CARING FOR THE (INFORMAL) CAREGIVER IN THE WORKPLACE

by

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Dedicated to my friend, Engela.

Thank you.

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ABSTRACT

The nature of jobs is changing as the global economy force organizations to become competitive and more of a virtual organisation of which the focus is more on team work. It is natural to look after the sick, elderly, disabled and children though those who care for these people tend to be forgotten. This study is an investigation of one of these informal caregivers. The roads on this journey (study) with the various cross-roads, intersections, paths and tracks were explored by means of multiple qualitative approaches. The respondent received an active role to voice her story as transcribed in her diaries. She deconstructed it accordingly of which the complexities thereof was holistically processed by means of Gabek (GAnzheitliche BEwältigung von Komplexität – a holistic processing of complexity). The uniqueness of this story can not necessarily be generalised though it can be used to prospectively identify the needs of the respondent. This can lead to adverse research outcomes associated with caregiving and target them for a prevention-focused intervention for others. This will help employers and employees in the art of balancing family responsibilities and workplace outputs.

OPSOMMING

Die aard van werk verander voortdurend namate die wêreldwye ekonomie organisasies dwing om al meer kompeterend mee te ding en 'n spanbenadering te volg. Om siekes, oues van dae, kinders en gestremdes te versorg, is 'n normale verantwoordelikheid in die samelewing, maar die versorgers self word afgeskeep. Hierdie studie fokus op die verhaal en belewenis van sodanige versorger. Die bane van die ondersoekreis met hulle verskeie kruispaaie, kruisings en spore is via veelvuldige kwalitatiewe weë ondersoek. Die respondent in die ondersoek het 'n aktiewe rol ingeneem om sodoende haar verhaal te verwoord deur middel van die dekonstruksie van haar dagboek. Die verweefde dinamiek hiervan is holisties prosesseer via die GABEK metodiek (GAnzheitliche BEwältigung von Komplexität – 'n holistiese prossesering van kompleksiteit). Weens die uniekheid en subjektiwiteit van die verhaal, kan die spesifieke uitkomste hiervan nie noodwendig veralgemeen word nie, maar kan die behoeftes van die spesifieke informele versorger uitgewys word. Dit kan die weg baan vir wyer navorsing en moontlik lei tot sinvolle intervensie aan ander informele versorgers. Dit sal werkgewers en werknemers help in die fyn kuns om gesinsverantwoordelikhede en werksplek-uitsette sinvol te kan balanseer.

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CHAPTER 1 – GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

John Nash made a contribution to the mathematic/economic environment by means of the development of the *"game theory"*, though he was diagnosed with schizophrenia (Schotter, 2001, p. 240). Kim (2005, pp. 397-404) referred to the article, *"John Nash: the Sufferings of Those Who Loved Him"*, and found that it is natural to look after the sick and those with disabilities, but people tend to forget to take care of the caregivers of those. Ramirez, Addington-Hall and Richards (1998, p. 209) estimated that the prevalence of anxiety and depression among informal caregivers are high. Providing care while trying to function adequately in other facets of life, for example to go to work, care for children, household demands, etc. is exhausting (Nemecek, 2004, p. 1). Greenhaus, Callanan and Godshalk (2000, p. 304) revealed that 22 percent of managers and professionals in their sample were expected to have elder care responsibilities in the upcoming 2-year period. Accordingly work-family conflict might arise due to the pressures in both environments (work and family).

Since the 1960s and 1970s, the domain of work and family emerged as a distinct field of research and furthermore, the 1990s also witnessed an increase in the participation of females in the labour force (McLellan & Uys, 2009). Research and literature within the South African context seems to be limited (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003). Therefore, this study is motivated by the lack of knowledge and understanding about caregiver's subjective experience in balancing their work and home lives within a South African context. It is significant to develop an in-depth understanding of the personal experience of an informal caregiver's way of balancing life between work and home (on an individual, community and organizational level).   The orientation of this research was based on the ways of functioning and processes that arose among therapists who, inspired by the pioneering efforts of Michael White and David Epston, have organized their thoughs by two metaphors: narrative and social construction (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Morgan (2000, p. 5) claims that Narrative Therapy is sometimes characterized as involving the *"re-authoring"* or *"re-storing"* of conversations.

Zelger (2002, p.11) states the importance of integrating each person within an organization's story into a holistic picture of the whole system, as they have their own respective knowledge and experiences. The word *"story"* has different associations and understandings for different people; though for narrative therapists, stories consist of (Morgan, 2000, p. 5):

- Events;
- Linked in sequence;
- Across time;
- According to a plot.

1.2   Research Problem

The nature of jobs is changing as the global economy continues to evolve towards a service-based economy (Grzywacz et al., 2007). Greenhaus (n.d.) generally recognized it as extensive pressures that produce high levels of work-family conflict for many employees; arising from the work environment and from the family environment.

The demographics of work in general change due to business globalization, aging population, rising healthcare costs and increasing single parents, working couples, women and minorities (Grobler, Wärnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield, 2006). Therefore it is assumed that balancing the conflicting demands between home and work has become the greatest challenge of the typical worker because of the additional care responsibilities towards the sick/elderly/disabled or child. Caring for an Alzheimer's patient can shorten the caretaker's life by four to eight years (Olsen, 2007). In addition over 40 percent of caregivers report high levels of emotional stress (Olsen, 2007, p. 1).

From a policy perspective, the relationship between caregiver's depression and missed time at work due to caregiving responsibilities is important, because missing work results in costs to (1) the individual caregivers (physical and financial), (2) the employers (the organization), and (3) the society (overall welfare) (Wilson, Van Houtven, Stearns & Clipp, 2007, p. 695).

It seems as if some employees experience the effect of work-family and family-work conflict as follow: *"I was tired of juggling. I was tired of feeling guilty. I was tired of holding the household reins in one hand. So I quit"* (Unknown in Williams, Manvell & Bornstein, 2006, p. 4).

The narrative approach offers a holistic approach towards the management of employees within the organization. Women increasingly leave large corporations for self-employment or new, less demanding careers when the juggling of work and family responsibilities becomes too difficult (Gordon, 1999). Therefore these employees do not function in isolation though are part of a bigger system within the organization and the society. Working families with children and/or elderly relatives face greater strain than ever before in meeting demands at the workplace and at home (Brown, Shulkin, Casey & Pitt-Castouphes, 2007). Organizations are trying to allow employees to balance their work and personal life more effectively by offering work-family benefits such as dependent care, flexible work schedules, etc. (Lussier, 1997). Any social organization is inseparable from the people who work and live in it; therefore it seems especially important to take their knowledge, estimations and opinions into account (Zelger, 2002).

Workplace discrimination against mothers and others based on family caregiving responsibilities is a rapidly growing problem (Bornstein & Weber, 2008). Women experience more difficulty than men in realizing their dreams, the biggest being to adjust to their husband's aspirations, and to split their time, and their dreams between marriage, having children and a career (Bergh & Theron, 2006). Van Tonder (2006, p. 172) claims that managers, through experience and training, have learned to suppress emotion in their own functioning and, to a large extent, to discard and often deny their emotion in the functioning of their subordinates.

Managers who understand the uniqueness of each employee can create collaborative relationships among people with different skills, abilities, experiences, aspirations, expectations and needs (Gordon, 1999, p. 58).

Zelger (2002) stated that the integration of the different points of view leads to effective organizational development in the sense of those affected, Working processes, cooperation and services can be improved while simultaneously facilitating the well-being of employees. Lussier (1997, p. 310) quotes Hammer, co-author of the book that coined the term "*re-engineering*":

> *The biggest lie told by most corporations, and they tell it proudly, is that people are our most important assets. Total fabrication. They treat people like raw materials. If you're serious about treating people as an asset, we're looking at a dramatic increase in investment in them.*

Women indicated that they feel pressurized by the gender role society expects them to fulfill and the conflicting responsibilities of work and home (Lewis-Enright, Crafford & Crouse, 2009). The focus of this research is to utilize a narrative approach with the respondent as a co-researcher to deconstruct her experiences. This was done in order to develop solutions to the research questions as discussed at the purpose of the study below. The research problem is that employers became aware of work-life conflicts due to employees complaining that the distinctive line between work and non-work time has become vague, creating personal conflicts and stress (Robbins & Judge, 2007, p. 629).

1.3 Overview of background knowledge related to the problem

The domain of '*work and family*' emerged as a distinct field of research in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (McLellan & Uys, 2009, p. 1), largely as a result of the growing number of women with dependent children entering the workforce (Robbins & Judge, 2007, p. 629). It began as a narrow research area focusing on working mothers of dual-career families that evolved into an extended domain of study involving researchers from several disciplines and theoretical perspectives (McLellan & Uys, 2009, p. 1). Since the Second World War women have played an increasingly important role in the economies of both developing and developed countries, and South Africa is no exception in this regard (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003, p. 77).

The construct informal caregivers as defined by Wilson et al. (2007, p. 685), being mostly spouses but they may also be parents, siblings, children, or friends of the patient, the ill, the elderly or the disabled. A distinction must be made between this construct and that of formal caregivers.

Formal caregivers are the multidimensional team that cares for the sick at hospital or an old age home (doctors, nurses and administrative personnel). It is only during periods of illness or crisis that the services of medical or social service specialists may be needed.

Volunteers or other unpaid helpers, such as family and friends, became critical in providing help of a more general and consistent nature. Increasingly, volunteers became the specialists themselves, both in their knowledge of HIV, as well as in the sort of care they provide (Miller, 2000). The amount of time spent and the responsibilities associated with caregiving of the ill or disabled result in high levels of burnout and depression for the informal caregiver (Pirraglia et al, 2004).

Every day families cope with the subtle- and not-so-subtle needs presented by loved ones either suffering of a terminal illness, disability, mental illness, elderly parent or child who has an unceasing physical ailment (Nemecek, 2004). These different conditions eventually require assistance in completing tasks of daily living (Wilson et al., 2007).

Ramirez et al. (1998, p. 208) found that most of the final year of life is spent at home, although 99% of the patients spend some time in hospital and about 55% of all deaths occur there. This study further found that three-quarters of care is the responsibility of the informal caregiver (family, friends or neighbours). Miller (2000) argued it as such that for lovers, friends, neighbours and family – care is an expression of love or community commitment (solidarity), and therefore is associated with a great emotional strain on the care-receiver (Ramirez, et al., 1998).

People suffering from schizophrenia and bipolar affective disorder (BAD) impose considerable burdens on caregivers (Chadda, Singh & Ganguly, 2007, p. 923) and 10% of the caregivers experience it as a punishment (Ramirez, et al., 1998, p. 208). On the converse much more of the informal caregivers find it rewarding to care for family members (Ramirez, et al., 1998, p. 208).

Burdens include multiple responsibilities such as financial costs, physical care of the patient, diminishing of personal freedom and strain on social and leisure activities that results in absence from work either by means of formal leave or absence without leave (AWOL) (Chadda, et al., 2007). Caring for a relative with bipolar disorder poses both objective burdens such as increased expenditure of time and money, and emotional burdens such as worry, tension and grief which impact on their quality of life which has been associated with compromised health and mental health among caregivers of patients with major affective and other chronic mental disorders (Perlick et al., 2008).

Not only does it compromise the personal freedom and leisure activities of informal caregivers, they also need to find ways to *"juggle"* their work and family responsibilities (Greenhaus, et al., 2000, p. 289). Robbins and Judge (2007, p. 631) report that people are worrying about personal problems at work and thinking about work problems at home. Hence informal caregivers need to cope with work and family responsibilities. Schreuder and Theron (1997, p. 148) argues that the greatest degree of conflict between work and family roles is created by the following work-related factors:

- Number of hours worked;
- Lack of control over the decision to work overtime;
- An inflexible work schedule (employees are not allowed to take time off to meet personal and family needs);
- Irregular starting time;
- Psychologically demanding work.

Managers do their work within a consciously coordinated social unit, composed of two or more people that functions on a relatively continuous basis to achieve a common goal or set of goals (Robbins & Judge, 2007). Lifestyle changes and other positive health behaviours ultimately occur at the individual level, thus the majority of worksite health promotional activities are directed at facilitating change at this level (May, Barnard, Koorzen & Visser, 2003).

The three determinants of behaviour in organizations are: individuals, groups and organizational (Robbins & Judge, 2007, p. 9). Individual performance is the foundation of organizational performance according to Ivancevich and Matteson (2002, p. 13).

Kossek, Colquitt and Noe (2001, p. 29) stated that (1) employees will make caregiving decisions during their careers of which it involves the selection of arrangements for the care of a dependent while the decision maker works. (2) It involves deciding on who provides the care as well as where the care occurs. Many caregivers reported positive and uplifting experiences, and hence the term "*caregiving*" is proposed instead of focusing on the *"burden"* of caregivers (Ohaeri, 2003, p. 457). Caring for the sick as an informal caregiver is extremely traumatic due to the conflict between work and family. To make it even more complex: Not only do you find couples being informal caregivers but single workers are defined as such.

Leonard (2010, p. 1) defined a single worker as an employed individual without a current spouse, who has never married or may have been married in the past and is now separated, divorced, or widowed. Leonard further indicated that single workers can be single parents; in fact, in the USA nearly 12 million single workers have children living at home according to the 2009 U.S. Census Bureau.

1.4 Overview of specific knowledge related to the research problem

The South African government has visibly demonstrated its intention to deal with the problem of inequity and discrimination in the workplace, bringing about a diverse workforce representative of South Africa's demographics by enhancing the career management of women in the workplace (Smith & Roodt, 2003).

The Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No. 55 of 1998), together with the Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 66 of 1995), the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act No. 75 of 1997), and the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998) are but a few of the regulations put in place to achieve these objectives. In South Africa, statistics show that although women make up 52% of the adult population, and have a 41% representation in the workforce, they hold a relatively small percentage of influential positions (Lewis-Enright, et al., 2009, p. 1).

McLellan and Uys (2009, p. 5) reported that for women fulfilling dual roles (work and home) effectively, the emphasis on the family as a priority remain. Therefore it is important to determine the employees' self-perceptions and coping mechanisms and to acquire an understanding of how they perceived the facilitating (or balancing) of their effective functioning of both roles. The study of Whitehead and Kotze (2003, p. 81) further concluded that the following external variables are supportive:

- Societal views and attitudes. The views and attitudes of society regarding the role of women are important in this discussion. In most instances respondents indicated having experienced conflicting views of society.

- Support structures. The existence and extent of support structures are instrumental in the experience of life-balance. Examples of support structures included housekeepers, au pairs, home managers, friends and/or parents and family, and after-care centers or crèches.

- Organizational values and support. The confirmation that the non-existence and non-awareness of a "balanced life-style organizational culture" and organizational support impacted negatively on respondents' experience of life-balance. Therefore an organizational culture which supports balanced life-styles and provides support and flexibility through human resource policies and practices will better enable employees to experience life-balance.

It is believed by Ramirez, et al. (1998, p. 209), that attention to the needs of caregivers will often benefit patients and caregivers will feel less useless and helpless. Accordingly the researcher believes that this knowledge will advance the understanding of the caregivers'' abilities on how to balance their personal and work roles.

Social constructionism focus on the social interaction in gaining knowledge and new meaning (Bergh & Theron, 2006). Furthermore it leads to consider the ways in which every person's social, interpersonal reality has been constructed through interaction with other human beings and human institutions (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Greenhaus, Callanan and Godshalk (2008, p. 295) stated that in many ways work can enhance family life, just as family experiences can advance work life. The dynamic nature of organizational life sometimes makes it extremely difficult for each person to carry out career plans with specific time constraints (Grobler, et al., 2006). Therefore it can be assumed that due to this nature of organizational life it sometimes can make it extremely difficult for each person to carry out family responsibilities within specific time constraints along with their career plans. Some informal caregivers believe that the work seems never-ending due to work responsibilities and after work they have to focus on shopping, domestic work, garden work, bills to pay, doctors appointments that needs to be kept, etc. (Joseph & Reele, 1995).

1.5 Purpose of the Research

The main purpose of this research is to explore the respondent's subjective experiences of caring for a mother with a disability and the balance between work and home (the caregiving process). The research was conducted by means of a qualitative approach through a holistic post-modern paradigm within the narrative epistemology in an ongoing hermeneutical (understanding) process (Van den Berg, Van den Berg, Nichol & De Klerk, 2005). In order to develop an understanding of the narrative of an informal caregiver's life experiences of the work/life balance that is like a *"thread that weaves the events together, forming a story and linking certain events together in a particular sequence across a time period, and finding a way of explaining or making sense of them* (Morgan, 2000, p. 5). The following research objectives were extracted from the main purpose of the study and the research questions:

- Defining work/family or family/work conflict.

- To find the balance between work/family and family/work demands and the impact thereof on the individual or the challenge to the individual.

- To find the challenges and pitfalls for organizations in the balance between work and family responsibilities.

- To find the benefits and opportunities to balance work/family and family/work responsibilities for organizations, groups and society.

- To identify a need for work/family or family/work enrichment/empowerment and to determine which intervention methods can be used by an organization to promote behavioral change in relation to employees' unique work- and family situations.

1.6   Conclusion

One of Whitehead and Kotze's (2003) most significant findings in terms of the organization and life-balance, was that all respondents in full-time positions in the private, public or Non Government sectors indicated a complete lack of support and understanding for working women from their organizations. In many dual-income families, social workers have found evidence of female overload, male narrow-mindedness, child neglect and relationships problems because many women who work also take on traditional roles, including the full burden of domestic responsibilities (Lewis-Enright, et al., 2009).   Although men increasingly express interest in a more balanced commitment to their work role, it is women who experience the highest levels of conflict between work and family (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003).   The same can be expected from "*single workers*" who has a child, parent, family member or friend to care for on their own. It was attempted by means of the respondent's narrative (story) to understand how the informal caregiver constructs her knowledge and the meaning she attached to the truth to *"juggle"* work life and family responsibilities (Greenhaus, et al., 2000, p. 289).

The respondent's past was reconstructed as accurately as possible according to her subjective experiences and the understanding of her own story/life (Mouton, 2006). It was to develop and build inductively new interpretations and theories of first-order descriptions of events, rather than approaching the social actor with deductively derived research hypotheses (Babbie & Mouton, 2006).

Narrative metaphors imply thinking about people's lives as stories on how they experience and understand the roles and responsibilities in life (work versus family and family versus work). Gansevoort (1998, pp. 71-90) defines the narrative methapor as such:

> *"Ik omschrijf narrativiteit verhaal-achtige structuur, waarin een verteller vanuit het eigen perspekt leven ervaart en verstaat en waarin hij of zij een rolverdeling aanbreng daarmee te positioneren in relaties in zich te verantwoorden voor het".*

CHAPTER 2 – LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   Introduction

The profile of Human Resources for 2010 according to Marx, Nel and du Plessis (2007a, p. 49) is aimed towards achieving a win-win ideal with a growth surge in coaching, mentoring, team building, leadership development, up skilling and personal development, providing a work/life balance. A concern for employees is the number of roles that they have to manage, namely informal caregiver, wife or husband, self, friend, etc.. The vast demands of one role sometimes make it difficult to comply with the demands of the other (Schreuder & Theron, 1997). Dilemmas about reconciling the demands placed on caregivers by their jobs and their personal lives are certainly not new according to Lewis (2009). Therefore chapter 2 is a literature review of previous research done on the dynamic balance between work and life.

2.2   Defining work/family or family/work conflict

Employees are increasingly recognizing that work is infringing on their personal lives, and they're not happy about it (Robbins & Judge, 2007, p. 25). Greenhaus and Beutell (1998, p. 77) defines work/family conflict as:

> "a type of inter-role conflict that occurs as result of incompatible role pressures from the work and family domains."

Burnout has been defined by Levy (2004, p. 541) as the:

> "…progressive loss of idealism, energy and purpose experienced by people working in the human services and has been associated with emotional exhaustion and depersonalization in clinical practice".

It seems as if some of the caregivers experience caregiving as *"If you're the primary caretaker and something happens to you, there's no one else to do it* (Olsen, 2007, p. 29)."

Nemecek (2004, p. 1) reported that informal caregivers often feel compelled to "*fix*" problems the loved one causes during acute episodes of mania or they feel guilty or angry at the person for his or illness due to the emotional, physical and economic burden that caring for them entails. Robbins and Judge (2007, p. 25) use the example of recent studies that suggest that employees want jobs that give them flexibility in their work schedules to better manage work/family conflicts. Conflict in respect of the work/family relationship begins when employees perceives that employers has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect something/someone that employees care about or vice versa. Therefore organizations that are responsive to employees' work-family concerns have revised the following cultural assumptions to achieve compatibility with the needs of the contemporary work force (Greenhaus, et al., 2000, p. 311):

- "Keep your personal problems at home."
- "Give them (employees) an inch and they will take a mile."
- "Put in long hours regardless of family responsibilities."
- "Travel when and where the organization dictates."
- "Relocate without concern for family needs."
- "Presence (at the workplace) equals performance."
- "Hours (worked) equal output."

A single worker is defined according to Leonard (2010) as an employed individual without a current spouse, who has never married or may have been married in the past and is now separated, divorced, or widowed. Leonard further defined that single workers can be single parents and reported that nearly 12 million single workers have children living at home in the USA according to the U.S. Census Bureau during 2009.

Gordon (1999) concluded that women more often than men choose to reduce their work commitment part time or conduct their careers in a serial fashion, spending time as a full-time wife and mother before re-entry into the workplace.

2.3 How does the balance between work/family and family/work impact or challenge the individual?

People are different in size, weight and other physical dimensions as well as in aptitudes, abilities, personality, interest and the way they are willing and able to commit their energies and resources to the attainment of the organization's goals (Marx, et al., 2007a, p. 51). Morgan (2000, p. 5) said as humans, we are interpreting beings, have daily experiences of events of which they seek to make meaning of and accordingly form a plot of a story. Therefore the metaphor stated by Robbins and Judge (2007, p. 32) seems to be a logic statement as part of the caregiving process:

…that when individuals enter an organization they are a bit like used cars of which each one is different and that people enter organizations with certain intact characteristics that will influence their behaviour at work. Some are:

- *'low-mileage' – they have been treated carefully and have had only limited exposure to the realities of the elements, though*
- *others are 'well-worn' – having been driven over some rough roads.*

Caregiver's depression had a statistically significant and positive relationship with the number of missed hours at work due to caregiving responsibilities (Wilson, et al., 2007, p. 692). The more chronic the disease, the more stressful it can be for family members to provide care (Nemecek, 2004, p. 1).

Levy (2004, p. 541) claims that signs of caregiver stress described in general practice caregivers, such as irritability, fatigue, an inability to leave work, absenteeism, lower

job satisfaction and a decreased sense of personal accomplishment are also commonly seen in caregivers who work in critical care areas. The amount of time required to care for an older individual with dementia can create a strain on the working caregiver, which seems to be true of the baby-boomer generation that were found to have a higher proportion reported home-to-job spill over than the other generations (Wilson, et al., 2007, p. 686). According to Robbins and Judge (2007, p. 32), the above-mentioned metaphor indicates that people enter organizations/the workforce with certain intact characteristics and variables that will influence their behaviour at work:

- biographical characteristics such as age, gender and marital status;
- personality characteristics as an inherent emotional framework;
- values and attitudes;
- basic ability levels;
- perception;
- individual decision making;
- learning and motivation;
- work/life balance (added by researcher, see below).

Considering the research of the three forms of conflict done due to work/life balance by Greenhaus, et al. (2008), the researcher adds to the above-mentioned characteristics/variables that may influence the behaviour at work of Robbins and Judge (2007). Providing care while trying to function in other facets of life for example work, children, household demands, etc., is exhausting enough as indicated in the literature review above. Therefore as stated by Greenhaus, et al. (2008, pp. 290-292) that work-family conflict exists when pressures from work and family roles are mutually incompatible, such that participation in one role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in another role in terms of three forms (See Figure 1):

- Time-based conflict – life roles compete for time.

- Strain-based conflict – When strain produced within one role affects experiences in another role.

- Behaviour-basd conflict – Employees' behavioral styles at work such as logic, objectivity, power and authority may be incompatible with the behaviours desired by partners, children, elderly, the sick, the disabled, etc..

<u>Figure 1</u>. Work-family conflict – model by Greenhaus, et al. (2008, pp. 290-292)
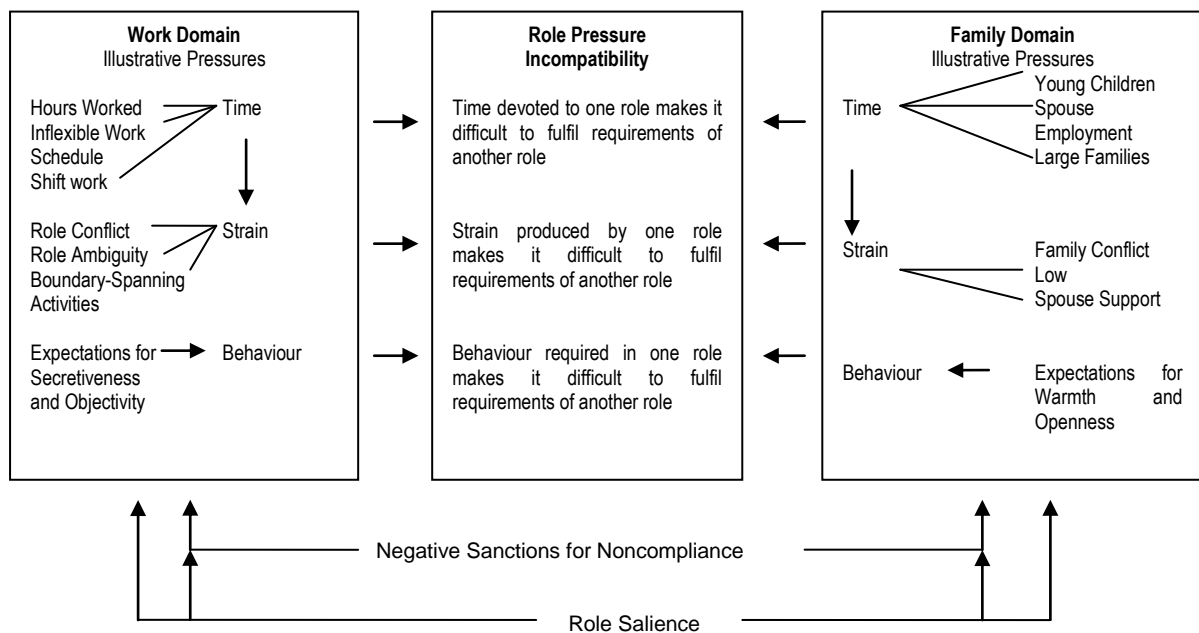
McLellan and Uys (2009, p. 1) indicated that within the South African context (with white females as respondents in the sample) it was evident that a mother's role in the family has not diminished to offset the increase in the average woman's role in the working world - effective planning and the structuring of responsibilities and events, support systems and quality time with family/children indicated a successful balance between work and life. Therefore, employees according to Gordon (1999, p. 71) should understand the implications of their particular career stage for: (1) their satisfaction and (2) job performance. A lack of such information plus the dilemmas experienced at various stages of career development may contribute to confusion and conflict in the performance of work and non-work roles. Accordingly, it seems as if they have to understand the internal emotional turmoil that family caregivers experience as well, which entails:

- a sense of loss over the end of a relationship as you once knew it; the feeling of responsibility that only you can provide care; coming to terms with the stigma surrounding mental illness (Nemecek, 2004, p. 1);

- a sense of guilt that perhaps, somehow, you caused the stress that led to the mental illness- and the experience can be overwhelming (Nemecek, 2004, p. 1);

- Olsen (2007, p. 32) said that if you're involved in long-distance care giving, you're likely dealing with the guilt of not being physically present.

Pirraglia et al. (2004, p. 512) claim that informal caregivers with depression more commonly spent all day with the patient, and more frequently reported having to help another person besides the HIV patient. Therefore the time spent together per day between the caregiver and the patient has a significant impact on the caregiver's emotions regarding depression. A higher caregiver's burden was strongly associated with depression among HIV-infected individuals' informal caregivers, who themselves had difficult life circumstances (Pirraglia, et al., 2004, p. 510).

Pirraglia's et al. (2004, p. 514) findings were twofold: (1) That depression and the level of caregiver's burden are strongly related. That indicates that there is a distinct population that may be in need, both of mental health services and of assistance in care giving. (2) They indicated that it is plausible whether the caregiving by informal caregivers with depression is of poorer quality than by those without depression. Depression can strike caretakers after a loved one enters a nursing home, maybe because of the loss of meaning (Olsen, 2007, p. 32).

Wilson, et al. (2007, p. 690) found a positive association between caregiver depression and the probability of missing some time at work due to caregiving responsibilities, of which female caregivers were significantly more likely to miss work than male caregivers (58% versus 38% respectively).

Mostert (2009, pp. 4-6) was the only researcher found that indicated no direct relationship between workload and health complaints. She emphasized though from a practical perspective that the corporate world should be aware of the relationship between demands from and interference between work and home and its links with ill health (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Path Model (Mostert, 2009, pp. 4-6): Correlation between work and home demands (WHI) and between home and work demands (HWI)
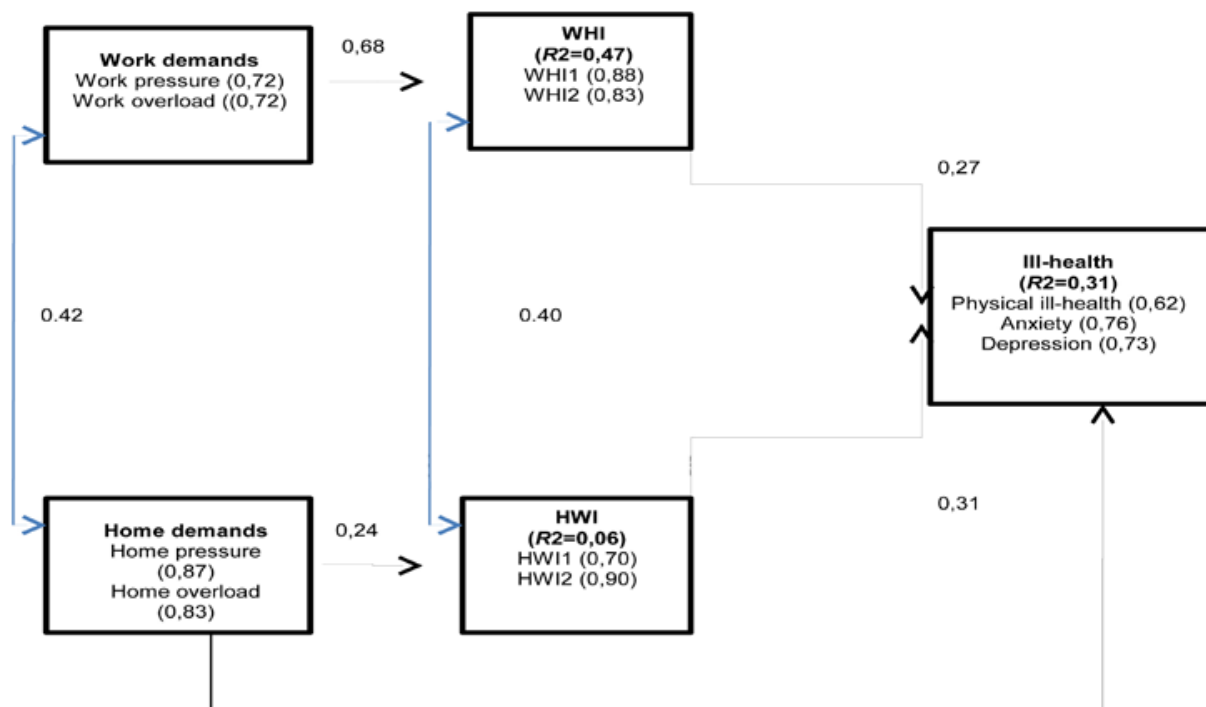
- (1) work demands and ill health (H1a);
  (2) work demands and negative WHI (H1b);
  (3) home demands and ill health (H2a);
  (4) home demands and HWI (H2B);
  (5) negative WHI and ill health (H3); and
  (6) HWI and ill health (H4)

In short, managers need certain characteristics to make effective decisions regarding compassion/family responsibility leave that increase the emphasis on team work and collaboration in organizations. It heightens the importance of managers' strong interpersonal skills to be able to (1) identify human troubles, (2) to offer human solutions to employees, (3) to empathize with workers' situations, and (4) to recognize the complexity of workers' lives (Gordon, 1999, p. 11).

2.4 What are the challenges for organizations in effectively balancing work and family responsibilities?

During World War II Kurt Lewin, a social psychologist, studied barriers to change households. He found that people who participated in discussions about "change" more often made the changes than those who merely listened to others talk about them (Gordon, 1999, p. 18). Thus it seems as if the future will lead to increased national and global competition for South African organizations (Marx, et al., 2007b, p. 41), they need to "*listen*" to their people rather than merely "*talk about them*". Furthermore, executives can give workers more autonomy and control over their work as a way of increasing job satisfaction and because of this they might be able to bring in the best talent and to meet diversity goals (Gordon 1999, p. 10), for example flexible working hours, family responsibility leave, etc.. Bergh and Theron (2002, p. 442) state that employees' most desirable experiences, not necessarily in order of preference, are:

- Interesting work;
- Significant work, having impact on others;
- Adequate help and equipment to do the work;
- Sufficient information to be able to do the work;
- Adequate authority to plan and execute work tasks (control and autonomy);
- Adequate compensation;
- Opportunities to develop specific skills and use a variety of skills;
- Work and physical security;
- Task identity, to be able to see the results in and of the work (feedback);
- Opportunities for interpersonal and social contact ;
- Recognition of personal value and position.

Considering the above-mentioned preferences of employees it seems as if the three broad categories of coping responses with the conflict between work and family is: (1) to change the situation that produces the stress, (2) to change the meaning of the stressful environment without necessarily changing the stressors themselves and (3) to manage the strain symptoms themselves (Greenhaus, et al., 2000, p. 277).

For that reason it seems as if the overall challenges to organizations will be to (1) either alter the stressful environment, (2) work with employees to change their interpretation of the environment, or (3) help them manage their strain symptoms (Greenhaus, et al., 2000, p. 278).

2.4.1 Human Resource Planning and the Role of Human Resources

Muchinsky, Kriek and Schreuder (1998, p. 207) defined human resources planning as such that it encompasses strategic human resource planning and operational planning. Analoui (2007, p. 107) defined human resources planning as the process of systematically forecasting the future demand and supply of employees and the deployment of their skills within the strategic objectives of the organization. It is not only the Human Resource Department that are in charge for presenting the human resources planning; all managers at all levels of the organization share in that responsibility (Grobler, et al., 2006). Marx, et al. (2007a, p. 50) asked; to whom the business must be responsible; only to one group of the stakeholders or to all? Therefore it seems that the challenge is this dual responsibility between the HR function and all managers on how to attract, retain, motivate and develop individuals with talent alongside considering the effect of work family conflict and the roles attached to it.

Marx, et al. (2007b, p. 41) are of the opinion that HR managers as change agents have to develop intercultural skills and expertise and have the experience not to set boundaries around them but to take calculated risks and, whilst remaining cautious, should break away from the familiar world to the more uncertain and competitive future (thus they should have an entrepreneurial attitude). Change is the constant factor and stability is an exception. We live and function in a continuous change situation which is interrupted with moments of periods of virtual stability, and not the other way around (Van Tonder, 2006, p. 2).

2.4.2 Nature of Workforce

Family and work are the two most important domains for many adults (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003, p. 77). Smith (2006, p. 2) stated that just as companies in the late 1990s came to appreciate the critical nature of their information systems, so companies and governments in 2010 and beyond should appreciate the critical nature of their workforces and should devise new programs to improve their speed to optimal performance. Accordingly, a business has to accommodate and integrate various groups, individual differences and norms with the goal of improving the business (Marx, et al., 2007b, p. 40).

Organizations that do not help their people to achieve a work-life balance will find it increasingly difficult to attract and retain the most capable and motivated employees (Robbins & Judge, 2007, p. 25). Informal caregivers of HIV patients might be in need of both mental health services and support in caregiving (Pirraglia, et al., 2004, p. 510). To gain and maintain a competitive advantage, management must therefore treasure its human resources that promote the wellbeing of stakeholders and society as a whole (Marx, et al., 2007a, p. 50). Thus, a holistic approach.

Today's employees have a list of demands when working for organizations of which family responsibility is one of these demands that need to be fulfilled. McLellan and Uys (2008, p. 1) introduced it as an artful balancing act of the roles between work and home. It could be argued that a potential imbalance in either of these roles could lead to role conflict or if the employees does not get what they want, they are quick to move on to employment opportunities that is more attractive (Marx, et al., 2007a, p. 50). An interview done by Casey and Corday (2006) with Barak stated the link between a globally inclusive workplace and work/life or work/family studies:

The increasingly diverse workforce brings to the workplace a wide variety of family arrangements and family needs. If you take it to the next level and add the global aspect, the implications for work organizations are profound. When companies send employees on overseas assignments, they don't prepare the family for the culture shock.

Most overseas assignments are cut short because of family reasons – primarily difficulties in adjustment. Consider the migrant workers who leave their families behind to take on, in most cases, low-paying jobs in our country and in other developed countries. How do they cope with the separation from their loved ones? How does it affect their emotional health and productivity? How does the families that are left behind? These are important questions that effect work/life and work/family studies.

The balance between work and family responsibilities can be very distinctive in different societies. For example, during the literature review for my book, I found information that in Scandinavian countries, fathers often take time off from work to care for young or sick children. In contrast, in the U.S., fathers often do not take leave, even when they are offered the opportunity to do so.

Typically, they are concerned that they would not be considered loyal employees or that the job will not be waiting for them upon their return. In many countries, child care is the sole responsibility of mothers.

If you look at Japan or South Korea, the traditional cultural expectations still anticipate that women leave the workforce once they have children and devote themselves full time to taking care of their children. I did some interviews in South Korea and discovered that managers there are less likely to devote time and resources to training young women for supervision or management positions. They assume that as soon as these women get married and have children, they will leave the workforce altogether.

2.4.3 Career Development

The management of the employee's career is crucial and career goals and strategies should be consistent with the desired balance of work, family and leisure activities (Grobler, et al., 2006, p. 209). The human factor of fear should be acknowledged. Hogan (2009) reports on a Canadian workplace and employment survey that out of 395,000 employees who had access to eldercare services through their employers, only 13 percent used it in fear that taking part in such a program would hurt their career. Therefore, it seems that there is a definite need for organizations to change and have flexible working hours, part-time work, and job sharing and maybe most importantly, telecommuting (Marx, et al., 2007a, p. 50).

2.4.4 *Organizational Culture*

It seems that there is a wide agreement that organizational culture refers to a system of shared meaning held by members that distinguishes the organization from other organizations captured within the following seven primary characteristics (Robbins and Judge, 2007, pp. 573-574):

- Innovation and risk taking.
- Attention to detail.
- Outcome orientation.
- People Orientation.
- Team Orientation.
- Aggressiveness and Competitiveness.
- Stability.

Innovation and risk taking. The degree to which employees are encouraged to be innovative and take risks. Marx, et al. (2007, p. 41) are of the opinion that line managers along with HR will have to take more responsibility in the future for doing appropriate market research and taking calculated risks as well to create an environment that are conducive to the growth and development of all employees and to share feelings and constructions to create social reality. Flexible and innovative managers act as follows accordingly to manage the work/family challenges according to Gordon (1999, pp. 75-76):

- seek equitable treatment for workers;
- recognized that employees perform better when free from personal pressures;
- realize flexibility is a competitive issue and a management tool;
- measure performance based on value added, not hours worked;
- meet business objectives by helping employees meet personal needs;
- willingly take risks;
- focus on results rather than rules and procedures;
- respect individuals but acknowledge and respond to differences;
- gain top-level support and backing from peers;

- produce change within the organization that outlives their own tenure.

Attention to detail.   The level to which employees are expected to demonstrate precision, analysis and attention to detail. Marx, et al. (2007b, pp. 41-42) are of the opinion that a healthy organization is able to link the past to the present and the future with the present. In this they are dealing with changes of which the reduce in work force numbers could be contributed to factors such as AIDS/HIV, emigration, etc.. Thus to align the HR strategy with that of business strategy – the HR manager and line management need to have an attention to detail to champion such an organizational culture that balances work and life accordingly.

Outcome orientation.   The degree to which management focuses on results or outcomes rather than on the techniques and processes used to achieve those outcomes.   The most important outcome point of reference for organizations from 2010 will be to tie HR to business strategy, retaining qualified employees, high productivity, and quality and customer satisfaction (Marx, et al., 2007b, p. 49). Nevertheless, a change in the organizational culture, human resource policies/practices and attitudes of top management need to be addressed to hold on to highly capable women.

People orientation. The point to which management decisions take into consideration the effect of outcomes on people within the organization. As stated in the previous paragraph, a change in the culture of an organizational culture is called for in terms of the advancement of women into upper management levels (Jackson, 2001).

Team orientation. The extent to which work activities are structured around teams rather than individuals. Managers according to Gordon (1999, p. 9) often experience difficulties in getting members of a diverse workforce to acquaint that guarantees that minorities feel at ease and valued on the job. A group/team has different cultures which emphasize internal factors as important agents for change such as sound infrastructure and a supportive HR system (Marx, et al., 2007b, p. 50). Gordon (1999, p. 75) claimed that organizations have become more family friendly by introducing programs that help employees balance the various aspects of their lives by easing the interface between work and family:

- Flexible work arrangements (part-time work, job sharing and flexible hours);

- Parental leaves (maternity/paternity leaves, family care leaves, and personal days);

- Dependent-care services, such as day care, vacation care, sick child care, and elder care,

- Work-family stress management (workshops, private counseling, and employee assistance programs).

Aggressiveness and Competitiveness. The extent to which people are aggressive and competitive rather than easygoing. Marx, et al. (2007b, pp. 49-50) are of the opinion that (1) South African organizations have to adapt as quickly as possible to the fast changing world, (2) To use their available resources to the best of their ability and (3) Due to the new labour legislation within South Africa, it is imperative for managers to convey their new found expertise, knowledge and skills of cultural changes by means of training or coaching to the actual work situation.

Stability. The extent to which organization activities accentuate maintaining the status quo in compare to growth. Such an organizational culture will inspire an awareness of the potential for work-family conflict and will promote discussion of the impact of the conflict between the employee and the organization (Greenhaus, et al., 2000).

2.5 What are the benefits to balance work/family and family/work responsibilities?

The systems-interactional model summarized the operational description of the relationship between the individual as a system and the organization as a system with an orientation of structure, behaviour and processes (Bergh & Theron, 2006).

Systems theories according to Gordon (1999, p. 19) represent an organization as an open system, which has the following characteristics to balance work/family and family/work responsibilities (See Figure 3 – A systems-interactional model of occupational well-being – Cummings, 1980 and Bergh & Theron, 2006, p. 437):

- Every system is made up of a number of interrelated, interdependent and interacting subsystems.

- Every system is open and dynamic.

- Every system transforms inputs into outputs.

- Every system seeks to maintain equilibrium.

- Every system has multiple purposes, objectives, and functions, some of which are in conflict.

- Every system demonstrates "equifinality" – organizations may utilize a range of means to accomplish the outcomes

- If a system does not adapt to changing circumstance, it will experience entropy.

Every system is made up of a number of interrelated, interdependent and interacting subsystems. The individual as a self-system brings a unique context in terms of individual experiences and characteristics. Alternatively the organization also has specific uniqueness because of its culture and its influential hierarchical systems/environments. The personality of the individual developed through learning and experiential process in all his/her hierarchical systems that in turn determine his/her attitude, behaviour, feelings, etc. in the relationship with the organization and fellow employees. The organization function as a whole or as a unit due to the internal and external context that is interconnected, co-dependent and network with each other (Bergh & Theron, 2006, p. 437).

Every system is open and dynamic. Organizations can never be completely closed - they are social systems consisting of people. The interactions between individuals and their attributes are influential factors which stem from their respective behavioural and value systems (Bergh & Theron, 2006, p. 438).

An added factor is the frequent interaction between the organization and its immediate environment that cause new energy ("inputs") which can be in the form of new resources (people, materials, and money), goals or information from the environment (Gordon, 1999, p. 19).

Every system transforms inputs into outputs. The less tangible inputs (such as worker knowledge/information) transforms through processes (such as decision making, leadership or motivation) into outputs (such as performance, satisfaction, morale, turnover or absenteeism) (Gordon, 1999, p. 19).

Every system seeks to maintain equilibrium. The interaction between the subsystems is constantly monitored when changes in the environment or organizational practices make current resources inadequate (Gordon, 1999, p. 19). Feedback or control systems are implemented to modify inputs or transformations to result in more desirable outcomes to maintain equilibrium. This also determines the extent to which the individual accepts or rejects the outputs and consequences (Bergh & Theron, 2006, p. 437).

Every system has multiple purposes, objectives, and functions, some of which are in conflict. Various parts of organizations, for example, different departments, work groups, even managers, all the individuals, may have different and conflicting purposes, functions and objectives (Gordon, 1999, p. 19). To gain the maximum benefit from events and situations, the dominant influential factors ("coalitions") in both the individual and the organization determine the extent to which they are selective in their interactions, observation and acceptance thereof (Bergh & Theron, 2006, p. 438).

Every system demonstrates equifinality – organizations may utilize a range of means to accomplish the outcomes (Gordon, 1999, p. 19). Just as important as the dominant coalitions in organizations, are the influences from surrounding environments in which organizations exist and function (Bergh & Theron, 2006, p. 438).

If a system does not adapt to changing circumstances, it will experience entropy. Often the boundaries, and interactions, between individual, organization and environment are not clearly defined, because an individual can be a "member" of various systems and accordingly work context conflicts between family and work roles do provide many problems (Bergh & Theron, 2006, p. 438).

Wilson, et al. (2007, p. 686) reported that caregivers may find work to be a means of avoiding the emotional tension associated with providing care, suggesting that going to work may reduce the likelihood of depression or depressive symptomatology. Consequently, managers face a range of challenges in the work environment as they function in a global competitive environment and consequently benefit as an open system by (Leonard, 2010 and Bergh & Theron, 2006):

- Creating equity-based rules for promotions, assignments, and schedules for all workers (dual or single).
- Maintain equal performance prospect for single childless employees and married employees with children.
- Develop organizational support systems, regardless of employees' family status.
- Offer social events that are appropriate for all employees, regardless of their family status.
- Cost for the organization against individuals are profits, growth, personnel turnover, fringe benefits, self-esteem, development, etc (see figure 3).

2.6   The Challenges of a Changing Workforce: Work vs Family and Vice Versa

As stated earlier, the demographics of South Africa's workers are creating a changing workforce with more single parents, working couples, women and minorities (Grobler, et al., 2006, p. 22). Bergh and Theron (2006, p. 438) further stated in terms of the system-interactional model of occupational well-being that wherever there are people there can never be "no communication" or "no behaviour". The behavior in which people understand their existence are biased by the broader stories of the culture in which they live (Morgan, 2000). The management of work and family lives pose a considerable challenge to employer and employee alike due to the changing landscape of work (Greenhaus, et al., 2008, p. 7). In many countries, including South Africa, employee- and work roles can be determined and facilitated, but also strained, by union interventions and governmental controls (Bergh & Theron, 2006, p. 438).

A substantial amount of woman entered the labour market and it seems as if research focused on the influence of family environment and child temperament on work/family role strain for mothers and fathers (Lee, Vernon-Feagans, Vazquez & Kolak, 2003, p. 421). During 2000 it was estimated that more women will enter the workforce and accordingly it has created new challenges of juggling work and family commitments (Greenhaus, et al., 2008, p. 7).

Not only couples have to juggle work and family commitments, though according to (Kossek, et al., 2001, p. 31), most employees will make caregiving decisions which refer to the selection of arrangements for the care of a reliant while the decision maker works. This involves deciding who provides the care and where the care occurs. Balancing home and work can be demanding, being a close relative with a full time position and even more difficult when care is given to aging parents or other relatives (Hogan, 2009).

Wilson, et al., (2007, p. 92) found that (1) household income was positively associated with missed work among working informal caregivers of older veterans with progressive dementia and (2) caregiver depression was positively associated with both the probability of missing any time at work due to caregiving responsibilities and the number of hours missed due to caregiving. Moore, Vosvick and Amey (2006, p. 70) suggested that work-related role strains were associated with increased depression levels and is consistent with prior research. According to Shaji, Smitha, Praveen Lal and Prince (2003, p. 1) most caregivers did not have a regular job and some had to give up their jobs due to their caring role became more demanding due to financial difficulties.

Kropf and Robinson (2004, pp. 63-77) report that there are about 2,400,000 grandparent caregivers within the United States, and most of these caregivers are women (62%) who are working (57%) and a considerable percentage (19%) of these generation families live below the poverty line. Elder care's life cycle should be experienced more negatively than the cycle of child care, as elder care culminates in health crises, dying, and death (Kossek, et al., 2001, p. 31).

Figure 3. A systems-interactional model of occupational well-being (Cummings, 1980, p. 437)

Environments

Open vs. closed
Formal vs. informal
Competitive vs. co-operative

Culture for instance
technical vs. human orientated
individual vs. group management
Production service

Control vs. freedom
Warm vs. reserved
etc.

Feedback that determines the inputs for the individual and for the organization

Individual system
Self-identity
Biological and psychological uniqueness
Relatives and family
Development stage
Professional identify
Behaviour styles
Communication styles
Needs
Capabilities
Expectations
Values
"Coping" style
Defenses
Physical health

Organizational structure
Sections and groups
Job design and structure
Personnel Policy
Personnel functions
- Remuneration
- Training
- Labour relations
- Evaluation of work
- Promotion
- Recruitment and selection
- Transfers
- Health policy and
- Programmes
Control and evaluation
- Information systems
- Discipline
Geographical location
Physical layout

Organizational behaviour and processes
Clarity of objectives
Leadership and supervision
Communication Systems
Group relations
Handling of conflict
Decision-making
Problem-solving
Planning and the setting of objectives
Group processes
Negotiation processes
Interpersonal relationships
Evaluation and control processes
Criticism and development processes

Personal outputs
Clarity of objectives
Clarity of role
Feeling towards the organization
Participation
Motivation and level of energy
Dedication
Feelings on personal growth and efficiency
Intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction
Readiness to participate
Readiness for new ideas
Consciousness of personal and organizational realities

Consequences for the organization, e.g.
Profits
Growth
Production
Personnel turnover
Absenteeism
Recruitment of good workers
Group conflict
Organizational health

Consequences for the individual, e.g.
Financial
Fringe benefits
Self-esteem
Development
Satisfaction
Self-actualization
Self-assertion
Independence
Flexibility of role
"Coping" style
Relationships with relatives, members of family and others
Physical and mental health

Coalitions in organizations, between individuals and groups, that may have a dominant effect on interaction, for instance
Personal styles
Personal values   Experiences   Managerial values   Specific groups or commitments

ENVIRONMENTS

for instance: Family   Social groups   Markets   Technology Economic   Political etc.

FEEDBACK SYSTEM

Research regarding the trend of conflicts between work and family responsibilities due to the huge entry of women into the full-time labour force can be presented as specified in Table 1.

Table 1. Trends: Work and Family Life (Seventies – new millennium)

Trends	Results
Seventies	In spite of woman's socioeconomic or occupational situation, performed most household responsibilities with little or no support from others (Lee, et al., 2003, p. 421).
Eighties	Wives spent 28.9 hours a week performing housework compared to their spouse's 4.7 working hours (Lee, et al., 2003, p. 421).
Nineties	Women's labor force involvement has generally been associated with a small decrease in the amount of hours women spend on housework; generally, men have not extensively increased their intensity of involvement in household labour (Lee, et al., 2003, p. 421).
Twenties	Women in senior positions compromise only 1.3% (49) of the 3773 directors of the 657 companies listed on Johannesburg Stock Exchange (Grobler, et al., 2006, p. 70).
	Work and family roles have been altered by technological advances which have distorted the differentiation between these two spheres of being (Greenhaus, et al., 2008, p. 8).

More organizations realize the importance of helping employees to balance their work and family (Greenhaus, et al., 2008):

- Parents are required to organize family and work responsibilities;
- Woman's need to balance both career and family lives of which extensive traveling and long working hours is part thereof;
- The vast majority of single parents are employed women who are confronted with a work and family demands, with no spouse to share the responsibility and;

- Employees are increasingly called to care for elder parents/ other adult relatives. Consequently, the South African Government took the initiative to develop the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCA), 1997, Section 9 (1) (a – c):

An employer may not require or permit an employee to work more than:

(1) 45 hours in any week; and (2) nine hours in any day if the employee works for five days or fewer in a week; or (3) eight hours in any day if the employee works on more than five days in a week…. employees have the right to take maternity leave (four consecutive months' for females), protection of employees before and after birth of a child, family responsibility leave and sick leave." Hence, an understanding of career management (Greenhaus, et al., 2008, p.13) and the predictions ranked by order of important with work and society by Grobler, et al. (2006, pp. 29-30) is important for organizations Strategic Human Resource Planning to ensure that productivity levels are not influenced.

- Individuals need to take the responsibility to manage their careers more effectively.
- Organizations need to develop an understanding of the career decisions and dilemmas that confront their employees.
- Family and Life awareness develop into a more established part in people's existence.
- Demand increase in workplace flexibility to pursue happiness and wellbeing.
- Dual-career couples reject the demands from work that influence their family lives. Consequently, more people will opt out of traditional careers.
- Families will depart that work serve as a foundation of cultural connections and unimportant friendships.
- The need for work/life balance will persist indifferently in workers, and it will get worse.

- Integration of work with quality-of-life initiatives will generate solutions to problems formerly seen as the responsibility of the government.

- Community participation and social responsibility will turn out to be part of an organization's business vision.

- Defined-contribution plans have been taken over from Social Security. Companies will take same responsibility for social needs such as: elder care and long-term care through cafeteria-style benefits programs.

- People who are resistance to new technology changes will find that they are working harder and accomplishing less.

2.7 Is there a need for Work-Family or Family-Work balance and Enrichment/Empowerment? Intervention methods to promote behaviorial change in relation to employees' unique work and family situations

Grobler, et al. (2006, p. 23) report some bitterness among childless workers, argumentative that they are repeatedly given the most time-consuming assignments, has to travel extensively or work overtime (weekends and after hours). Grobler et al. (2006, p. 23) commented that when there is a conflict of interest between work and family, the family suffer three times more than the employee's job performance. Research by Dickson (2008, p. 113) wrap up that in the past decade there has been a 419% increase in the amount of lawsuits by family caregivers resulting in settlements over $100,000 in Canada. No statistics were available within South Africa regarding the number of lawsuits brought by such caregivers. However, the substantial challenge to employers regarding this matter cannot be ignored due to the effect of the Labour Law, Employment Equity Act, etc as stated earlier in Chapter 1. This cause an intensely competitive and global marketplace to recruit and retain a highly committed or competent workforce:

In today's intensely competitive and global marketplace, maintaining a competitive advantage places a heavy premium on having a highly committed or competent workforce, therefore the challenge is to acquire, develop, manage, motivate and gain the commitment of the organization's key resource – the people. (Armstrong quoted in Analoui, 2007, p. 3)

The quality of work life reflects the social concern and the responsibility of the organization to plan for its employees in respect of recreation facilities, safety and health, training, working conditions, ethical practices, etc. (Marx, et al., 2007a, p. 52). The key individual factors according to Whitehead and Kotze (2003, p. 81) which influence the phenomenon of life-balance and the achievement or non-achievement thereof include:

- the level of self-awareness at which a person lives life;
- the ability to "know and understand yourself";
- the ability to take responsibility for your decisions and life choices;
- the ability to understand and deal with personal fears;
- the application of proactive coping strategies;
- a positive attitude towards life and dealing with chosen demands; and a level of trust in others who assist and support you.

Broadly defined by Naicker and Fouché (2003) an Employment Assistant Programme (EAP) is a professional assessment, referral and/or short term counseling service offered to employees with alcohol, drug or mental health problems that may be affecting their work performance. It seems that employees do not only need assistance with alcohol, drug or mental health problems.

Els and De la Rey (2006) stated that the greater focus is to direct organizations at achieving overall wellness and improving the wellness disposition of employees by making them aware thereof by implementing a strategic health and wellness program that incorporate all wellness factors that contributed to holistic wellness. Whitehead and Kotze (2003, p. 79) researched results which can be drawn in defining the phenomenon of life-balance included the following:

- It is important to consider all the roles performed by an individual over a lifetime;
- What constitutes life-balance for one person, might not be applicable to another;
- Self-awareness is the main point of departure from which any individual achieves life-balance;
- It is important to accept "*who you are*" and what is important to you in order to experience life-balance;
- It is also important to take responsibility for the choices you make;
- Life-balance has a cyclical nature, and therefore it is important to be constantly aware of your life experiences;
- Life-balance is not an *"end",* but a process, and an ever present tool for achieving personal growth;
- Life-balance is therefore not *"one, single ultimate experience"*; but a series of individual experiences over time, which can better be described as "*life-balance moments*".

2.8   Conclusion

The systems-interactional model summarized the operational description of the relationship between the individual as a system and the organization as a system with an orientation of structure, behaviour and processes. Therefore it seems as if the challenge is for organizations to become aware of their employees' needs and life experiences and for individuals to do the same.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   Introduction

For centuries, researchers and scholars studied the development of human beings through a number of theories (Moen, 2006) and used either quantitative research or qualitative research.   The researcher intends to give voice to the respondent's experiences. The alternative focus is not only to understand and to interpret the story of the respondent and to have *'re-authoring conversations",* but also to involve her in the study to deconstruct her story/narrative and to develop themes thereof (White,1997, p. 148). To (1) develop an understanding and (2) to make sense of all the data received from the interviews and the respondent's diaries - the researcher used the GABEK framework (GAnzheitliche BEwältigung von Komplexität — the holistic processing of complexity) to develop a frame that aids one to comprehend the picture (story) and to represent the whole as a dynamic unit in which new perceptions can be created. (This GABEK framework will be illuminated later in this chapter).

3.2   Introduction to Narrative Thought

According to Mouton (2006, p. 138) most people live the ordinary social and physical truth as human beings that construct and use knowledge of different kinds, which is referred to as lay knowledge.   Different understandings of life-balance are apparent, and it is clear that what characterizes life-balance to one person is not necessarily applicable to another (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003, p. 79). The researcher's aim was not so much to solidify the research method into a certain framework, but rather to utilize an unusual and innovative way by means of a narrative approach to gain knowledge of the world of the informal caregiver (Babbie & Mouton, 2006).   The purpose of this research is to add value to the uprising of patterns of research in order to deconstruct the sometimes foulness of research projects. Alternatively the researcher referred to research objects and the research population as "*research participants or co-researchers* (Müller, van Deventer & Human, 2001, p. 2)."   Chivers (2010) points out that there has been a progress in the last few years to bring storytelling into the business world and those stories are used in everything from revealing the business culture, analysis and innovation, through to business branding.

Morgan (2000, p. 3) claims that when she meet with the people consulting her, she sometimes think of the possibilities for the courses of the dialogue as if they are *"roads on a journey…there are many cross-roads, intersections, paths and tracks to choose from"*. Therefore, the aim of the study is to develop a holistic understanding of the *"roads on the journey"* of the informal caregiver's past experiences and the chronology of events of her story/narrative in terms of her work/life balance and the challenges thereof to integrate the competing expectations of work and home, along with all her other role expectations. Chivers (2010, p. 1) says that people gain knowledge of stories – the best stories have a moral or punctuation position that has people metaphorically move up and down their foreheads and going "*A-ha! Now I get it!".* Sieberhagen (2008, p. 1) defines Narrative Therapy as: *"a bit like standing on the edge, caught up between the stringent demands of the academic world and the narrative world, which requires creativity and 'otherness'"*.

The same applies to using the Narrative Approach within research. The researcher finds herself being caught up between the academic world and the narrative world of the informal caregiver's experiences, knowledge and skills of balancing work, hope and creativity. The alternative focus was not only to understand and to interpret the story of the informal caregiver and to have *"re-authoring conversations"* with the informal caregiver, but to engage her as co-researcher in the challenge to deconstruct her story/narrative and to develop themes thereof (White, 1997, p. 148). Narrative therapists/researchers believe that people value and live their lives through stories. Thus by externalising conversations/interviews the problem and the history thereof can be traced through exploring the dominant and alternative plot/story and accordingly recognize unique outcomes (Morgan, 2000, p.10).

Müller (2004, p. 1) further argues that these experiences should not only be truthful to the context, but also truthful to a methodology with a definite and purposeful movement from the context, or praxis, to theory, and back to the context – *"the circle of practical wisdom"*.   Chivers (2010, p. 1) claims that "*Story Listening"* is a strategy to help those on the receiving end of stories to make sense (meaning) from what they hear and not just any meaning, but (valid) meaning that *"sticks"*.   Therefore the endeavour of this research is to explore the praxis and experiences of the respondent, to move to the theory of work-family relationships, and back to the praxis.

3.3   Introduction to Social Construction

The characteristic of constructionist research is to show how versions of the social world are constructed in discourse, and to show how these constructions of reality make certain deeds possible and others extraordinary (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 6).   The spokesperson of social constructionism is Kenneth Gergen, who in 1985 accentuated that knowledge and social interaction are mutually bound (Bergh & Theron, 2006, p. 27).

The metaphor of social construction guide the researcher to think about the ways in which each person's social, interpersonal reality has been constructed through relations with other human beings and human institutions (Freedman & Combs, 1996, p. 1).   Hence the focus is on the influence of social realities on the value of people's lives.   Within the work/personal environment one can develop an understanding of the demands of groups on individuals through the systems in which group members interrelate with each other and other groups.   In view of that they have their own meaning systems, which influence the ways in which individuals fulfil their roles (Bergh & Theron, 2006).   The culture (beliefs, ideas and practices) in which people live play a large part in the sense they make of their lives (Morgan, 2000).   It is stories of uniqueness that contributes to the discovery and acknowledgement of those persons who have contributed significantly to the creation of stories of identity (White, 1997). Janse van Rensburg (2000, pp. 1–2) described a paradigm as follow:

The frame keeps the painting together and defines the character… It is

the frame of mind with which one starts to paint one's picture of life and

the world… (and which) determines how ones' world-view will operate

and how one's knowledge about the world and life will be structured.

Paradigms are comprehensive systems of interconnected practice and thinking that define for researchers the character of their enquiry along three dimensions (Terre Blanche and Durrheim, 1999, p. 6): ontology, epistemology and methodology. Functioning from a social constructionist approach of which the principle is that reality consists of a fluid and variable set of social constructions, the researcher assumes a suspicious and politicized epistemological stance, and utilize methodologies that allow the researcher to deconstruct editions of reality (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 6):

Ontology	Epistemology	Methodology
• Socially constructed reality • Discourse	• Suspicious • Political • Observer constructing versions	• Deconstruction • Textual analysis • Discourse analysis

3.4   Introduction to GABEK (GAnzheitliche BEwältigung von Komplexität— holistic processing of complexity)

GABEK (GAnzheitliche BEwältigung von Komplexität — the holistic processing of complexity) suggests a systematically qualitative research method that attempt to solve problems that includes the experiences and aims of all respondents and individuals affected (Zelger, 2003). Its theoretical root is based on concepts such as understanding, explaining and learning and gestalt perception (Zelger, 2002, p. 8).

This is an benefit considering that qualitative research involves a variety of approaches that (1) keep close to the data when labelling phenomena, (2) taking into account the researcher's impact on the context of study and on (3) the development of the interpretive version and keep alive several potential of rival explanations (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 429).

As summarised by Louw (2005, p. 27), the use of Gestalt move away from primarily personality change or good mental health to proper positioning of which some space is enlarged similar to the frame of a painting: "*it sets it off*". He further explained that a first-class frame assists one to appreciate the picture; it exposes the whole as a vibrant unit in which new perceptions are created.

GABEK is a means for information organization which in this context joins three types of systems: (1) Knowledge of systems of social organizations, (2) Conceptual knowledge system and (3) Knowledge search systems and offers a PC – supported analysis through the WinRelan ® software (Zelger, 2002, p. 8). Modernists and post-modernists might criticise/approve this means of exploring the narrative/story of the respondent.

Post-modernism rejects the idea of universal truths and rejects metanarratives; research according to them rather seek for innovative data by studying the experience of people in their social and cultural contexts (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Modernism will insist to metanarratives, i.e. metastories that act to legitimize broader (scientific) knowledge (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). Substantiation of the methodological validity and reliability is comprehensive and snowballing across many studies according to Zelger (2002).

In conclusion, by means of the above-mentioned approaches - narrative, the social constructionism and GABEK as the methodology of data analysis - the researchers (the researcher self and the respondent as co-researcher) could construct and deconstruct the narrative as diarised. In view of that a comprehensive understanding could be developed of how the individual created her personal beliefs and meanings attached to balancing her work and life (Bergh & Theron, 2006).

3.5   Research design and methodology

Qualitative methods according to Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999, p. 42) allowed the researcher to decide on issues in depth, openness and detail to be able to identify and attempt to recognize the categories of information that surfaced from the information.   The emphasis was on studying, describing and understanding the phenomena of human action in its natural environment through the course of the eyes of the actor herself, (Babbie & Mouton, 2006).

The importance of using qualitative research as a paradigm search for knowledge and action may be directly useful to people and the organization (Kekäle & Pirttilä, 2006). This was created while at the same time attempting to change it into a dynamic partnership with those concerned (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). The focus in this research design was more on the process than the outcome to follow the researcher to explore the personal experience, particularly as related to the issues of the conflict between work and family responsibilities (Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000). Accordingly a multi-methodological approach was followed; the data-collection strategies could be adjusted and surprising leads could be discovered (Huysamen, 1997).   According to Zelger (2003, p. 2) it is one of the fundamental tasks of the social sciences and humanities to creatively processing and defining complex and generally unstructured problems in humanity. Social constructionism according to Bergh and Theron (2006, p. 27) focuses on social interaction in attaining knowledge and new meaning(s). This social interaction present meaning on three different qualitatively levels and systems that comprise of (Ivancevich & Matteson, 2002, p. 14):

- The Individual (e.g. individual differences, work behaviour, motivation, organizational employee wellness, job design, evaluation, feedback and reward of Individual Behaviour),
- Groups (e.g. Group Behaviour and Work Teams, Intergroup conflict and Negotiations, Organizational Power and Politics),
- Organizational (e.g. Processes, Structure and Design (the Organizations' Structure and Design, Managing Organizational Change and Innovation, Organizational Climate Culture).

The meaning of work embraces the attraction that work has for the individual (Muchinsky, et al., 1998). Thus, in this study the researcher endeavoured to explore an extraordinary narrative of an informal caregiver. An individualised and nuanced analysis of the information was made to develop the opportunity for the respondent to give a voice to and to share her narrative of stress and coping in a diverse work environment as an informal caregiver.

As a result, the informal caregiver plays a significant role in documenting the direction of the walk between the balance of work and life. The researcher seeks to develop a hermeneutic understanding/meaning of the story of the respondent and her journey of preferences and to build a theory from there (Morgan, 2000, p. 3).

The narrative- and social-constructionism approaches force researchers to pay attention to the stories of people struggling in real situations, not merely to a description of a general context, but to be faced with a detailed and real situation (Müller, 2004). Therefore the hermeneutical frame in nature thereof, provides the opening to discover a subjective experience of the informal caregiver's experiences within a diverse work environment and the influence of the care process on her work. These two metaphors made it possible to give the individual the opportunity to tell and repeat her story and to contribute to the expressions made in her diary of the entailed emotions. As Freedman and Combs (1996, p. 1) state:

- Using the narrative metaphor to reflect and experience people's lives as stories a meaningful and fulfilling and;
- Using the metaphor of social construction to consider the behaviour in which every person's social, interpersonal reality has been constructed during interaction with other human beings and human institutions and to focus on the demands of social realities on the meaning of people's lives.

3.6 Method of data collection

The form of data collection was in a qualitative format. Considering the two metaphors: narrative and social construction, the researcher used multiple sources of collecting data to rationalize evidence based on the ideas of replication and convergence (Babbie & Mouton, 2006 & Mouton, 2006):

- A personal diary was kept since 1999 by the informal caregiver to express feelings which otherwise would never be made public as an unsurpassed continuous record of the subjective side of the person's life. The concept of a diary becomes a progressively relevant approach to capture the practices and experiences day by day; and can be used in both qualitative and quantitative research (Kenten, 2010, p. 2). The respondent developed more or less 44 themes herself and consistently evaluated the past against the present and made notes on her experiences of her own story accordingly. Consequently the caregiver got the opportunity to *"plot"* her story using themes (Morgan, 2000, p. 10).

- Basic individual interviews were used within an unstructured manner which allowed the informal caregiver to verbalize her own story rather than to provide her with a series of the researcher's own preset hypothesis-based questions. The researcher interviewed the respondent on ten different occasions for between 45 to 60 minutes. All interviews were noted, with the permission of the respondent being interviewed.

- Open questions were used to discover the respondent's feelings within her own context rather than that of the researcher self (Freedman & Combs, 1996). Open questions leave enough freedom for the interviewee to say what she in reality thinks is significant (Zelger, 2002). The foundation of a narrative approach is that people can study the effects of problem-statured stories on their lives when they do it in the framework of an externalizing dialogue.

Furthermore the researcher (or therapist) listens as a co-author of which questions should be asked in such a way that all the parties involved experience the problems in an externalized manner (Freedman & Combs, 1999). During the interview or dialogues the respondents are engaged in revealing and challenging their old, obstructing stories in substituting them with more satisfactory and (for them) ideal narratives. Therefore by asking the right questions, the clients should apprehend that the stories that they have internalized, manifests the power in their own way of life (Sieberhagen, 2008). After the interviews, the notes were recorded into computer files. Care was taken that the recordings were correctly recorded by the respondent herself in which she became in fact the co-researcher. Once the final research report was written, the transcripts were handed over to the co-researcher/respondent for her own record-keeping purposes.

- Discourse analysis was used to reinterpret the data and to develop an understanding in the course of which the respondent's world of words emerges and act upon (Van den Berg, et al., 2005). The language used by the informal caregiver is not a collection of signs each pointing to a particular concept, however it contained a system of meanings - as everyday talk helps to create and maintain the world human beings live in, so too with everyday actions (e.g. typing in the password on the computer) or images (e.g. a new Polo advertisement), (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 150). Concepts used by the informal caregiver, are constructs formed from her idea of it, someone else's idea of it, and the idea of all those who have ever used the term (Babbie & Mouton, 2006, p. 111). The results were prepared by means of GABEK in the language of the interviewees which makes them more easily acceptable by those affected (Zelger, 2002).

- Considering the metaphor of social constructionism, this research is not in the first place about language per se, but about interpreting the social world as a type of language, that is, as a system of meanings and practices that construct reality (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999, p. 151).

- The intervention was open and unstructured, to promote reciprocal learning and to understand the respondent's values, beliefs and preferences. It was open to find the dominant story and the alternative story of the caregiver and to plot it via GABEK's Gestalten Tree and to develop the "*plots* (Morgan, 2000, p. 10) accordingly. Thereafter the caregiver got the opportunity to develop the unique outcomes of her story by means of plotting her dominant and alternative story (see figure 1 – the X represents the dominant plot/story and the Y represents the alternative plot/story).

Figure 1. (Morgan, 2000, p. 55). The plotting of the dominant and alternative story.
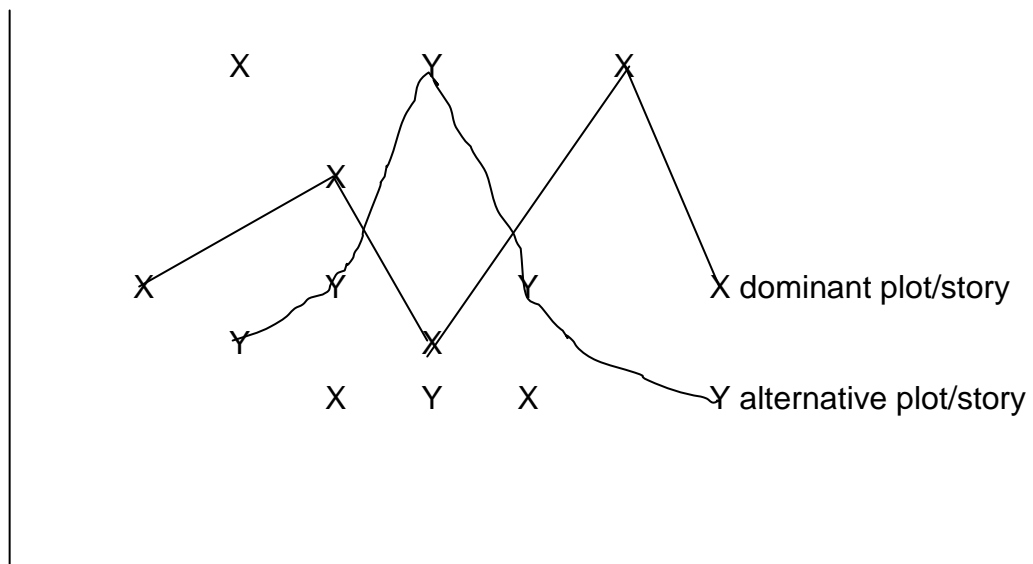
- Literature review. Literature reviews and the above-mentioned interviews were used to obtain opinion/attitudes (Bilorusky & Larence-Wallace, 2002).

- The researcher acknowledges the main sources of potential error: (1) the researcher's emotional/subjective involvement and (2) possible manipulation by the respondent of the research process to serve her own interests (Mouton, 2006).

- The success of this study depends on the participation and involvement on the part of the respondent, which enhances chances of high construct validity, low refusal rates and ownership of findings during the interviews, though it cannot be generalised (Mouton, 2006);

- The use of a narrative case study are linked to limitations of the data, the understanding and judgement of the respondent; differences in viewpoints which are contradictory. However the power is the ability to recreate the past through narrative practices and the highlighting of an alternative story. Thus, the focus is on process and change by finding the alternative story through narrative practices (Mouton, 2006);

- Representativeness of documentary sources and the accuracy of interpretations are being subjective biased, though the exact wording and phrases were used of the respondent/subject herself and accordingly she developed her own themes of all the critical incidents as noted in her diaries. The researcher basically recorded all of this information within a MS Office Word document and by means of interviews and informal discussions.

- The GABEK method encompass the processing and representation of knowledge in many individuals, thus depended on a system designed for an organization (Zelger, 2002), of which this study only used one respondent.

3.7   Method of data analysis

Narratives (stories) are powerful because it helps researchers/human resource managers/health care professionals to understand others according to their way of being. It provides a place of safety for those who may find themselves with muted voices in the face of being caregivers in a diverse work environment (Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000).

A right to be heard by means of a diary, notes and interviews are significant. Hence the data will be reasoned reproductively in trying to make sense of the history and the meaning of the respondents understanding of being a caregiver in a diverse work environment (Mouton, 2006). The GABEK method was used as a problem solving technique that included the experiences and aims of the individual affected (Zelger, 2003).

The focus was to voice the research problem and the effect thereof according to the respondent's experience, as the expert of her own story (Morgan, 2000). The starting point of the GABEK method is the posing of open-ended questions and a procedure to present a formal expression network (Chandler, 2001). The data was analysed and interpreted by means a narrative approach in terms of discourse analysis and deconstruction of the informal caregiver's story and the standard GABEK method as follows (Zelger, 2003, pp. 3-35):

- Active and Deconstructive Listening and Questioning. Listening to the informal caregiver as the "expert" on her story as being a story regarding conflict between work and family responsibilities (Freedman & Combs, 2006, pp. 42-56 and Janse van Rensburg, 2000, p. 7). The paradigm evolved from deconstructive listening to deconstructive questioning that invited the informal caregiver to take part in the process of "unpacking" her story to find the grand narrative of her story as well as the alternative truths of her story (Janse van Rensburg, 2000, p. 7).

    To describe the thrust of this study, it was to listen to the being of the respondent (Müller & Pienaar, 2004). Thus the attempt is to reconstruct the past and the chronology of events as accurately as possible. The researchers needed themes from the diaries and the unsorted verbal data of the interviews. Consequently the researchers attempted to find content-relevant information, to eliminate without changing the central topic (in the cognitive sense) of the statements made by the respondent (Zelger, 2003).

In view of that, graphs were used to represent conceptual associations of a frequently occurring term, selected by the analyst in order to construct or plot the themes of the respondent's story on the basis of the verbal and written data. In order to construct a meaningful order from the unsorted text units, an indexing system is developed that represent the co-researcher's (respondent's) meaningful and coherent thoughts of which is graphically represented of the linguistic knowledge on the PC and was exported into Word for Windows (Zelger, 2002, p. 11). Accordingly, each text can be understood as content supplementations of the text initially read by the researchers.

- Not-Knowing and Interpretation. The interpretation of the story of the informal caregiver took place from a "not-knowing" position by the researcher – to take part in a conversation that gave the opportunity to share her story more openly rather than constricting and closing down due to fixed meanings and interpretations (Freedman & Combs, 2006, pp. 42-56 and Janse van Rensburg, 2000, p. 7).

- Deconstruction of own story by the Participating (developing themes) (Freedman & Combs, 2006, pp. 42-56). The respondent was requested to discover, acknowledge and 'taking part' (to deconstruct) her beliefs, ideas and practices of the broader culture in which she lives that are serving to assist the research problem (Morgan, 2000, p. 45).

- Association graphs. How can common concepts be reconstructed and used in social groups? This is a method to eliminate synonyms or homonyms and to find key concepts that are occurring in each text unit referred to as object-linguistic coding. Accordingly the researcher is able to find by means of the indexing system all the text units within the verbal database in which the term occurs for any given concept. Thus the meaning of a term that emerges in the course of discussions/interviews can be reconstructed.

- <u>Gestalten-tree</u>. How can a holistic theory be constructed about the contents of the verbal data base on various levels of complexity?   Frederick Perl's Gestalt theory and his idea of a holistic approach to life is viewed as an event of ongoing Gestalts which continually form, reach completion and recede for the next emerging Gestalt (Louw, 2005, p. 26). Using all the answers of the verbal data base, the researchers obtain a very complex linguistic net of sentences connected by nodal concepts that can be either redundant or contain relevant knowledge applicable to a new problem situation.

  Therefore the concept of a linguistic gestalt is introduced to address the question on how the sentences can be clusters and transformed into meaningful groups of statements. Lastly, the Gestalten tree is to be understood as a deductive summary and system of texts that represent a formulation of the everyday-language of the respondents.

- <u>Evaluation lists</u>.   How can cognitive assessments be represented and expressed in the verbal data?   No particular evaluations are requested during the interview; rather all evaluations will be expressed spontaneously by responses to open interview questions.   These evaluation lists are means to compare desires and concerns between different groups.

- <u>Causal opinion networks</u>. How can causal assumptions of the respondents be identified?   This method enable the researcher to analyse causal assumptions that lead to complex nets of opinions about influence relations, which can be used in new problem situations or to develop new hypothetical relations substantially.

- <u>The order of cognitive relevance</u>.   Which topics are relevant from the respondents' point of view as values, possible aims or measures?

- Emotional graphs. How can the emotional load of the verbal data be represented? Researchers, using the GABEK method assumes that emotional feelings of the respondents are perceived in ordinary communication although not fully consciously. The motivating role of was not only to consider the cognitive perspective but to take into account also the emotional one.

- Statistical frequency. Which groups of verbal data should be analyzed separately?

- The simulation of dialogues. How can different social groups learn from each other? The researchers believe that individuals can be different and hold very different opinions; accordingly the GABEK method provides a way to compare and encompass these different opinions of individuals or opposite groups of individuals.

The GABEK method is the *"holistic processing of linguistically expressed complexity"* and offered a series of analysis steps to collect and systematize the unordered knowledge (Zelger, 2002, p. 11). GABEK ® according to Zelger (n.d., p. 2), represents a net of opinions, attitudes, basic values and strategic objectives of an organization and refers to possible operational objectives and measures. Oral accounts, starting with experiences in an actual situation, are the main vehicles by which the knowledge and experiences of members of an organization and other interest groups are being conveyed – this is a flexible form of knowledge which includes implicit skills and social experiences (Zelger, 2002, p. 9).

3.8   Sampling procedure

The sample or respondent selected to participate in this research was selected particular with the interest in studying a deviant case (Babbie & Mouton, 2006, p. 167). Adapting to A.T. Boisen's saying that a narrative approach of people are *"the living human document"* (Dykstra, 2005, p. 30), this sampling method is decisive by nature considering the unique experiences of the respondent by balancing her work and life while caring for her disabled mother. The researcher was less concerned with statistical accuracy than with detailed and in-depth analysis due to constructionistic- and qualitative research that typically do not draw large or random samples (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999). Purposeful sampling is an unique and natural method to rather focus on the criteria used to select a sample than a representative sample or to draw statistical interference (Wilmot, 2005, p. 3).   The sample selection consist out if one informal caregiver, a white female, with significant and unique experiences of work/life balance. She expressed a great willingness to participate in the research processes, in the hope that she might add value on a personal level to others with similar experiences and to research in general within a narrative field.

3.9   Validity and reliability implications

Mouton (2006, p. 10) indicates that an in-depth account and insight into the experiences ("life-worlds") of a small number of individuals show high construct validity and insider perspective due to the fact that it is the subjective reality of the individual, on process and change, and on the totality of the person. Neuman (2003, p. 185) mentions that authenticity implies; "giving a fair, honest, and balanced account of social life from the viewpoint of someone who lived it every day". Interviews according to Tanggard's (2008, p. 24) voiced critique of the assumptions and interpretations made by the researchers produced a critical awareness about research on learning in everyday life. Accordingly, the researcher incorporated the respondent as a co-researcher and partner in the plotting of her own story, interpreting her own story and analysing her own story.

In this study, the researcher portrays the respondent's experience of being part of the research and the new awareness that arises in being part of discussions during interviews. As indicated previously, the respondent developed her own themes of the critical incidents as noted/recorded in the various diaries since 1999. As discussed earlier (paragraph 3.6), the main limitation in this type of study is the issues related to representativeness (generalisability), reliability and validity, and specifically source of bias - interview bias, respondent bias and context effects (Mouton, 2006).

3.10 Ethical Issues

Ethical issues arise out of our interaction with other people, other beings (such as animals), and the environment (Mouton, 2006). The right thing to do is not always evident and in many cases, what is right for one person might not be right for other people (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). Thus, it is of the utmost importance to the researcher to search for truth but not at the expense of the rights of other individuals within the study. The following are some of the main ethical aspects that the researcher applies in the research study (Babbie & Mouton, 2006):

- <u>Voluntary participation</u>. The nature of this study represents intrusion into a person's life by revealing personal information about her, therefore the researcher will take heed, even when feeling ultimately justified in violating it, to honour the ethical norm of not harming the respondent. The respondent will not be forced to partake in the study in any way and will be free to withdraw from the study at any point.

- <u>No harm to the respondent/s</u>. The researcher will always acknowledge the following rights of the person/s under study (Mouton, 2006, p. 522):

  o The right to privacy and the right to refuse to participate in research,
  o The right to full disclosure about the research (full consent),
  o The right not to be harmed in any physically, psychologically or emotionally manner,
  o The right to refuse to be interviewed,

- o The right to refuse to answer any question,
- o The right to anonymity and confidentiality.
- o To ensure full confidentiality and to promote participation, the questionnaire will at no point require any respondent to fill in any identifying information.

- Consent Forms. Consent was given by simply signing the consent form. Any other biological information will only be used to refer to the sample as a whole, and no reference will be made to any individual information. The respondent was assured that her identity and privacy will be respected under all circumstances at all times.

3.11 Limitations of the study

Mouton (2000, pp. 170-171) states that the limitations of such a study are linked to limitations of the data, the understanding and judgement of the historian and differences in theoretical perspectives which are contradictory. Mouton further states that the main sources of error are the authenticity of documents; principles that underlie the selection of documents; representativeness of documentary sources; accuracy of interpretations and a subjective bias.

However, when people tell stories to the researchers, they feel listened to, and their information brings researchers closer to the actual practice of education (Creswell in Eloff and Kriel, 2005). Thus stories enrich the lives of both the researcher and the respondent.

Therefore as stated earlier the emphasis is on studying human action in its natural setting via the diaries and accordingly the eyes of the actor/respondent herself, together with an emphasis on a detailed description and understanding of the phenomena within the appropriate context of qualitative research (Babbie & Mouton, 2006, p. 491).

3.12   Recommendations

Only certain dominant conversations will be highlighted by the dominant discourse of the respondent. Consequently, it is recommended that a multilayered-perspective by means of an alternative discourse is used to develop an ear and an eye for the untold and unwritten stories of other influenced by caregiving of the sick, disabled, elderly, child, etc. in a diverse work environment.

3.13   Conclusion

The researcher argues for the importance of eliciting a story/stories in attempting to understand the perspective and personal experience of one's informant as part of the complex and diverse work-life environment of the caregiver (Mattingly & Lawlor, 2000). In developing an approach within a work environment that is truthful, a narrative approach due to a changed postmodern situation calls for minimising the significance of methodology to distinguish the suitable role it can have (Van den Berg & Kuyler, 2005).

CHAPTER 4 - DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

An extraction was made according to the respondent's dominant story in order to provide some insight of how she coped with her dual role between home and work as an informal caregiver. Her biographical data is provided up front. Specific quotes from the diaries were used and supported by further comments as discussed during the interviews.

4.2 Findings

4.2.1 Background of participant's story

The respondent (35 years old) was (until recently) the main caregiver of her 60-year-old mother that was born with cerebral palsy. The respondent's highest level of education is a Diploma in Purchasing Management. She is single and has not been married before. She earns R240 000 per annum (cost to company) within the Supply Chain Management environment. It was a big drawback of not having her own father involved in her childhood, as he did not fulfil his responsibilities accordingly and was not married to her mother.

Her mother was married twice of which both relationships were not stable – financially and otherwise – they subsequently had some difficulties. The respondent took it upon herself to care for her mother. Hence, she was the only financial provider for the household, however her mother did receive a small social security grant from the state welfare due to her disability. Their home was a small one-bedroom house which they shared for an extended period of time.

As a young child the respondent was sexually abused, that was mostly kept quiet due to her grandmother who refused that she would be sent to a psychologist for therapy. Her grandmother turned a blind eye to the fact that she did not want to believe that such thing could happen to her granddaughter. On top of all these terrible traumatic relationships, the respondent was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), which made it difficult for her to concentrate constantly on one task.

Levy (2004) established that work control (autonomy and resource availability), work home interference, and home support were the major factors in physicians (formal caregivers) experiencing burnout. It seems as if the same may be experienced by the informal caregiver. Deducted from the experiences of the respondent, the following seems to be identified as major components of work-related stress: time demands, organizational change, lack of autonomy in work environment, work overload, interruptions at work and organization constraints. As part of her responsibilities to care for her mother and financial constraints, she had to give up her dreams to study full time (physiotherapy) and had to apply for a job for which she would not necessarily have applied for. She is still employed within the same organization, yet she had her own personal dreams:

> *"How can I do what I want to do? Want to go to Europe and Egypt. I want my own house, car and CD's. I want to wear beautiful clothes and want it for Mom as well (Adopted from the Respondent's Diaries)."*

She could not further her studies after the Diploma, she tried to explore some promotional opportunities at her current employer, although the support from the HR Department was unsatisfactorily and they lost the application:

The Johannesburg HR manager ensured deliberately that I could not be accommodated in the position that I should have been and translated in rank ('horizontal placement/mobility') as should have been the case. HR policy of that time indicated that after your studies you may be directly moved horizontally to a Junior Management position.

I knew for a fact that a memorandum existed where the horizontal transfer was recommended and the applicable post number confirmed. This memorandum existed on my personnel file, but was ignored and kept away from the Regional Manager as well as any other persons that were in a position to rectify the situation. This left me so angry and frustrated at the powers given to undeserving so-called managers.

Accordingly any future promotions were jeopardized and this had a big financial implication on the household income. Actions speak louder than words. (Further comment to this diary entry: About 6 years later, I was able to page through my personnel file and got a copy of this memo – with the knowledge of organizational official in possession of my files. This left me angry again; although I had the countenance thought that I could not do anything to change what happened years ago. I did approach my workers' union to pursue the case on my behalf. Again, this did not have any positive outcome(Adopted from the Respondent's Diaries).

As a single worker being the main caregiver, an employed individual who has never been married; the balance between work and family and vice versa was very difficult at times. Therefore, it became important for to her to make sense of her own story. However with the ADD, she experienced extra difficulties:

> *"The more I am worried, the lesser is my focus and the longer it takes*
>
> *for me to get my work done (Adopted from the Respondent's Diaries)."*

Her unique outcomes at various times through the years were: (1) she used the opportunity to study part-time. (2) She decided to place her mother in an old age home (which has 24 hour care available). However, she has indicated that her worries did not necessarily pass away:

> *"Though my mother is in an old age home, I still find myself worrying.*
>
> *Although not as much as when I was the only one responsible for her*
>
> *(Adopted from the Respondent's Diaries)."*

(3) She has met a wonderful friend in 2006 whom she married on 10 July 2010. As a friend he started to support her informal caretaking with small things such as pushing the wheel chair, assisting her mother to walk, buying goods that is needed, etc. and today as her spouse he provides financial support as needed with the care of her mother. (4) She found alternative ways to reach her dream to become a Physiotherapist. Due to the care for her mother she had to learn certain techniques of physiotherapy to assist her mother's neck muscles to relax. She has a natural talent for this and was, as a result able to assist other people with the same problem at the office and elsewhere. (5) Her willingness to walk the extra mile.

4.2.2 Extracted Experiences of the Respondent (from the Respondent's Diaries)

She experienced life as being unfair at times:

- *"DOWNHEARTED...LIFE IS UNFAIR".*

- *"Dear Father Christmas, please send me a bag to fill with all my sadness. Then take it to the moon or throw it in the deep blue sea".*

She has experienced her high school years as extremely difficult. The lack of finances during her teenage years due to her step fathers not taking responsibility was a burden throughout her teenage years. She experienced her school years as extremely difficult. Her mother received a social grant (welfare pension) for people with disabilities, as well as a small amount for a children's allowance. A serious challenge arose after the respondent completed Grade 12. The Government stopped paying the whole amount instead of stopping only the children's grant, and this happened without prior notice. She had to re-register her mother for the pension for people with disabilities of which she noted the following:

"...mother's pension reregistered at Danville...taken leave to do so. We had to walk to the clinic, because public transport was not sufficient."

Her biological father did not take any part in raising her as a child nor did he do so when she was a young adult. He did not contribute financially either:

...have to detach myself from my father in my mind and not give myself out for any further hurt. In the past I always kept contact when I knew where he was but the favour was never returned. 'Detachment' would mean that in future if he wanted any sort of relationship with me it would have to come from him.

She did explore other job opportunities e.g. her application at a well-known travel agency. Her family was concerned due to the commission based income such employees receive. She studied part-time towards a Diploma in Purchasing Management (Graduation Ceremony on 05 May 1998):

It was extremely difficult for me to work full time, to go to class in the evenings, to study for a test or exam for the next day and care for my mother in the evenings. There were times that I fell asleep sitting upright on the couch with my head on the books, but I had to go on. Today I can see the benefit of persevering in dire circumstances.

The respondent developed 44 themes originally with extracted incidents of which GABEK, by means of the '*Gestalten perception'*, formalized five (5) themes that is seen as the *"frame"* and dominant story of the individual. Thereafter the respondent drafted a diagram (see diagram 1) that was discussed with the researcher to provide substantiating data (the alternative stories of the individual) from that:

- Wondering thoughts. Before her mother was placed in the old age home, she was constantly worried about her mother's well being. She had to learn to balance work and her family life, though her thoughts were *"wondering"* due to the ADD. A psychiatrist advised her to make use of a diary to note her thoughts to make it easier to process it. She did not only keep a diary of her work and personal life, she kept small notes, pamphlets, training manuals, etc.

- Proving documents. Her mentor advised her to keep copies of work related documents at work for two reasons: performance management purposes and "CYA – cover your ass". Accordingly, she became over controlling to keep record of work documents, e.g. one copy was kept at home and one copy at work (additional to the originals kept in the organization's registry offices).

- <u>Time Management</u>. Not being on time was one of the elements discussed during performance management. The reason for her being late was mainly due to the care that she had to give her mother and the ADD. The ADD made it difficult for her to concentrate and to focus on what she was busy with and accordingly she did not do the right thing at the right time. To get out of bed and ready for work was problematic, due to overwhelming thoughts of what lies ahead for the day, weariness, worries and feelings of resistance to go to work (at this specific organization).

  The one result thereof was procrastination of tasks that she was busy with. At one time she had over 8000 emails on her inbox of which she made lesser to about 2000 at this stage. She felt that Outlook can be used much more wisely to assist her with her performance management as well as to cover herself accordingly in the work environment. This is still a task in progress – though she has not reached all her goals yet (marked with "X" – see diagram 1). At the same time she does not find time to do craft work, scrap booking and to relax after a day's work.

- <u>Performance Management</u>. Her reward of performance management is a sense of accomplishment (not only at work but at home as well). She keeps the notes and diaries (refer to *"documents"*) and thought of developing spreadsheets to assist her to focus on what needs to be done and what has been done already. She has opened folders on Outlook to sort e-mails according to their content. This is also still a task in progress. She is working on this in between tasks and during lunch time. She experiences that she still doesn't find time to sort out her own personal financial issues and accordingly does not experience a sense of accomplishment accordingly ("no performance"). However she did not had the opportunity to follow some of her dreams, she made a point thereof to study part-time towards a diploma and accordingly completed and succeeded.

Her employer had processes and structures in place to acknowledge any further studies though due to the poor performance of the HR manager and affirmative action strategies of that time she was not promoted as expected. Accordingly it had a financial impact on the household. Furthermore it influenced all future promotional opportunities and career development for her. Alternatively, she could add an additional outcome as she took responsibility for her own career - she attended short courses to better her competencies in her job and to enhance her work experience.

Grobler et al. (2006, p. 263) reported the major problems that were identified during a survey done of nine leading South African organizations regarding performance management, included the existence of a rather negative working culture; changes in corporate strategy that did not result in corresponding behaviour changes and insufficient line management support for performance management. Especially the last one was applicable to the respondent:

> *Fair evaluation of performance (to be reasonable). Evaluation Report to be handed in to management to evaluate my performance. They did not evaluate themselves the way they evaluated me. Different set of rules for different people. Prejudice/bias during my working performance management; management indicated that my work is not up to standard. They did not read the evaluation report that I handed in. I also knew very well that the Regional Manager was on leave on the day that the moderating committee met to discuss performance reports. Our line manager was acting Regional Manager that day… Their only focus was on the 2 cases that were out of my control.*

The cell account of the Regional Manager and the 2 items sent for repairs to a company that was then under liquidation. So their biased verdict regarding my work performance was 'not up to standard'.

Line management discussed my evaluation report with me – apparently I am not up to standard. It feels as if they try to grief me. Especially because my direct supervisors were threatened by my qualifications. (Further explanatory comment to this diary entry: my supervisors at the time have not completed their studies and were placed in their positions due to horizontal transfers themselves or due to affirmative action. This is why they were so threatened – because I have completed my studies and made my qualifications higher than theirs.)

- Job. All the wondering thoughts, proving documents, time- and performance management escalated in a spiral pattern towards the last component of the "frame", namely "Job". She experiences both work and home as a "job". Due to the ADD she has trouble to focus and accordingly she mostly fails on her time management. She does not experience "closure" (does not get a task done) and accordingly feels no real sense of accomplishment. All "tasks" are called "projects" and accordingly is not done due to the worries about the caring for her mother financially and otherwise.

Grobler et al. (2006, p. 502) stated that the *"buzzword"* in the corporate environment at present is *'virtual'* and almost touched every factor of the work society within which technology has (1) prompted changes in the company structure (e.g. the *'virtual organization'),* (2) modified work arrangements (e.g. the *'virtual team'),* (3) influenced how people are managed (e.g. *'the virtual workplace').*

This impact organizational processes including the Human Resource Management processes of which the main questions would be how effectively does the current information technology infrastructure support remote access and collaborative tools, how does the organization's budget support equipping and support remote team members, etc.:

> *"…does not have a computer at home. How am I going to do all*
>
> *this work with such little time available?"*

Further, Grobler et al. (2006, p. 137) stated that two of the most important fears of HR managers in South Africa nowadays, are employee productivity and job satisfaction. Grobler et al. (2006, p. 142) suggested that *"work teams"* should be implemented in the place of work, of which these teams (1) offer the potential for satisfying the individuals' social needs and (2) they are empowered to control themselves and the work they do. The respondent's view was:

> *"Duties should be fairly distributed and not only to the willing and*
>
> *able personnel and it is influenced by the style of the supervisor*
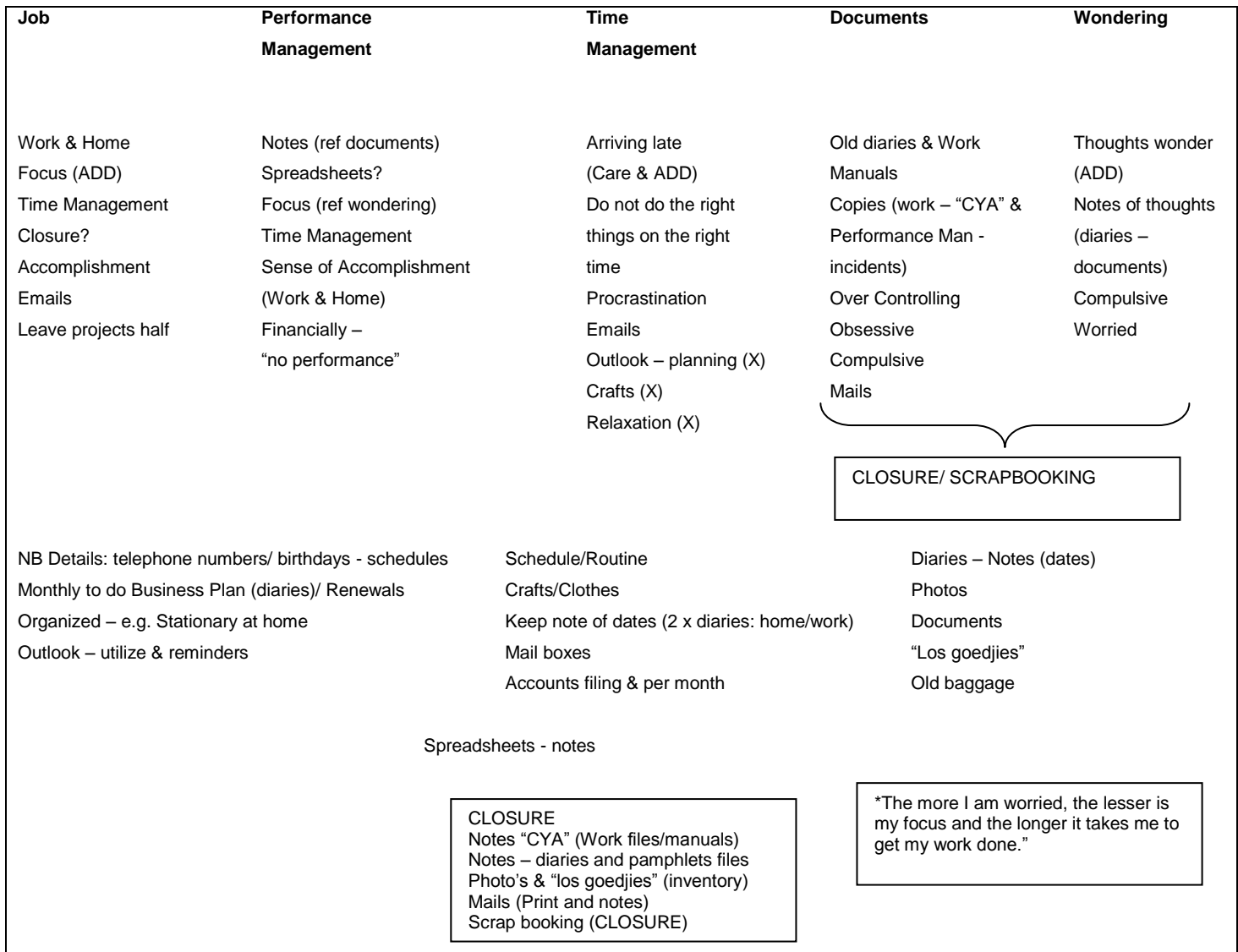>
> *and the ability of the colleagues".*

It seems that the employer rather hampered the respondent's job than enriching it:

Received job description-must be Inventory Controller as well…Much more work for me…Manager checked on me…tried to explain the queries regarding the cell phone letters…Issue was not resolved – copies of the invoices were not attached.... does not have a computer at home to take work to home to be able to work overtime.

(Further comment on this diary entry: I was well aware of the irony that the organization made a study bursary available, but did not make appropriate use of their investment. The bursary contract included a stipulation that the bursary holder works for the organization for the same period of years after completion of studies. In this case it was a period of 4 years.

Part of the irony was that I was only promoted after the 4 years have passed. The organization could have made much better use of their investment in skills development. The unwritten 'laws' of the organization does not put best practices upfront, but rather political and other goals. This is definitely to the detriment of the organization.

Diagram 1. Respondent's way of making sense of the five (5) themes

Job	Performance Management	Time Management	Documents	Wondering
Work & Home Focus (ADD)	Notes (ref documents)	Arriving late (Care & ADD)	Old diaries & Work Manuals	Thoughts wonder (ADD)
Time Management	Spreadsheets?	Do not do the right	Copies (work – "CYA" &	Notes of thoughts
Closure?	Focus (ref wondering)	things on the right	Performance Man -	(diaries –
Accomplishment	Time Management	time	incidents)	documents)
Emails	Sense of Accomplishment	Procrastination	Over Controlling	Compulsive
Leave projects half	(Work & Home)	Emails	Obsessive	Worried
	Financially –	Outlook – planning (X)	Compulsive	
	"no performance"	Crafts (X)	Mails	
		Relaxation (X)		

CLOSURE/ SCRAPBOOKING

NB Details: telephone numbers/ birthdays - schedules
Monthly to do Business Plan (diaries)/ Renewals
Organized – e.g. Stationary at home
Outlook – utilize & reminders

Schedule/Routine
Crafts/Clothes
Keep note of dates (2 x diaries: home/work)
Mail boxes
Accounts filing & per month

Diaries – Notes (dates)
Photos
Documents
"Los goedjies"
Old baggage

Spreadsheets - notes

CLOSURE
Notes "CYA" (Work files/manuals)
Notes – diaries and pamphlets files
Photo's & "los goedjies" (inventory)
Mails (Print and notes)
Scrap booking (CLOSURE)

*The more I am worried, the lesser is my focus and the longer it takes me to get my work done."

As part of the respondent's career development she defined her own life goals and dreams though she could not take all of it on due to the caring of her mother. She had to travel at times between her home and work as part of the caregiving process. Sometimes her mother needed to be transported to the doctor to receive e.g. Botox injections. These are injections that are given every three months to assist with muscle relaxation.

The difficulty thereof in the beginning was that she was dependant on public transport of which the availability was limited. Levin's theory on career development emphasizes four development tasks for the young adult or "novice" between the ages 17 – 33 to grow into adulthood between the ages 40 – 60 (Bergh & Theron, 2006):

- Define a dream (set life goals). The participant had a defined dream as young adult and accordingly set her life goals, though she had difficulty to achieve it and had to re-plan her path continuously due to the responsibility of taking care of her mother. It has only recently started to change when her mother was placed in an old age home with full time care. Now she will have the chance to sort out her *"clutter"* after the changes in her life of not being a fulltime caregiver anymore.

- Find a mentor (an adult of stature to facilitate growth towards autonomy away from parents and family). She did find a mentor both for her personal and work life; though in a sense her mother was one of her big mentors for life. She did not necessarily experience the feeling of *"leaving the nest"* but she experienced more a change in roles of which her mother at times *"became the child"* but motherly advised her as well. Grobler et al. (2006, p. 314) defined a mentor as an experienced manager who provides guidance to a junior manager or professional and facilitates his or her personal development. The respondent stated the helpful assistance of a mentor in her own personal development that guided her from controversial situations and provided coaching by suggesting work strategies:

> *"Must be someone you really trust and must preferably be someone that knows the people and the organization (ethics). Advice from my Mentor: "Do what you must do, when you have to do it and in the way you must do it!!! More than that you cannot do."*

- <u>Develop a career (all activities to find a stable career pattern)</u>. As stated by Rowe and Crafford (2003), in reality, women do not have the assistance of supernatural powers to break through their constraints and the barriers they face in the advancement of their careers; society expects women to take responsibility for a family over the responsibility of a career. The respondent did not have a choice of a specific career pattern due to family members that expected from her to take on the responsibility to care for her mother:

  "…it seems as if the family expects me to take responsibility for

  my Mom. It is so comfortable for them that I am looking after my

  Mom. I do not do it for them; I do it for me and Mom."

- <u>Establish intimacy (find a supportive intimate relationship, such as a spouse in marriage)</u>. As stated earlier, the respondent has been in an intimate relationship with someone for the past 3 years and they got married. Her "*support system*" was primarily her Mother and then the friends that she either met at work or outside of work. It was not difficult to establish intimacy with her mother due to the close relationship that they have. What was difficult however was to have some privacy (private time and space) in such a small house. For example, It was not possible to close the bedroom door, because of the limited options for arrangement of furniture and because they shared the room.

  Her friends within her work environment established a sense of understanding in relation to her circumstances. Those that she met outside her work environment assisted at times with her mother, though had difficulties due to their own family/work responsibilities. However, the respondent stayed the main caregiver – although these friends made life much easier with the limited assistance that they could provide.

4.2.3   Human Resource Roles and Responsibilities: Balancing Work and/Life

The challenges underlined by the experiences of the respondent, support previous Human Resources Management Literature. A well-designed organizational culture of well-being will not only add value to the organization's systems and functioning, however will build an identity of caring for the well being of the employee as well. Therefore, the Human Resources Department should aim to (1) develop a culture that focus on balancing the needs and meeting the goals of both organization and the employee, (2) develop policies, programmes and practices that satisfy both the emotional and economic needs of the employee and that (3) treat employees as investments that will as a result reward the organization in the form of greater productivity and loyalty.

The role of Human Resource personnel cannot be avoided to guide management towards effective and efficient strategic planning objectives within the organization that is distributed equally between employees. Further it seems as if these objectives should be converted into job descriptions which should clearly stipulate who is responsible for what in the organization and the performance should be fairly managed.   Training facilities and programmes such as mentorship can be implemented to assist employees with their tasks and challenges within the work environment.

To support employees with their challenges of balancing work/life, place emphasis on the role of management as mentors.   In addition to this, it seems as if benefit programs can add value during the sustainment and recruitment of employees, in terms of flexi hours, leave policy and supportive organizational culture. Martier and Stephens (2003, p. 177) found that the parent care role often entails many time-consuming, physical demanding, and emotionally draining responsibilities. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act of South Africa states in Section 7(d) that "*every employer must regulate the working time of each employee with due regard to the family responsibilities of employees*".

The respondent had difficulty to manage her time according to all the diary entries over the years; though during the year 2000 it seemed to be even more difficult as she took 24 days vacation leave (vacation purposes and caring purposes), 13 days study leave (for personal study purposes and courses that she attended on behalf of the employer) and 40 days sick leave. Considering the amount of sick leave taken, the multiple roles and responsibilities of work and care may have caused high levels of burnout and compassion fatigue.

The experiences of the respondent suggest findings to illustrate the importance for organizations to develop a supportive organizational culture that will balance the needs of both employees and the organizations goals and objectives; even though this is primarily based on the subjective experiences of the respondent. Therefore the opportunity may arise for further study to find the organizational narratives and experiences of other respondents. To investigate whether a need does exist from an organizations point of view to balance the work-family/family-work environment.

During the interviews the respondent did report that the organization by which she is employed, does have an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) that was only introduced during the last few years. Due to her current role as Sectional Head, she does get exposure to the EAP programme due to certain cases within her section and she does recommend it to her subordinates. The HR official involved with these cases does maintain the confidentiality. The respondent does not experience the EAP programme as totally inefficient, but she would not make use of it herself.

The respondent does acknowledge and understand the *"normal"* resistance that goes along with sharing personal issues with outsiders. In her case she has additional reluctance because she does not have confidence or trust in the organization anymore. This is due to the limited support that she gained from the organization during her career. She would therefore not make use of EAP unless she is utterly compelled to do so.

Therefore the researcher deducted an opportunity that the implication thereof to HR management is to facilitate and provide professional counselling through which they assist employees to set appropriate personal and professional boundaries, take time to set personal and organizational objectives and address issues or addictive behaviours for companionship and emotional support.

4.3   Credibility and Validity of the Study, and – why?

The respondent was intentionally sampled for the specific perspectives and experiences that she has as an informal caregiver. Therefore the aim of this study was not to generalise the findings. During the interviews the researcher relied upon the respondent's willingness to give accurate and complete answers to questions posed and accordingly she became as well a co-researcher and co-author of her story in this study. Her original diary entries and the interviews were in Afrikaans, the respondent assisted with the translation of the information to English. Therefore all the data captured from the diaries and the interviews remained the respondent's own words.

The value added by means of GABEK, was to extract the dominant story of the respondent. The researcher had a basic/minimal role of capturing the data into the program. The respondent's views are consequently less susceptible to external contamination. This enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the study. The topic for this study is ethically acceptable research as the respondent agreed to participate in this study in order to add value to research in general and to others that might gain insight and perspective from the research at any time. Information obtained about the participant is confidential an anonymity was verbalised at the time of the interviews and discussions.

4.4   Conclusion

There are certainly other coping behaviours that may assist employees in the process of caring and guiding them to balance work and life. The role of both the Human Resource Department and Management seems to have a significant impact on the way the employee may experience their work environment. The challenges of work/life balances may be converted to benefits, providing that a supportive organizational culture with effective programmes and systems may arise in the process of caring for the informal caregiver within the work environment.

CHAPTER 5 - CONCLUSION

5.1   Introduction

The aim of this study was to develop an in-depth understanding of the untold story of an informal caregiver's life experiences of balancing her work and life. In the course of determining her self-perception and coping mechanisms, an understanding was provided of how she perceived her effective functioning both at work and at home was facilitated. The prerequisite of this study was that the respondent was caring for either a family member or friend at home and that she had some difficulty in balancing that within their work environment.

5.2   The problem and the objectives of the study

The main purpose of the study was to develop an understanding of the narrative of an informal caregiver's life experiences of the work/life balance that is like a *"thread that weaves the events together, forming a story and linking certain events together in a particular sequence across a time period, and finding a way of explaining or making sense of them (Morgan, 2000, p. 5)"* as captured within her personal diaries as from 1999 until present.

The research objectives were extracted from the main purpose of the study and following the research questions:

- Defining work/family and family/work conflict.
- To find the balance between work/family and family/work and the impact thereof on the individual / challenge the individual.
- To find the challenges for organizations in an effective fit between work and family responsibilities.
- To find the benefits to balance work/family and family/work responsibilities for organizations, groups and society.
- To identify a need for work/family or family/work enrichment or empowerment and which intervention methods can be used by an organization to promote behaviour change in relation to employees' unique work and family situations.

5.3   Summary of the Findings

The informal caregiving role often entails many time-consuming, physically demanding, and emotionally draining responsibilities and it seems to become more of a reality these days (Martier & Stephens, 2003 p. 168). Accordingly it seems from the respondent's story that she needed more assistance from her work environment than what she got.   Though the results cannot be generalised, a few lessons could be learned.

It is clear from the respondent's story that both the individual and the organization have a role to play in the caring process. It seems as if the individual has to effectively plan and structure his/her responsibilities and events, support systems and quality time with the sick or disabled to successfully find a balance between work and life. Though they need to determine as well how much they are willing and able to give in terms of their energy levels and own time to both worlds of work and life. As for the work environment it seems important to know each employee's circumstances to contribute to a more flexible and motivational work environment. To change the organizational culture to that of a virtual organization in which employees work as teams towards one single goal.

The roads on this journey (study) with a variety of cross-roads, intersections, paths and tracks were explored by means of multiple qualitative approaches. The respondent assumed an active role to voice her story as recorded in her diaries. She deconstructed it accordingly of which the complexities thereof was holistically processed by means of GABEK (GAnzheitliche BEwältigung von Komplexität). The uniqueness of this story can not necessarily be generalised though can be used to prospectively identify the needs of the respondent that can lead to adverse research outcomes associated with (informal and formal) caregiving and target them for a prevention-focused intervention for others.

Work-family conflict seems to be a type of inter-role conflict that occurs as a result of incompatible and conflicting role pressures and needs from the work and family domains. This leads to a progressive loss of idealism, energy and purpose and has been associated with emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation. Therefore the individual is challenged by multiple needs of which he/she has to decide on how much energy will be spend to balance the needs between work and family.

As stated by Bergh and Theron (2006) regarding every system that seeks to maintain equilibrium, the respondent found ways through her diaries, keeping notes and documents to interact with individuals and between individuals and her employer as a method to control / get a grip on the systems in which she is engaged. It determined the extent to which she accepted or rejected the outputs and consequences thereof.

The challenges for the organization seems to develop a supportive working culture for employees with family responsibilities as the increasingly diverse workforce brings to the workplace a wide variety of family arrangements and family needs. Therefore organizations need to listen to their people and give workers more autonomy and control over their work as a way of increasing job satisfaction and meeting diversity goals.

The character of an organizations workforce need to be reconsidered by revealing a virtual organization of which the focus is to encourage employees to become (1) ground-breaking and risk taking, (2) with attention to detail, (3) outcome orientated, (4) people orientated, (5) team orientated, (6) aggressive and competitive and (7) constant. The succession planning for career development planning seems to be important not only for the individual though for the organization to ensure a competitive edge in the global market.

Caring in general according to Benner and Wrubel (1988, p. 1073) enables people to recognize problems, to identify possible solutions, and to apply those solutions. Therefore it seems that the quality of work life reflects the social concern and responsibility of the organization to plan for its employees in respect of working conditions and ethical practices.

Thus it can influence the phenomenon of life-balance and the achievement or non-achievement thereof by guiding them to (adopted from Whitehead and Kotze, 2003, p. 81):

- Develop a point of self-understanding designate living in his/her workplace;

- The aptitude to "know and understand" him-/herself within his/her job;

- The skill to take responsibility for decisions and life choices within the workplace;

- The power to understand and deal with personal fears that may influence his/her job;

- The application of practical and proactive coping strategies to balance needs of work and family;

- A positive mind-set towards life and dealing with chosen demands between work and family;

- And a level of faith in others who give a hand and support the employee in their work environment directly and indirectly with their families.

It seems as if the main need for work/family enrichment or empowerment is primarily to set and enhance the condition of trust between employer and employee and secondly to avoid the separation of caregiving and caring in terms of the modern epidemic of *"burnout"*:

> *"'...burnout, which is defined as the loss of human* caring (Benner & Wrubel, 1988, p. 1074).'"

It seems in conclusion as if the employer can assist with the employee's life-balance to guide the individual towards personal growth by becoming constantly aware of his/her life experiences. *"Caring is primary because it sets up the condition of trust where help can be given and help can be received* (Benner & Wrubel, 1988 p. 1073)".

Without becoming directly involved an organization can attempt to give security within the workplace by way of effective succession planning and by establishing a virtual organization of teamwork. Furthermore the employer can evaluate the effectiveness of an Employment Assistant Programme (EAP) as a professional tool towards counselling services within the workplace. Therefore the employer should become a systems-interactional organization with the orientation of structure, behaviour and processes of awareness of the needs of each employee. Empower them in order to give them control over their professional and personal lives.

This study is important in a number of respects. The untold story of one respondent sheds light on the caregiving experience. Dilemmas about how to resolve the demands placed on caregivers by their jobs and their personal lives are certainly not new (Lewis, 2009). However people are diverse and different in size, weight and other physical dimensions as well as in aptitudes, abilities, interest and the way they are willing and able to commit their energies and resources to the success of the organization's objectives. It is assured that balancing work/life has become a great challenge for the respondent and the typical worker according to the literature review because of the additional care responsibilities to the sick/elderly/disabled/child, etc.. Therefore the significance of the findings for theory and praxis is the utilization of this information to further the research by exploring more untold stories of other informal caregivers and how they approach this scale of balance between work and life.

This study is a starting point for further studies on informal caregivers and their experiences of work-life balance. It is recommended to expand the research in terms of time; research methods and sample (consider other cultures as well).

5.4   Précis (Finale)

The quality of work/life balance reflects an employee's productivity and determines the competitive edge of an organization. For organizations to become sensitive to their employees personal lives, may be an art to know what to offer to them:

It is an art to know what to offer in a situation without overextending or assuming more responsibility for the situation than necessary. ...caregivers make the 'least possible contribution'. 'Least possible contribution' does not, of course, mean doing as little as possible, but doing only a little bit beyond the ordinary, something that most closely reflects the caregiver as his or her best.

The art reflected by the maxim 'least possible contribution' is offering what you can without dictating the results and recognizing that you are not the only one to contribute. It takes courage to be involved and to offer what you can even though it may not be enough.

(Benner & Wrubel, 1988:1074)

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