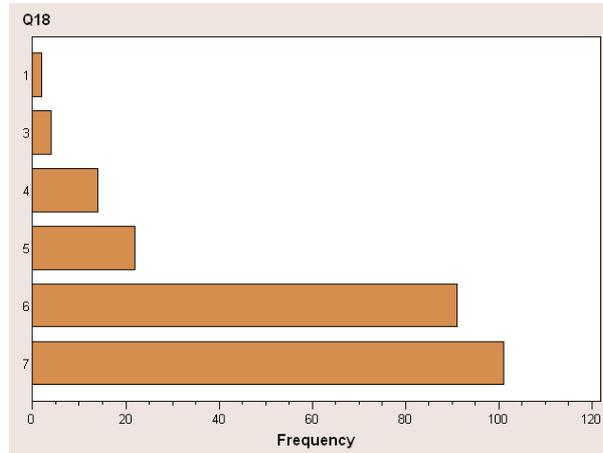
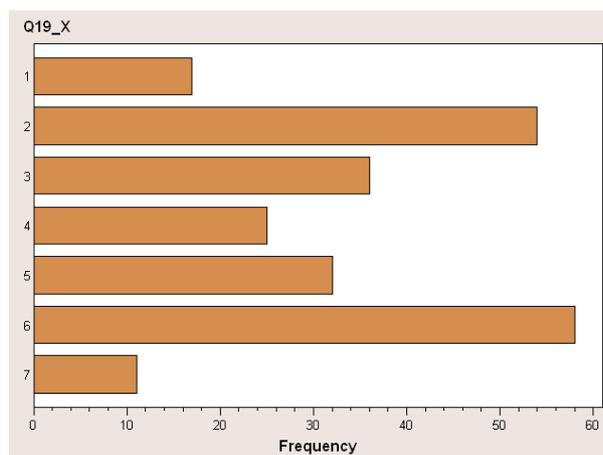


Figure 5.14 indicates that 91.45% of the participants agreed in some form or another that they were proud to tell friends and family that they worked for their particular organisation.

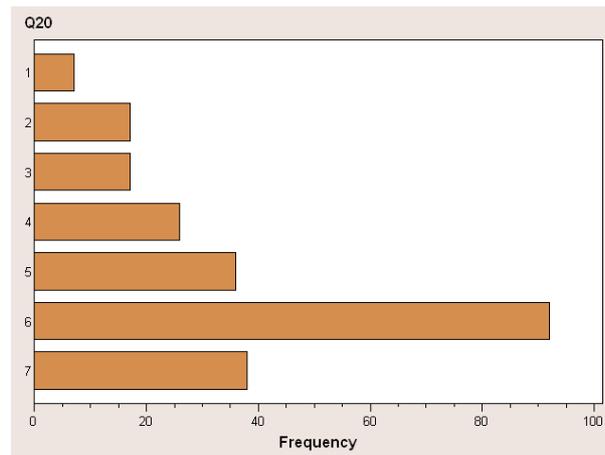
**Figure 5.15: Similar Job, Different Organisation**



As indicated, the results in Figure 15.5 are reverse coded. Figure 15.5 indicates that 45.93% of the participants agreed with the statement that they could be working for a

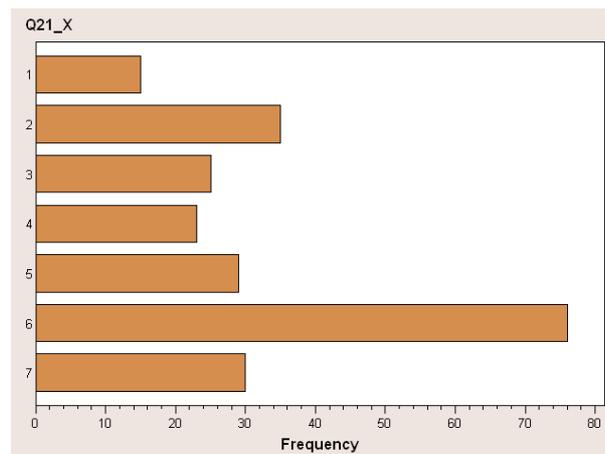
different organisation, as long as they performed the same type of work. However, 43.34% disagreed with the statement in some form or other.

**Figure 5.16: Organisational Inspiration**



As can be seen from Figure 5.16, 71.24% of the participants felt that the organisation inspired them to do the very best.

**Figure 5.17: A Small Change will cause me to Leave**



As indicated, the results in Figure 5.17 are reverse coded. As depicted in Figure 5.17, it can be seen that a greater part of the sample in some form or another disagreed with the statement that they would leave the organisation even if there was little change in their current circumstances – 57.95%. It is however, important to note that the part of

the sample, in some form or another agreed with the statement amounted 32.19% of the participants.

**Figure 5.18: The Right Choice of Organisation**

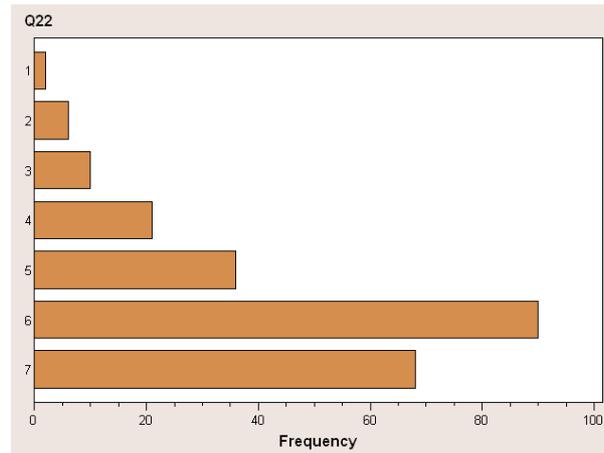


Figure 5.18 indicates that the participants were in general agreement that they made the right decision to work for their particular organisations. 83.26% of the participants agreed with the statement in some form or another.

**Figure 5.19: Proud to be Part of the Organisation**

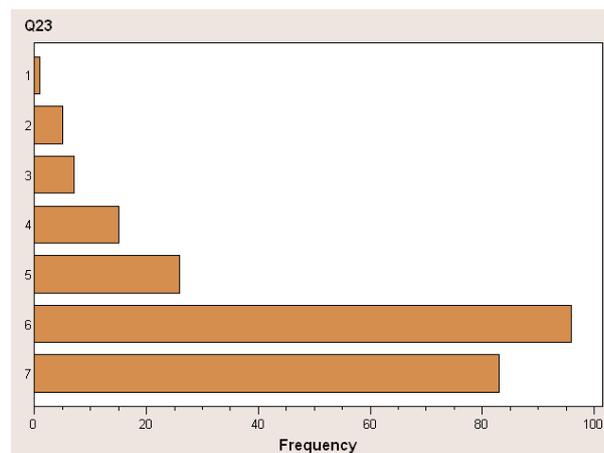
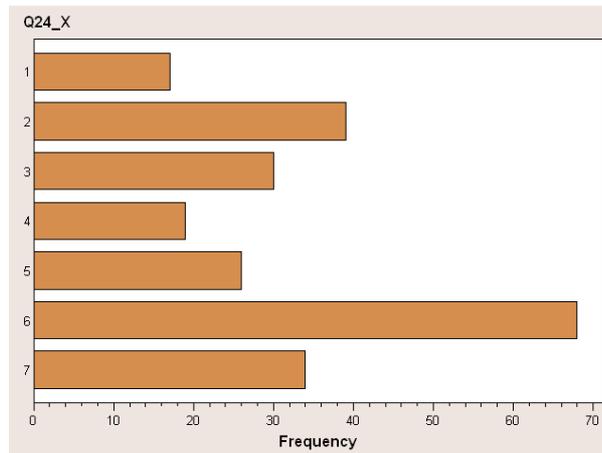


Figure 5.19 shows very strong positive tendencies to the statement that the participants were proud to be a part of the organisation. 87.98% of the participants agreed with the statement in some form or another.

**Figure 5.20: Personal Gain from Remaining at the Organisation**



The results represented in Figure 5.20 are reverse coded. As can be seen from Figure 5.20, 54.93% of the participants disagreed that they couldn't gain anything personally from remaining with their current organisations. It is however, important to note that 36.92% of the participants felt that there would be no personal gain from remaining with the organisation.

**Figure 5.21: Care about the Organisation's Fate**

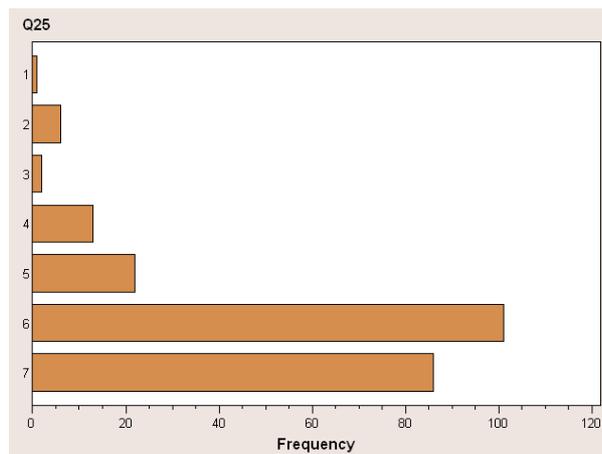
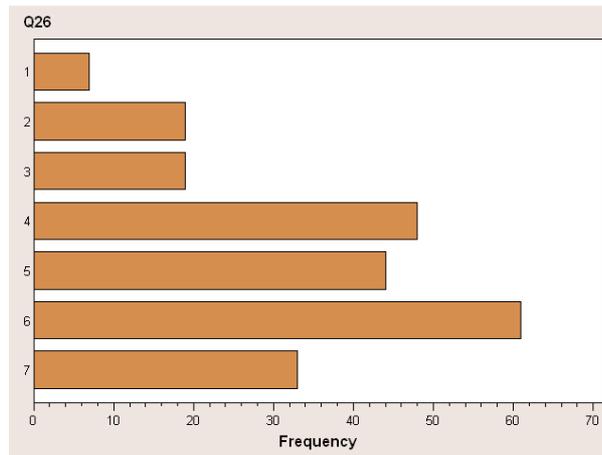


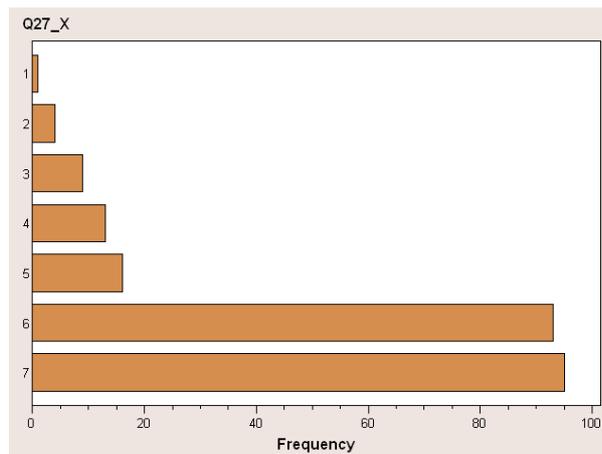
Figure 5.21 indicates a positive association regarding the concern for the fate of the organisation by the participants. 90.47% of the participants agreed with the statement in some form or another.

**Figure 5.22: The Best Organisation to Work for**



As indicated in Figure 5.22, the results are fairly spread out across the different attitudes. Even though 20.78% of the participants indicated that they felt neutral regarding the statement that they were working for the best possible organisation, 59.75% of the participants agreed in some form or another with the statement.

**Figure 5.23: Mistake to Work for this Organisation**



The results depicted in Figure 5.23 are reverse coded. 81.39% of the participants disagreed that they made a mistake by choosing their individual organisations.

#### 5.2.4 Summary of the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979)

In summary, the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) indicates that women professionals in South Africa:

- Will exert a great deal of effort for their organisations.
- Are prepared to tell their friends and family about the great organisation that they work for.
- Feel a sense of loyalty to their organisations.
- Would not accept any other job within the organisation to ensure that they retain membership of that particular organisation.
- Agree that the organisation has a similar value system as their own.
- Are proud to tell others that they are part of the organisation.
- Would be prepared to work for a different organisation as long as the job scope remains the same.
- Organisation inspires them to do their very best.
- In spite of changes within their organisations, they would remain with them.
- Are glad that they choose their particular organisation above an other.
- Are proud to tell others that they work for their organisation.
- Feel that they can gain a great deal personally by remaining with the organisation.
- Indicated that they care about the fate of the organisation.
- Agree that it is the best possible organisation to work for, and the decision to do so was not a mistake.

### 5.2.5 Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005)

In the following section the results for the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) will be discussed. Similar to that of the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) the results are represented visually (in histogram format) to aid interpretation. The Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) specifically aims at answering the following research questions as raised in Chapter 3:

*Do women professionals in South Africa have a sense of work life balance?*

*Does work permeate more easily into the family role than vice versa?*

Similar to the analysis for the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979), the y axis represents the 7 point Likert scale. None of the questions in the following section have been reverse coded.

**Figure 5.24: Due to Demand, I work Long Hours**

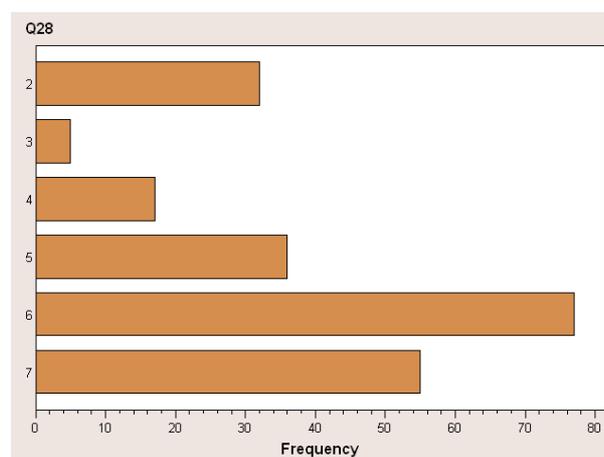


Figure 5.24 indicates that 75.67% of the participants agreed that due to job demands, they usually worked long hours. 14.41% of the participants, however, disagreed with the statement.

**Figure 5.25: Lack of Time to Socialise and Relax**

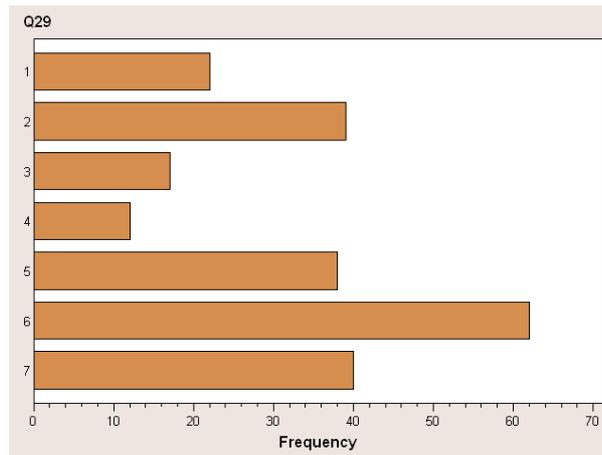


Figure 5.25 indicates that there is a wider spread of attitudinal orientation regarding the statement, that there is not much time to relax and socialise with family and friends during the week. Even though 33.92% disagreed with the statement, 60.54% agreed with the statement in some form or another.

**Figure 5.26: I have to Take Work Home**

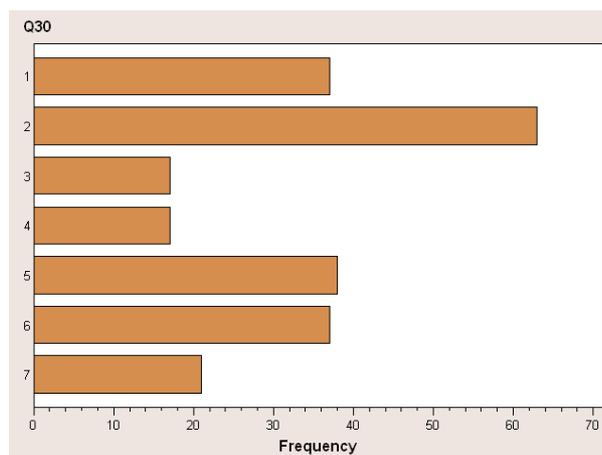


Figure 5.26 indicates more a greater orientation towards disagreement with the statement, as 50.87% of the participants indicated that they did not have to take work

home. However, 41.74% of the participants agreed with the statement in some form or another, and had to take work home most evenings.

**Figure 5.27: Work Late or on Weekends without Interruptions**

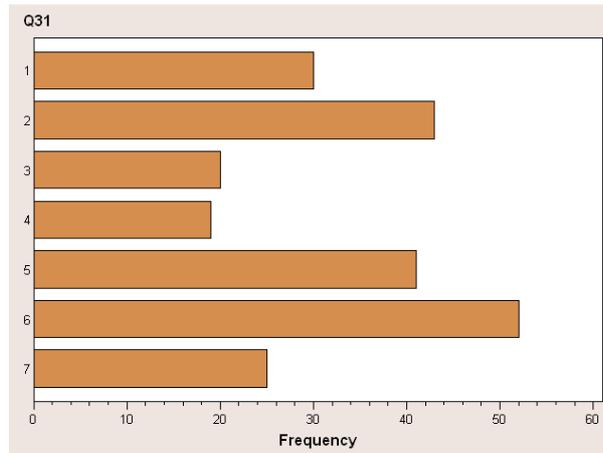


Figure 5.27 indicates a variation of agreement with the different attitudes as presented by the 7 point Liker Scale. Even though 51.31% of the participants agreed in some form or another that it is necessary to either work late or weekends to complete work without interruptions, 40.44%, however, disagreed with the statement.

**Figure 5.28: Relaxing and Forgetting about Work is Difficult**

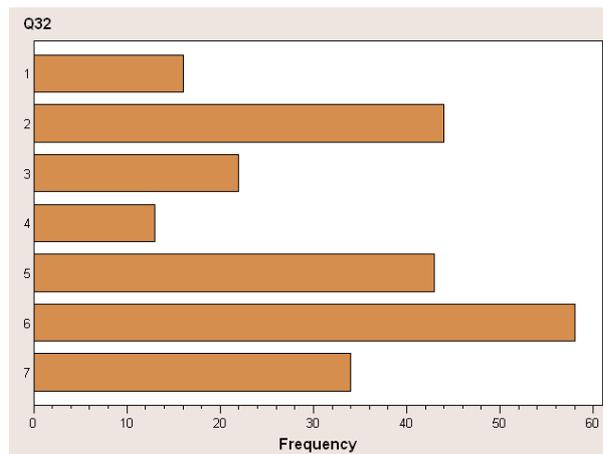
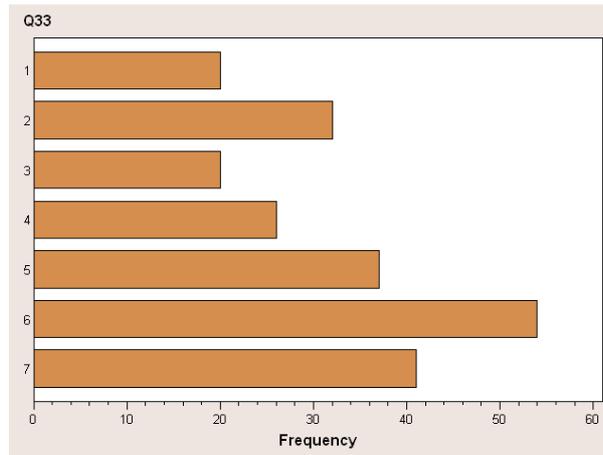


Figure 5.28 indicates an orientation towards agreement in some form or another with the statement, as 58.70% of the participants agreed that it was difficult to relax and

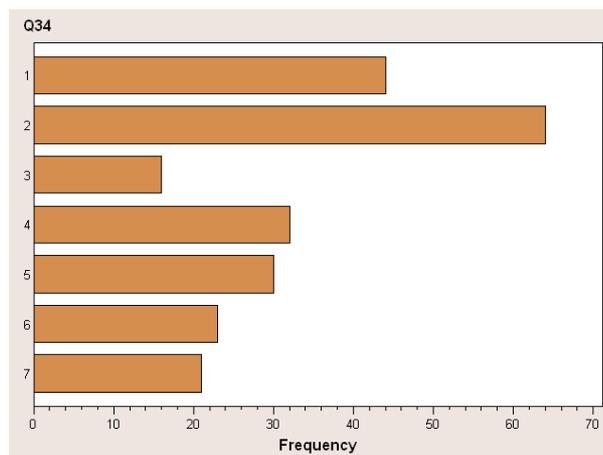
forget about work. There were, however, 35.66% of the women professionals that could successfully relax and forget about work.

**Figure 5.29: Work Related Stress and Health**



As can be seen from Figure 5.29, there is a wide spread of opinions relating to the influence of work stress on health. What is however, apparent from the figure is that 57.40% of the women professionals were concerned about the effects that work stress would have on their health.

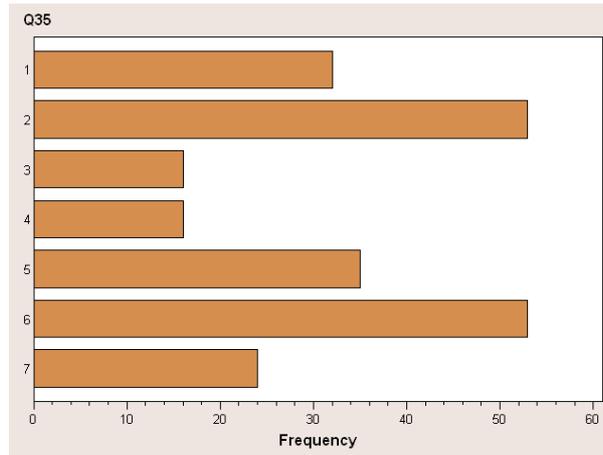
**Figure 5.30: Relationship is suffering due to Work**



53.92% of the participants disagreed in one form or another that their relationship with their partners was suffering due to work pressures. From Figure 5.30, it is apparent that

there were women professionals that agreed with the statement in some form or another – 32.17%.

**Figure 5.31: Lack of Input due to Fatigue**



When looking only at point two (disagree at 23.14%) and point six (agree at 23.14%) in Figure 5.31, it appears as if the sample is divided in the sense that some women professionals felt that their families were not losing out on their input and support due to fatigue, while an equal number felt that it had a negative influence on their families. However, a total of 44.10% disagreed with the statement in some form or another, while 48.9% agreed with the statement.

**Figure 5.32: Finding it Difficult to conduct other Activities**

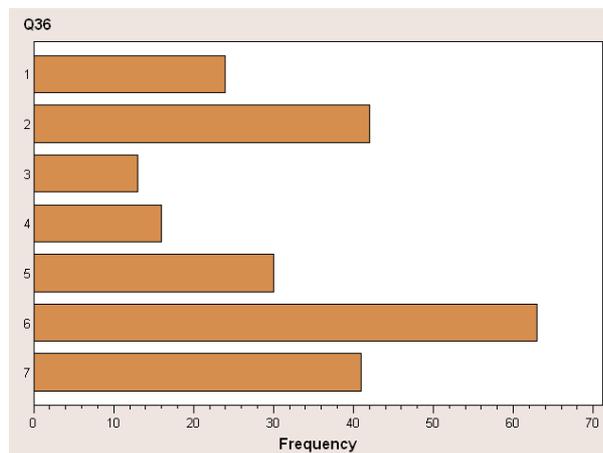
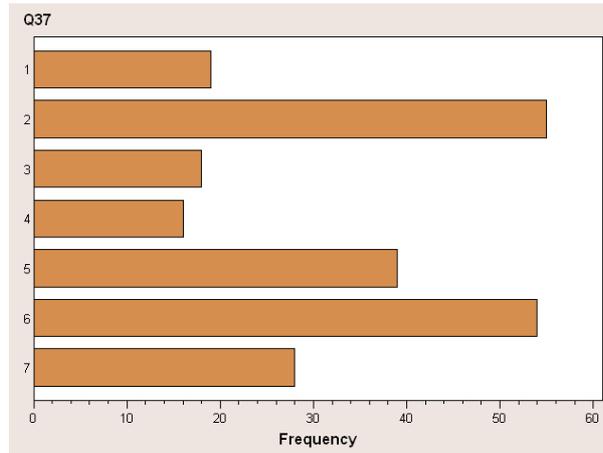


Figure 5.32 indicates that the 58.51% of the participants in general found it difficult to have time for hobbies and other leisure activities. However, 34.50% disagreed with the statement in some form or another.

**Figure 5.33: Lack of Control over Working Hours**



Women professionals both agreed and disagreed with the statement that they did not have control over their working hours as can be seen in Figure 5.33. 40.18% of the participants disagreed with the statement and felt that they were in control of their stress levels and working hours, further 52.84%, however, felt that they had little or no control over their stress levels and working hours.

**Figure 5.34: Feelings of Guilt**

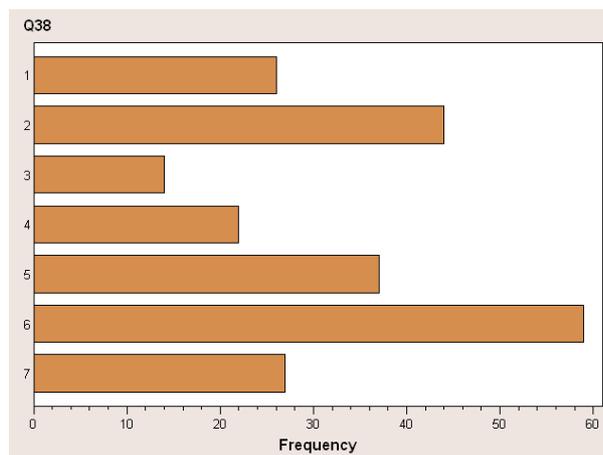


Figure 5.34 indicates a greater spread of results obtained across the various attitudes in connection with feelings of guilt. 53.71% of the participants felt guilty when they spent time with their partners/family/friends when they had work to complete. 36.67% however, did not experience any feelings of guilt.

#### 5.2.6 Summary of the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005)

The results obtained for the questions in the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) were far more spread out across the different attitudes than was the case with the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979).

In summary, the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) indicates that women professionals in South Africa:

- Work late hours due to job demands.
- Do not find time to relax or socialise with partner/friends during the week.
- Do not have to take work home most of the evenings.
- Usually work later or during weekends in order to complete paperwork without interruptions.
- Have difficulty in relaxing and forgetting about work related issues.
- Are concerned about the effects of work related stress on their health.
- Relationships with partners are not being affected by long working hours.
- Families are however missing out on their input due to the lack of contact time or the fact that women professionals are too tired when they get home.
- Are finding it difficult to find time for hobbies or family visits.

- Feel disempowered regarding their lack of control over their stress levels and working hours.
- Feel guilty if they spend time with their partner or family when there is work that needs to be completed.

In order to further explore the relevance of the results obtained for the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) linked to the relevant research question, the results will be discussed in conjunction with literature findings in greater detail in the next chapter.

The next section of this chapter will look at the results obtained for the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) in conjunction with the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) in order to either accept or reject the null hypothesis.

#### 5.2.7 Hypothesis Analysis

In order to support the hypothesis test, a bivariate analysis were conducted, utilising the Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient,  $r$ . The aim is to either accept or reject the null hypothesis as posed in Chapter 3:

H0: There is no correlation between work life balance and organisational commitment

H1: There is a positive correlation between work life balance and organisational commitment.

Figure 5.35: Summary of the Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation Coefficients, N = 230 Probability >  r  under H0: Rho=0	
	Q13-27_avg_calc Organisational Commitment
Q28-38_check11 Work Life Balance	Pearson's Correlation Coefficient -0.12307 Prob >  r  under H0: Rho=0 0.0624 <i>Correlation coefficient is negative, but is not significant at 5% probability level Therefore, cannot reject H0; thus <b>not</b> correlated</i>
Q28-38_check08 Work Life Balance	Pearson's Correlation Coefficient -0.10088 Prob >  r  under H0: Rho=0 0.1271 <i>Correlation coefficient is negative, but is not significant at 5% (or 10%) probability level Therefore, cannot reject H0; thus <b>not</b> correlated</i>

In both cases – correlation of Organisational Commitment to Work Life Balance and Work Life Balance to Organisational commitment, the results as can be seen from Figure 5.35 are not statistically significant even though the correlation coefficient are negative. In order to illustrate a moderate correlation the  $r = -0.6$ , which in both cases it is not. There is therefore no correlation between the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) and the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005).

The significance of this result will be discussed in greater detail within the next Chapter.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The results for each section of the questionnaire were discussed in this chapter and a summary of all the results was presented in order to gain a better understanding of each of the measuring instruments that formed part of the questionnaire. In order to further understand the significance of the results obtained for both the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) as well as the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005), the results will be discussed, as well as whether or not the findings support the research questions and hypothesis in greater detail with in the next chapter. The findings will also be supported by literature from Chapters 1 and 2 in line with the three research questions and hypothesis posed in Chapter 3.

## **Chapter 6**

### **6 Discussion of Results**

#### ***6.1 Introduction***

In this chapter the significance of the results obtained in chapter 5 will be discussed in detail. To further substantiate the findings, information gained from the literature review in Chapters 1 and 2 will furthermore be utilised to support the three research questions and hypothesis as formulated in Chapter 3 on the basis of the actual research findings.

#### ***6.2 Research Question and Hypothesis Findings***

The findings for each individual research question and hypothesis will be discussed independently at first and the end result will be considered collectively in order to support the hypothesis in Chapter 3.

##### **6.2.1 Do women professionals in South Africa have a sense of work life balance?**

The results' summary in Chapter 5 for the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) will be used as the basis of this discussion. Each finding will furthermore be supported by literature from Chapters 1 and 2 in order to understand the relevance of the results obtained.

Even though the results' summary indicated that more women professionals were experiencing work life conflict, some women professionals, however, successfully balance work and home. Due to the fact that a greater portion of the sample experienced work life conflict, the discussion will therefore focus on work life conflict.



The first part of the discussion specifically focuses on the results obtained for the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) statements that relate to long working hours (75.67% agree), taking work home (41.74% agree) and working later or on weekends to complete paper work without interruption (51.31% agree). These findings are furthermore supported by the question in the demographics section related to the average time spent on work and work related activities during the week. 50.81% of the participants spent between 45-54 hours per week on work or work related activities. Extensive research into the field of work life conflict has indicated that employees who continuously work long hours have a greater degree of work life conflict, while managers, specifically women, have an even greater work life conflict. Quality of work, and not necessarily the quantity of work, is important in the spill over effect between work and home (Dex and Bond, 2005). The findings furthermore support Ranson's (2007) "total responsibility theory", as work forms part of an extrinsic focus that results in practical outcomes. The main motivational drivers for work are objective, imposed and forced. Boundaries between work and home are relatively weak and spill over into the home or work environment triggered by stress can easily occur (Lewis, 2003).

The concern regarding work related stress as mentioned by Lewis (2003) is further supported by results obtained for the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) statements that there is not much time to relax and socialised during the week (60.54% agree), relaxing and forgetting about work are difficult to do (58.70% agree), there is also a general concern about the effects of work stress on health

(57.40% agree) and the feeling of disempowerment when it comes to taking control of stress levels and working hours (52.84% agree). Ranson's (2007) "total responsibility burden" furthermore supports the findings related to work stress. Recreation has an intrinsic focus that results in psychological well being. The motivational drivers between recreational activities are subjective, chosen and voluntary. The fact that "role scarcity" exists however supports the feelings of stress and disempowerment. The argument around "role scarcity" is directly linked to the amount of expendable energy each person has, and each role requires a certain amount of energy. Commitment to one role will utilise the energy resources available for another. Commitment is thus time and energy greedy. Each role would like to extract the maximum value out of the person, and the "role" can now be redefined as a greedy institution" regardless of the fact that it might be work or home (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002; Burchielli *et al's* , 2008).

The theory regarding "role scarcity" is further supported by findings from the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005), that specifically relate to the lack of input in the family due to being at work or too tired when at home (48.9% agree) and, the lack of time for hobbies and leisure activities and maintaining relationships with friends and family (58.51% agreed). A positive result was however, obtained regarding the effect of long working hours on the relationship with a partner, in this case 53.92% of the women professionals that participated disagreed with the statement.

The results obtained for the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) in this case, is greatly supported by Ranson's (2007) findings that conclude that the "total responsibility burden"; the total constraint between work and life, forms a part

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of the women professionals' lives that participated in the questionnaire. This aspect should also be taken into consideration when studying polarisation commitment as it takes aspects of both work and home into consideration.

The results obtained from the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) for women professionals are further supported by local and international literature. Grobler *et al's* (2006) made specific predictions regarding work life conflict that is supported by work life balance and commitment literature in the sense that the work life balance concept is never far from the public eye, specifically now with the focus on what damage extended working hours are doing to families (White, Hill, McGovern, Mills and Smeaton, 2003). "Technology has made work more portable and ubiquitous", (Eaton 2003, p.146), thus resulting in the blurring of the boundaries between work and home. High commitment and high performance management practices will have an ever increasing negative effect on work life balance (in this case increase work life conflict), to such an extent that these practices are designed to extract greater discretionary effort in pursuit of the organisational goals (White *et al's*, 2003).

The results of the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) specifically showed that women professionals feel guilty when they have work that requires completion and they spend time with their family and friends (53.71% agree). This finding is furthermore supported by Lewis' (2003) statement regarding the relatively weak boundaries between work and home. If women professionals are feeling guilty when they are spending time with their partners/friends/family, it can be deduced that

the boundaries are so blurred between work and home that work has become priority number one in their lives.

The findings discussed in this section under the heading of work life balance have a direct link to the next section of the chapter in which the level of work permeation into the home will be discussed. The link between the two research questions is grounded in the theory of “role scarcity” as well as boundary theory.

#### 6.2.2 Does work permeate more easily into the family role than vice versa?

In studying the results obtained for the Industrial Society’s Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) supported by the results of specifically the statements that there is not much time to relax and socialise during the week (60.54% agree), relaxing and forgetting about work is difficult (58.70% agree), there is a general concern about the effects of work stress on health (57.40% agree), the feeling of disempowerment when it comes to taking control of stress levels and working hours (52.84% agree), the feeling that of a lack of input into the family due to being at work or too tired when at home (48.9% agree) as well as the lack of time for hobbies and leisure activities and maintaining relationships with friends and family (58.51% agreed). It has become apparent that work permeates more readily into the family role than vice versa. Some literature further supports the fact that women professionals can in actual fact benefit more from work life balance, because they can afford luxuries such as child care, house keepers and additional support structures. In harsh contrast to these findings, more and more literature are emerging that states that managers and professional women actually face more work life conflict due to the fact that management positions actually suite men

better than women (Burchielli *et al's*, 2008). The pure nature of the “greedy institution” is such that due to excessive work place demands, even employees with greater autonomy and access to resources will feel constrained (Burchielli *et al's*, 2008).

The findings are further supported by the literature findings regarding “role scarcity” “blurring of boundaries” as discussed in the previous section. The sense of guilt expressed by the women professionals due to this “blurring of the boundaries” as well as external stressors places an even greater pressure on them. People are now working harder and longer than ever before due to globalisation, the 24 hour market place and the compression of time and space by information and communication technology. The boundary between paid work and personal lives is becoming more blurred (Lewis, 2003). Work and family commitments are time greedy in nature and are fundamentally difficult to reconcile. It is therefore inevitable that women will experience work-family conflict as they attempt to master both (Scheibl, 1999; Franzway, 2000).

The next section of the chapter will specifically focus on the results obtained for the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) and the link between the results obtained and the research question posed in Chapter 3.

6.2.3 Do women professionals in South Africa have a sense of organisational commitment?

The results obtained for the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) indicate whether or not women professionals are committed to their organisation or to their profession (cosmopolitan commitment). The factors that influence the level of

commitment are very important to take note of when evaluating the results obtained (Cappelli, 2000a; Birt *et al's*, 2004; Fiorito *et al's*, 2007).

Employee commitment is influenced by both extrinsic e.g. performance based pay and stock options, as well as intrinsic factors e.g. meaningful and intellectually stimulating work, great management and development opportunities. Intrinsic factors contribute the most to organisational commitment, as they lead to a stronger support of the organisational goals and values by the individual as well as the willingness to exert extra effort for the organisation for which no compensation is required. The level of employee commitment to the organisation will further predict performance, absenteeism as well as work force stability (lower levels of commitment are positively associated with high employee turnover) (Cappelli, 2000a; Birt *et al's*, 2004; Fiorito *et al's*, 2007).

Organisational commitment is therefore influenced by three variables; commitment of the individual to her professional skills and values, loyalty to the particular organisation and a specific reference group orientation (Chang and Choi, 2007; Fiorito *et al's*, 2007). Results obtained from the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) further support the literature findings regarding the loyalty and reference group orientation as women professionals indicated that they informed friends and family of the great organisation that they worked for (86.33% agree), they are proud to tell others about the organisation that they worked for (91.45% agree), and they were furthermore extremely glad that they decided to work for this particular organisation instead of another (84.26% agree).

Commitment in an organisational sense is then the “totality of internalised normative pressures to act in a way that meets organisational goals and interests” (Mckenzie, Truc and Winkelen 2001, p. 116). The results obtained further supports Mckenzie, Truc and Winkelen (2001) statement; as women professionals indicate that their organisations inspire them to do their very best in the way of job performance (71.24% agree) and they also feel that they really care about the fate of the organisation (90.47% agree)

Organisational commitment can therefore be summarised into three related factors. The employee:

- Exhibits a strong belief in the organisations goals and values.
- Is more than willing to make an extra effort on behalf of the organisation (extra role effort).
- Exhibits a very strong desire to retain membership of the organisation (Fiorito, *et al's*, 2007).

The following results obtained for the statements in the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) support the literature findings by Fiorito, *et al's*, (2007) and relate to the strong belief in the organisational goals and values (77.78% agree), willingness of the individual to exert extra effort for the organisation (87.6% agree), and the fact that the women professionals exhibit a strong feeling of loyalty towards their organisations with 67.09% agreeing with the statements in some form or another.

The following three statements form the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) and are phrased in such a way that they specifically aim at determining whether or not the participants are committed to the organisation or to their individual profession. First; the participant would accept almost any job in order to continue to work for the particular organisation, the second statement can be considered being the exact opposite of the first statement as this specifically focuses on performing the same type of job, regardless of the organisation. The last statement specifically looks at small changes within the organisational environment that would lead to the resignation of the participant.

Cosmopolitan or professional commitment is based on a psychological attachment to the individuals' profession rather than the organisation in which that individual is employed. Cosmopolitan commitment is associated with job involvement, improved attention and customer centricity as well as technical performance. Cosmopolitan commitment is therefore rooted in an exchange between the individual and the organisation which is linked directly to perceived organisational support (Haar and Spell, 2004; Van Kippenberg and Sleebos, 2006; Chang and Choi, 2007). Being committed to ones career in the sense of cosmopolitan commitment is not necessarily a negative aspect as can be seen from the definition above.

In light of the literature findings and the results obtained in Chapter 5 it is clear that women professionals would not accept any job within the organisation to ensure that they continue to work for that particular organisation (45.3%). The results obtained for the second statement indicated that there is a much stronger commitment to the specific

job type (45.93%), thus indicating a level of cosmopolitan commitment in both statements. The last statement indicated that 57.95% of the women professionals will not leave their leave their organisation regardless of changes within the organisational environment, indicating a level of organisational commitment.

The fact that the results exhibit some tendencies towards cosmopolitan commitment, specifically in the last section, should be considered in light of the definition of organisational commitment as provided by Chang and Choi (2007) and Fiorito *et al's* (2007) that organisational commitment is therefore influenced by three variables; commitment of the individual to her professional skills and values, loyalty to the particular organisation and a specific reference group orientation. It can therefore be formulated that the cosmopolitan commitment traits exhibited by the results obtained for the two statements in the previous section in actual fact refers to the women professionals' commitment to the professional skills of the individual, and not in actual fact to her profession.

The next section of the chapter will specifically look at the proposed hypothesis that there is a link between organisational commitment and work life balance in order to support the proposed fifth level of commitment; polarised commitment.

#### 6.2.4 Hypothesis 1

H0: There is no correlation between work life balance and organisational commitment

H1: There is a positive correlation between work life balance and organisational commitment

As discussed in Chapter 5, it appears as if there is no correlation between the work life balance (Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005)) and organisational commitment (Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979)). The results are therefore inconclusive; literature however has indicated that there has to be some sort of a correlation between the two. The commitment to multiple roles in the case of the proposed polarised commitment will include roles both outside and inside the current women professionals' occupation, including, but not limited to, the commitment to parent and spouse roles (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002). Ruderman *et al's* (2002) findings are further supported by the "role enhancement theory", that suggests that individuals can benefit from multiple role commitments and the resource transfer between these multiple roles (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002; Burchielli *et al's*, 2008). Proposed further study into the polarised commitment level will be discussed in greater detail within the next chapter.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

In this chapter the results obtained for both the Industrial Society's Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) and the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al's*, 1979) were discussed in conjunction with the literature findings from Chapter 1 and 2. The results thus far indicate that a greater portion of women professionals in South Africa experience work life conflict and are committed to their organisations. The proposed correlation between organisational commitment and work life balance was inconclusive. The conclusion to the research conducted will be discussed in the next chapter, as well as proposals for future research projects.

## **Chapter 7**

### **7. Conclusion**

#### ***7.1 Introduction***

In this last chapter various aspects of work life balance and commitment will be explored in conjunction with the literature in Chapter 1 and 2 as well as the discussions regarding the results in Chapter 6. The first part of the chapter will conclude the investigation into organisational commitment, work life balance and the proposed polarised commitment. The second part of the chapter will specifically focus on the impact of organisational commitment and work life balance on organisations and will conclude with recommendations for HR practitioners. The last part of the chapter will specifically look at future research subjects in order to further expand on the findings of the research project.

#### ***7.2 Implications for South African Business***

##### **7.2.1 Organisational Commitment versus Cosmopolitan Commitment**

In Chapter 1 the question was posed as to whether or not women professionals in general are committed to either their professions or to their organisations. The research question posed in Chapter 3 further narrowed the scope of the research to specifically investigate the level of organisational commitment exhibited by women professionals in South Africa. The analysis in Chapter 6 indicates that women professionals in South Africa are fairly committed to their organisations, thus supporting the research question. The ideal commitment in any organisation is organisational commitment, as these individuals will improve themselves for the greater good of the organisation.

Fiorito, *et al's*, (2007) summary of organisational commitment encompasses the benefits of having employees that are fully committed to the organisation as they:

- Exhibit a strong belief in the organisations goals and values.
- Are more than willing to make an extra effort on behalf of the organisation (extra role effort).
- Exhibit a very strong desire to retain membership of the organisation (Fiorito, *et al's*, 2007).

### 7.2.2 Work Life Balance

The aim of work life balance is therefore to improve the fit between professional and private lives (White *et al's*, 2003). However, the analysis in Chapter 6 indicates that women professionals in South Africa are in actual fact experiencing work life conflict, and that the boundary between work and home is becoming more blurred. In Chapter 1 the question was raised as to why women continue to work when they are faced with these immense challenges? At a very basic level the answer seems to be that women work in order to support the material needs of the household. At a higher level it appears that women are committed to work for reasons other than material enrichment (Scheibl, 1999). Some see work as a challenge, absorbing and increasingly interesting with the potential of improving positive well being, but for others, as the findings in Chapter 6 proved, time spent at work is ever increasingly encroaching on personal and leisure time (Lewis, 2003).

### 7.2.3 Polarised Commitment Theory

In Chapter 1 it was proposed that there is in actual fact an overarching level of commitment as first proposed by Procter and Padfield (1999). “Polarisation of work orientation between one of the two categories is deceptively inadequate in that it excludes the possibility that some combination of both (work and home) is empirically, theoretically and indeed practically significant” (Procter and Padfield 1999, p. 160).

Even though the correlation between the Industrial Society’s Work Life Check List (Dex and Bond, 2005) and the Organisational Commitment Questionnaire (Mowday *et al*’s, 1979) was inconclusive, it cannot definitely be concluded that the proposed polarised commitment between work and home does not exist.

Even though Kabanoff’s spill over theory in conjunction with the polarised commitment as presented in Chapter 1 could not be conclusively proved. Different aspects of Kabanoff’s theory may further assist in supporting the link between work and home, without excluding the possibility of polarised commitment. Other aspects of Kabanoff’s theory indicate the following:

- Compensation: a high satisfaction in one domain may compensate for lower satisfaction in another.
- Segmentation: the levels of satisfaction in the two domains are independent of each other (Chang and Choi, 2007).

These two independent theories can be utilised to support the findings of; organisational commitment, in harsh contrast with the lack of work life balance as exhibited by the

women professionals that participated in the research. This again can be linked to the question raised in Chapter 1 as to why women continue to work when they are faced with these immense challenges. Ruderman *et al's* (2002) state that women's careers and work lives are not divorced from one another, and cannot be fully understood if the "whole" is not examined. This forms the basis of the investigation into the polarised commitment theory. The "whole" in this case is, that even though women professionals in South Africa are experiencing work life conflict, they are still committed to their organisations. This in a sense is proof that polarised commitment does exist in some form or another.

#### 7.2.4 Organisational Commitment and Work Life Balance – A Business Imperative

Organisations should treat employees as clients! Even more so in today's ever challenging, environment that demands balancing of both work and life responsibilities. (De Cieri *et al's*, 2005). Organisations that actively seek to improve employee morale, commitment and job satisfaction as well as aiming at reducing sources of stress both at work and home through work life balance policies, will improve their ability to become the employer of choice as well as retain talent (Wallace, 1995; Eaton, 2003; Birt *et al's*, 2004; De Cieri *et al's*, 2005; Macky and Boxall, 2007). Talent retention is the key to organisational success. "Becoming the employer of choice" means, that their organisational practices, employment terms and conditions are generous enough to attract employees away from their competitors and keep their own employees from leaving the organisation (Cappelli, 2000b). It is however more relevant than ever to successfully manage the talent that we have within our organisations as also discussed

in Chapter 2, organisational commitment has a direct influence on the performance of that organisation.

- Organisations with a higher level of organisational commitment will outperform an organisation with lower commitment by 200%, by only focusing on intrinsic factors to retain their talent (Birt *et al's*, 2004).
- There is a strong positive correlation between job satisfaction and employee commitment that have a positive effect on the overall organisational performance.
- Committed employees are less counter productive and are prepared to exert positive extra role effort as well as better quality in role behaviour for their organisation (Macky and Boxall, 2007).

Various publications have supported the fact that women professionals are constantly being torn between their managerial and personal roles, leaving them chronically exhausted and frustrated (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002). The results obtained in Chapter 6 indicated that women professionals in South Africa are in fact experiencing work life conflict. The main drivers behind flexible HR strategies e.g. telecommuting and flexitime which aim to support work life balance are; a sense of intense competitiveness between organisations, a response to more flexible opening times, the desperate need of organisations to retain skilled and knowledge workers and the need for commitment (Greenhill and Wilson, 2005). Organisational commitment and work life balance should therefore not be considered as isolated issues, but should be placed together, not only an HR perspective, but also from an organisational perspective to ensure that the

organisation becomes the “employer of choice” and retains talented workers for the future.

#### 7.2.5 Recommendations for Organisations and HR Practitioners

In order to instil organisational commitment within employees, HR practitioners should focus on both intrinsic e.g. meaningful and intellectually stimulating work, great management and development opportunities and extrinsic e.g. performance based pay and stock options factors as discussed in Chapter 2. Intrinsic factors contribute most to organisational commitment, as they lead to a stronger support of the organisational goals and values by the individual as well as the willingness to exert extra effort for the organisation for which no compensation is required. The level of employee commitment to the organisation will further predict performance, absenteeism as well as work force stability (lower levels of commitment are positively associated with high employee turnover) (Cappelli, 2000a; Birt *et al's*, 2004; Fiorito *et al's* , 2007).

The following recommendations will specifically focus on literature findings in Chapter 2 in light of the results obtained from Chapter 6 that indicate that women professionals in South Africa in actual fact have work life conflict and not work life balance.

Burchielli *et al's*, (2008) indicated that in ensuring some control, whether it is forced by the organisation or out of own free will, the woman professional will feel that the organisation has her best interest at heart by either forcing her to take time off for the family/home or giving her the autonomy to make her own decisions. Employees who

perceive that the organisation provides them with greater support in balancing work and home, will exhibit higher levels of organisational commitment. The following are possible HR Programmes which can be utilised in order to support Burchielli *et al's*, (2008) recommendations:

- All female employees are forced to leave work at 16:00 once a week.
- Make the practice of having a “duvet day” every six weeks compulsory. The concept of having a “duvet day” is a day that is taken off for which no explanation is required, it is basically done just because “you feel like it” ([www.duvetday.org](http://www.duvetday.org)).
- Provide all female staff with spa vouchers every six weeks to ensure that they take time out for themselves.

White *et al's*, 2003 research indicates that flexible working hours and telecommuting, as work life balance policies, are in actual fact infringing more on work life balance. Organisations should enforce stricter control as to when they allow their employees to work (forcing them to work life balance). HR Programmes can be utilised in order to support White *et al's*, (2008) recommendations and findings as organisations:

- Should restrict remote access to mainframes over weekends (have to notify IT if you would like to work over a weekend).
- And managers should also avoid sending e-mails late at night in order to set an example for their subordinates.

The most difficult aspect of recommendations regarding time off from work, flexible working hours and telecommuting, is that organisational culture focuses on the positive

rewards of working long hours as it is perceived to depict high organisational commitment (Drew and Murtagh, 2004). Organisations will therefore only be able to ensure successful work life balance practices through a complete cultural change programme.

### **7.3 Recommendations for Future Research**

The following points can be considered as future research topics in order to further expand the knowledge base in the field of organisational commitment and work life balance:

- Benefits of “role enhancement theory” (Ruderman *et al's*, 2002) on organisational commitment.
- Kabanoff’s spill over theory as closer investigation into work life balance.
- The impact of technology and boundary theory – ease of transition or a necessary evil.
- The influence of individual “choice” on work life balance.

### **7.4 Conclusion**

The purpose of the research was to investigate the possibility that women are committed to their professional lives (work) and their family/social lives (home), and that this commitment to both work and home results in the proposed fifth level of commitment; polarised commitment. Even though the proposed fifth level of commitment; polarised commitment, could not be conclusively proven, it can successfully be concluded that women professionals in South Africa are committed to

their organisations; however, they definitely lack a sense of work life balance. The research thus supports the statement that the majority of the women professionals interviewed wanted both; they are equally committed to work and their families. “There was a sense amongst these women that it was not their muddled brains which led them to ‘want their cake and eat it’, but social expectations for women to be both worker and mother” (Procter and Padfield 1999, p. 156). As a result of this strong sense of commitment to organisations and the work life conflict experienced by women professionals in South Africa, the question arose whether we are not in actual fact becoming “grateful slaves” to our homes and organisations?

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## 9. Appendices



### 9.1 Annexure 1

Demographics Questionnaire							
<b>Question 1</b> I hereby give consent to partake in this ANONYMOUS academic research survey, and that the data gathered may be utilised both nationally/internationally and may be published in an academic journal. Please answer "Yes" if you agree.							
		Yes		No			
<b>Question 2</b> Gender							
		Female		Male			
<b>Question 3</b> Date of birth							
		Year only e.g. 1976					
<b>Question 4</b> Ethnic Group							
		Black	Coloured	Asian	White	Other	
<b>Question 5</b> Marital Status							
		Single	Married	Life Partner	Divorced	Widow/Widower	
<b>Question 6</b> Children							
		Yes		No			
<b>Question 7</b> Education							
Matric	Certificate Course	National Diploma	National Higher Diploma	Degree/ B.Tech	Hons.	Masters	PhD



**Question 8**

Employment

Unemployed	Entrepreneur	Public Sector	Private Sector
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**Question 9**

Current position within your organisation

Owner	Employee	Middle Management/ Supervisor	Senior Management/ Divisional Head	Board of Directors
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**Question 10**

How long have you been in the current position?

< 1 y	1-5 y	> 5y
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**Question 11**

I am currently working in

South Africa	Other
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**Question 12**

How much time do you on average spend on work and work related activities per week

e.g. 54 hours per week
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**Organisational Commitment Questionnaire ®**

**Question 13**

I am willing to put in a great deal of effort for my organisation, beyond what is normally in order to help my organisation succeed

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree



**Question 14**

When I talk to my friends and family it tell them what a great organisation it is to work for

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 15\***

I feel little loyalty to the organisation

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 16**

I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep on working for this organisation

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 17**

I find that my values and that of the organisation are very similar

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 18**

I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree



**Question 19\***

I could just as well be working for a different organisation as long as the type of work is similar

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 20**

The organisation really inspires the very best in me in the way of job performance

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 21\***

It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this organisation

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 22**

I am extremely glad that I chose this organisation to work for over others I was considering at the time I joined

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 23**

I am proud to tell others that I am part of this organisation

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree



**Question 24\***

There is not much to be gained personally by sticking with this organisation indefinitely

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 25**

I really care about the fate of this organisation

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 26**

For me, this is the best possible organisation to work for

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 27\***

Deciding to work for this organisation was a definite mistake on my part

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**The Industrial Society's Work-Life Check List ®**

**Question 28**

At the moment, because the job demands it, I usually work long hours

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 29**

There isn't much time to socialised/relax with my partner/family in the week

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree



**Question 30**

I have to take work home most evenings

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 31**

I often work late or at weekends to deal with paperwork without interruptions

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 32**

Relaxing and forgetting about work issues is hard to do

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 33**

I worry about the effect of work stress on my health

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 34**

My relationship with my partner is suffering because of the pressure or long hours of my work

7	6	5	4	3	2	1
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree



**Question 35**

My family are missing out on my input, either because I don't see enough of them/am too tired

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 36**

Finding time for hobbies, leisure activities, or to maintain friendships and extended family relationships is difficult

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 37**

I would like to reduce my stress levels and working hours, but feel that I have no control over my current situation

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Question 38\*\***

I feel guilty when I have work to complete and I spend time with my partner/family/friends.

<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
strongly agree	agree	slightly agree	neutral	slightly disagree	disagree	strongly disagree

**Questions marked \* - Reversed scored items**

**Questions marked \*\* - Additional question added that does not form part of the Industrial Society's Work-Life Check List**

**Organisational Commitment Questionnaire ® (Mowday, Steer and Porter, 1979).**

**The Industrial Society's Work-Life Check List ® (Dex and Bond, 2005).**



## **9.2 Annexure 2**

### 9.2.1 Results

Figure 9. 2.1: Organisational Commitment Questionnaire Summary

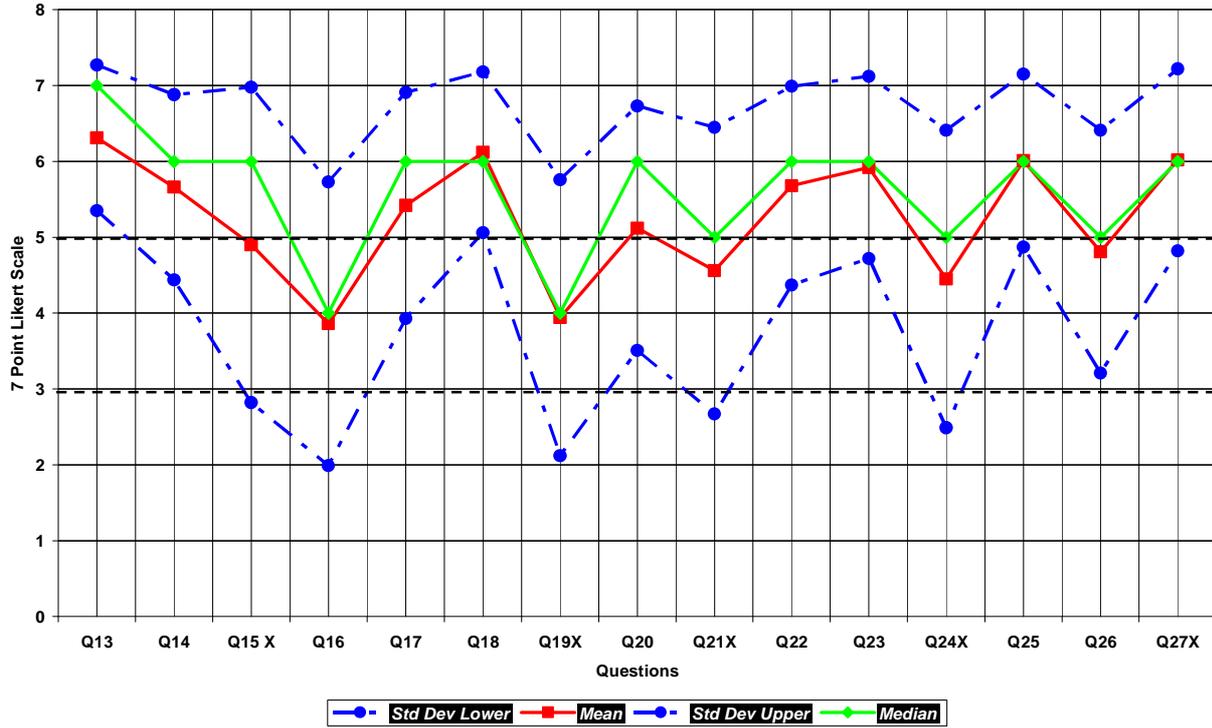
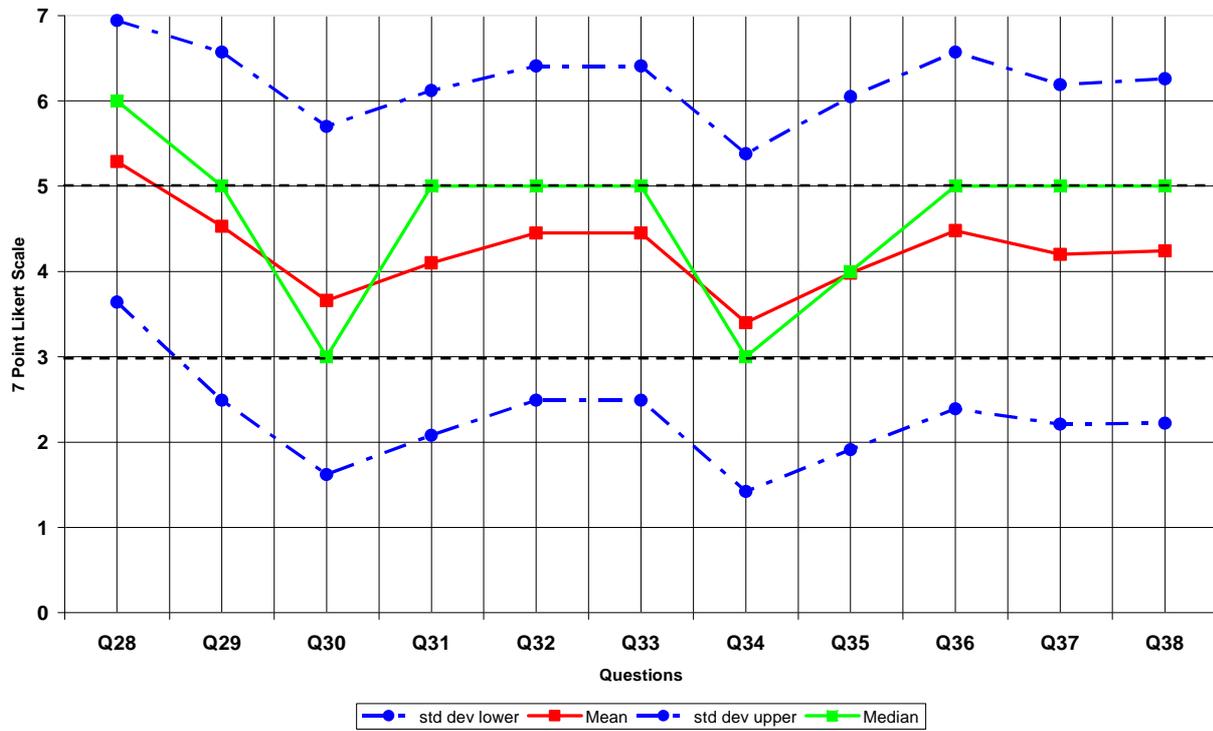




Figure 9.2.2: Work Life Check List Summary



**Table 9.1 Results Summary**

Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum	N	N Miss	Median	Lower 95% CL for Mean	Upper 95% CL for Mean
Age_calc	35.07	9.27	20.00	64.00	252	0	33.50	33.92	36.22
Date of birth	1972.93	9.27	1944.00	1988.00	252	0	1974.50	1971.78	1974.08
EthnicGroup			1.00	6.00	252	0	5.00		
MaritalStat			1.00	5.00	252	0	5.00		
Children	0.49	0.50	0.00	1.00	252	0	0.00	0.43	0.55
Education			1.00	8.00	240	12	5.00		
Employment			1.00	4.00	240	12	3.00		
Position			1.00	7.00	240	12	2.00		
Time			1.00	3.00	240	12	2.00		
Avg_Hrs_work	49.19	7.90	18.00	72.00	240	12	50.00	48.18	50.19
Q13	6.31	0.96	2.00	7.00	234	18	7.00	6.19	6.44
Q14	5.66	1.22	1.00	7.00	234	18	6.00	5.50	5.82
Q15_X	4.90	2.08	1.00	7.00	234	18	6.00	4.63	5.17
Q16	3.86	1.87	1.00	7.00	234	18	4.00	3.62	4.10
Q17	5.42	1.49	1.00	7.00	234	18	6.00	5.23	5.61
Q18	6.12	1.06	1.00	7.00	234	18	6.00	5.99	6.26
Q19_X	3.94	1.82	1.00	7.00	233	19	4.00	3.71	4.17
Q20	5.12	1.61	1.00	7.00	233	19	6.00	4.92	5.33
Q21_X	4.56	1.89	1.00	7.00	233	19	5.00	4.32	4.81
Q22	5.68	1.31	1.00	7.00	233	19	6.00	5.51	5.85
Q23	5.92	1.20	1.00	7.00	233	19	6.00	5.76	6.07
Q24_X	4.45	1.96	1.00	7.00	233	19	5.00	4.20	4.70
Q25	6.01	1.14	1.00	7.00	231	21	6.00	5.87	6.16
Q26	4.81	1.60	1.00	7.00	231	21	5.00	4.60	5.02



Variable	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum	N	N Miss	Median	Lower 95% CL for Mean	Upper 95% CL for Mean
Q27_X	6.02	1.20	1.00	7.00	231	21	6.00	5.87	6.18
Q13-27_avg	5.25	0.95	1.47	7.00	234	18	5.40	5.13	5.38
Q28	5.29	1.65	2.00	7.00	222	30	6.00	5.07	5.51
Q29	4.53	2.04	1.00	7.00	230	22	5.00	4.26	4.79
Q30	3.66	2.04	1.00	7.00	230	22	3.00	3.39	3.92
Q31	4.10	2.02	1.00	7.00	230	22	5.00	3.84	4.37
Q32	4.45	1.96	1.00	7.00	230	22	5.00	4.19	4.70
Q33	4.54	1.96	1.00	7.00	230	22	5.00	4.28	4.79
Q34	3.40	1.98	1.00	7.00	230	22	3.00	3.15	3.66
Q35	3.98	2.07	1.00	7.00	229	23	4.00	3.71	4.25
Q36	4.48	2.09	1.00	7.00	229	23	5.00	4.21	4.75
Q37	4.20	1.99	1.00	7.00	229	23	5.00	3.94	4.46
Q38	4.24	2.02	1.00	7.00	229	23	5.00	3.98	4.51
Q28-38_check11	4.25	1.54	1.00	7.00	230	22	4.23	4.05	4.45
Q28-38_check08	4.36	1.51	1.00	7.00	230	22	4.38	4.16	4.55