

**“Professional Women Balancing Work and
Motherhood: A Study of the Coping Strategies used
in Balancing this Dual- role”**

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this qualitative research study is to develop insights into the dynamics involved in work- family conflict, balance and coping strategies. The study explores the experiences of seven professional women, who are also mothers, employed in professional work positions in Grahamstown. The research is interpretive in nature as it aims to explore the conflicts experienced by the professional mothers in balancing their competing roles. The study focused on the demands that these women face and the coping strategies that these working mothers develop and use, in order to balance their career aspirations as well as their family responsibilities. It set out to explore the women's perceptions of work- family conflict and the extent to which they experience it, further examining the compromises that the women have had to make and possible feelings of guilt or regret that they may have experienced. The findings indicated that this balance is sensitive to many facilitating and hindering factors. The participants revealed that they experience work- family conflict, and that the experience of it has largely to do with the guilt of not spending enough time with their family. Another significant finding was that the women expressed their coping strategies as being organised; forming a line between work and family life as well as employing domestic workers. The women further stated that there are constant compromises that have to be made to fit in the multiple roles, and that feelings of guilt and/or regret do set in at times.

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1. Introduction

Working mothers today are expected to perform numerous roles in the home as well as the workplace. These roles can overlap at times and cause conflict and feelings of guilt and regret toward the two domains. Compromises as a result may have to be instilled in order to allow for a balance between the two spheres. Women in professional work positions have the added responsibility of possible business travel, taking work home and working long after hours. The goal of this research study is to explore and investigate the coping strategies and mechanisms that professional working mothers develop and use in order to fulfill their career aspirations and ambitions as well as succeeding in their personal lives with regard to being a mother to their children and to the greater family domain. The study also attempts to explore how the mothers perceive the level of work- family conflict they experience on a daily basis due to balancing this dual role, as well as focusing on the compromises the women make between the competing demands of the home and the workplace, and to what extent, if any, they feel a sense of guilt or regret.

The study explores many areas of the women's lives with regard to the two domains and throughout the study there is a particular focus on work- family conflict, coping strategies and support systems, as well as compromises that need to be made and possible feelings of guilt and regret.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introducing the Issues

According to Whitehead and Kotze (2003), the emergence of women into professional work roles in developing socio- economic environments such as South Africa, happened more slowly and later than in the developed countries, such as the United States and Britain. A reason for this may be seen to rest on the history of South Africa. According to South African History Online (2011), the 20th century was characterised by a divided society in South Africa brought on with the policy of apartheid implemented by the Afrikaner National Party. This caused great racial gaps to occur between the ‘have’s’ and ‘have not’s’. The racial segregation between races and classes had an impact on who could enter the workplace and what kind of work individuals could do. With particular reference to women, this time was subject to insensitive pass laws limiting the opportunities available to women, predominantly women of colour. The pass laws required, in this case, black women to carry a document proving that they were allowed to enter white areas. The pass laws threatened basic rights of freedom (Magubane, 2008). Much of this time was notable for a struggle for justice and racial equality in the country as well as gender equality in South Africa as well as around the world. All South African women together for one cause played an important part in the struggle for equal rights, forming campaigns and movements in protest of racial and gender discrepancies that continued to motivate women through decades and finally led to a more equitable situation in 1994 (South African History Online, 2011). The federation of South Africa and the marches on Pretoria in 1956 allowed for a great movement in history for females in South Africa. It was estimated that 20 000 women of all races marched in protest to the Union Buildings against the carrying of passes by women. (South African History Online, 2011). Given the history of South Africa that has been marked by the late entry of women into work, it may not be surprising that there is limited research and understanding with regard to the subjective experiences of professional women in South Africa, in balancing their work and family lives.

2.2. The History of the Women’s movement into the Labour Force

Women's roles have been critiqued by feminists over the years strongly challenging the view that the ultimate role of women is in the home, noting that women should not only be identified within these bounds (Wilson, 1991). Feminist theory has through the decades, according to Folbre and Himmelweit (2000) been formed through debates about the organisation and significance of care. Many feminists argue that women should have more freedom in following their own self interests rather than dedicating most of their time to caring for others. Furthermore, Folbre and Himmelweit (2000) maintain that women should have greater social validation and economic support, such as family policies for the caring work they do (Folbre & Himmelweit, 2000).

Before the 1970s, women were almost never considered when it came to the world of business. The major idea concerning a woman's role was characterised by the 'women's place is the home' where women were traditionally expected to focus on the functions involved in running the home (Franks, Schurink & Fourie, 2006). According to Wilson (1991) the 1950s saw a portrait of the 'Happy Housewife' showing women as devoted mothers and wives. This era found that the definition of success according to the average American woman was that of 'Finding Mr Right' (Davis, 1999). There was no conclusive evidence of this in South Africa. Davis (1999) expresses that the 1960s saw the rise of the modern American women's movement. The movement grew amongst the older, liberal women and the young radicals. Through this era the movement grew gradually, but it was not until the 1970s when feminism really exploded in America. Feminist groups were challenged through the 1980s by white male resentment groups, but nevertheless, new feminist groups continued to surface, many at this stage formed by women of colour. The 1980s brought with it the 'Superwoman' image, adding professional activities to the picture. The image made clear that a woman could manage all daily tasks and in essence have it all; a meaningful job; a loyal husband; as well as clever children (Wilson, 1991). Some argue that the image has little to do with reality and according to Wilson (1991) some argue that the image shows that women have the freedom to choose either career or motherhood or both. The 1990s stated by Davis (1999) brought with it a bigger, stronger and more diverse women's movement. Between the 1960s and 1990s, feminists achieved what were named 'a half revolution', laws were passed and sex discrimination was banned, women were elected and promoted to professional work positions they had never been in before. The movement transformed people's assumption about a woman's capabilities and rights. The issues involved with the

movement of women into work positions and roles of power as well as having a family life started to rise. The issues surround that of balancing of, as well as the choosing between the competing demands of paid employment and motherhood (Wilson, 1991).

Since the 1990s, women have become more involved in the world of formal work in the professions and business, and have risen to the challenges of balancing work and family life, concerned in such a shift. Women have over the years taken to professional positions and roles of power in the workplace, and, according to Wilson (1991) this is due to demographic, economic and attitudinal changes in the last four decades that have altered family life.

Technological advancement and the arrival of the information age have allowed women to become more involved in this world. Physical strength and size are less of a need in the modern automated workplace, where skills and knowledge are more important for men and women. Female characteristics such as empathy, warmth, understanding and communication - the skills that many believe a woman reflects – are increasingly important in motivating commitment and endeavour (Carr- Ruffino, 1993). In the developing world of today, men and women are still socialised in such a way that they are required to perform their traditional roles on a daily basis. The recent move toward globalisation and the financial strain on households by an unstable global environment has resulted in women being required to join the workforce (Ntuli, 2007). Many women work for the same reasons that men do, and that is for income, personal satisfaction, social purpose as well as the fact that women are capable and able to work (Farel & Dobelstien, 1982).

Carr- Ruffino (1993) adds that the continuing entry of women into more professional positions and roles of power in the workplace has meant a movement beyond the more traditional roles of women in the home. Some women work part- time or flexible work hours, but their movement into the workplace has meant that their place in society is not solely based around their family and the home, thus they have moved beyond the focus of just the home. Single parenting and divorce have become more prevalent over the years as well, necessitating the need for women to become heads of their households and to provide the income needed for the family to survive. Posel and Casale (2002) and Mokomane (2009) note that South Africa has witnessed a growing feminisation of the labour force post-apartheid, with the increase in women's employment, confirmed with data now showing that the number of women working or actively seeking work, has risen from 38 percent in 1995 to 49.9 percent in 2007. The female labour force in South Africa according to Franks *et al.*,

(2006), is expected to grow, with Muchinsky, Kriek and Schreuder (1998), predicting that by 2011, the growth rate will be 3.2% for women and 2.4% for men. The weakening of the traditional nuclear family structure consisting of a mother, father and children, according to Wallis and Price (2003), has allowed for it to almost have fallen away, due to the increasing number of women entering the labour force. The dual- income worker family consisting of two working parents has become the norm and single mother households have in addition become a common phenomenon. Research to this effect has shown that around 3.5 million households in South Africa are run solely by the working mother, and this has resulted in significant social changes over the years.

2.3. Defining the Role of Motherhood

Since the Industrial Revolution, there has been mass change with regard to the societal expectations of women, in that women are expected to participate in both spheres of work and family life. From a feminist perspective, Forcey (1994), states that that the roles assigned to men and women by society have changed but there are still societal expectations and assumptions that have remained in place with regard to women's roles. These expectations surround the idea that a woman plays a major role in responsibility when it comes to childcare. Hochchild (1989) reveals that motherhood is a nurturing role that is passed on from generations of mothers, and in accordance with Forcey (1994) it is generally accepted that women are more capable of childcare than their male counterparts. Forcey (1994, p. 357) states that mothering is "a socially constructed set of activities and relationships involved in nurturing and caring for people". This suggests that mothering is seen in a particular light because of the way society constructs this phenomenon. According to Richardson (1993) motherhood is an essential element of a woman's life as it is seen to shape "their relationship with other people, their opportunities for paid employment, their leisure activities, and their individual identities" (Richardson, 1993. p. ix). Women are seen to possess maternal instincts for caring and raising children in the family, and these perceived skills have resulted in society acknowledging the roles of women in this light. Buzzanell (2005), states that even in contemporary western societies, home and childcare have been constructed as feminine activities and the patriarchal ideology still exists. Medina and Magnuson (2009) add that in the gendered system of parenting, women and men take part in differing roles. Mothers are dominant in roles of planning, scheduling, emotional management as well as the behind the

scenes caring of children. But motherhood is a choice and with it comes opportunities as well as constraints that differ according to race, class, age and sexuality (Medina & Magnuson, 2009).

Motherhood according to Richardson (1993) is a highly complex issue. It is an identity, and not merely the looking after of children and caring for the family. A woman will associate herself with being a mother as this is necessary to fulfill the natural 'feminine' role of a woman. When women feel that being married and a mother is central to their lives they feel that social acceptance is brought on with the role of being a mother, and brings with it a sense of maturity becoming a 'real woman' (Richardson, 1993).

According to Medina and Magnuson (2009), most women who want and can have children are at some point in their lives a mother and the majority of mothers are employed. Most mothers who are employed full -time may find it difficult to combine motherhood and employment.

According to Richardson (1993), when it comes to women, society is seen to construct which role a woman should take, in essence making it difficult for her to take paid employment when having young children and in particular, having to make use of the availability of childcare facilities. Arendell (2000) adds that mothers may feel the pressure to be 'stay-at-home' mothers if they can financially afford to do so. An alternative argument is expressed by Richardson (1993) as a choice between motherhood and work; stating that if you have a child you should be at home looking after the child and if you want to work then you ought not to have had the child in the first place. Furthermore an argument that is negatively conveyed by Medina and Magnuson (2009) states that middle- or upper- class mothers are in a position whereby they may be judged as abnormal because they are employed, due to the fact that society may see these women as not having to work for financial income, and thus should be at home looking after their families. As far as parenthood and work are concerned, men and women differ; unlike men, women are assumed to have to choose between the two, or if they have to work, they are expected to choose work that has low levels of conflict with the responsibilities of being a mother. For some women "being a mother is the only career they want" (Richardson, 1993. p. 19). Having children poses many benefits and society places huge pressures on women to stay at home and bring up their children. In saying this, having children for women may cause the mother to lose her personal identity and ability to

be financially independent. Despite the social pressures concerned, women are moving more and more into positions of paid work as well as professional work positions. Arendell (2000) adds that social attitudes continue to be critical of a mother's absence from her children, and thus mothers must challenge opinions of others as well as the guilt that they may feel for being away from their children.

2.4. Gender- Related Assumptions

Throughout history, the division of labour has been a development of specific sex related roles that men and women take on, where “a variety of sex- specific skills and behavioural styles arise from men's and women's typical family and economic roles, which in many societies can be described as either breadwinner or homemaker” (Carli & Eagly, 1999, p. 206). Traditionally men and women according to Barnett and Hyde (2001) have always taken on different roles in society; women have always been associated with nurturing and men with work. Men in the past were presumed unable to perform roles of childcare, and should rather focus on work due to men being characterised as the ideal ‘breadwinner’ portrayed as strong and protective. Women were not involved in paid work as it was a role for which they were not suited. The norm of the division of labour according to Barnett and Hyde (2001) over the years has dictated that women should be in the home and men at work; feminist theory has challenged this ideology with regard to the frustration of women, as a result of being associated within the limited bounds of the home. The gender role stereotypes that men and women play throughout society have been replicated over many years, however, “While women's lives have been characterised primarily in terms of motherhood, men's lives have been characterised largely without reference to fatherhood” (Engle & Leonard, 1995, p. 49). According to Milkie and Peltola (1999), women have continued to perform ‘female’ tasks for example, cooking, cleaning, caring for children and the elderly as well as shopping on a daily basis. However, the built in flexibility of male tasks such as repair work, lawn maintenance and so on is the one difference between traditional male and female tasks. The difficulty is revealed for women in having to balance work and family due to the time commitment of paid and un- paid work being equal to or greater than that of employed men (Milkie & Peltola, 1999).

Contemporary men and women are continuously finding themselves in work and family

arrangements that were unheard of in previous generations. Paterna and Martinez (2006) state that the interest placed on the father figure has in recent years grown in relation to both the development of children as well as in comparison with the dedication to childcare by a woman. Men are increasingly seen to be participating more and more with the children, changing the traditional gender roles. Brownson and Gilbert (2002) add that, men although recognising this gender role change, are still defining their role in terms of the traditional ideology, perceiving themselves as being primarily responsible for economic protection of the family as well as the discipline of their children. Easton (2007) adds that in many ways, men and women have not progressed that far- her study showed that the domestic coping of working mothers with regard to the reliance placed on partner/spouse is less dominant in society in reality, and that the gender role stereotypes of men and women are still being implemented in South Africa today.

An area of particular significance according to Phillips and Imhoff (1997) is that of the dual-earner couples and the sharing of household and childcare responsibility. Numerous studies show that while women have taken on added roles outside of the home, their level of childcare and household responsibility have not changed relative to their husbands. Even in dual- income households, Leslie, Anderson and Branson (1991) state that women are seen to be more involved in childcare than men. According to Biernat and Wortman (1991), when a wife is employed, husbands are believed to take on increased involvement in the household, but this is not always the case. Working women account for fewer hours spent on household activities and more hours spent on labour work. This however, does not increase a husband's level of participation in the household. Women although having to decrease time spent on household activities, they regardless carry primary household care and responsibility, thus carry the 'double duty' involved.

According to a study on juggling multiple roles and the act of resistance undertaken by Chasteen and Kissman (2000) it was shown that through women becoming co- providers of the couple, the couple thus starts to share childcare roles and negotiate for the change of giving up the control over managing the home and the children. The reduction of stress for women can be seen through the co- equal gender existence in this relationship. In the study, communication between the parents and the children can help mothers in dealing with this balancing act. The study also shows that mothers at the end of the day bear the responsibility for their children and the changes that take place in the family. The idea that the mother is

responsible for the children causes anxiety to build up and is further enhanced by societal changes and expectations on the mother that can cause further conflict.

2.5. Women in the Workplace

Post- Apartheid South Africa according to Easton (2007) has seen the growing feminisation of the labour force, between the years 1995 and 2005. Easton (2007) adds that according to the 2006 Labour Market Review undertaken by the Department of Labour in the Republic of South Africa, females accounted for almost 58% of the growth in the labour force and males accounted for 42.3%. According to Herbst, Coetzee and Visser (2007), 1.7 million women entered the South African labour market between 1991 and 2001, a 23.6% increase in the feminisation of the labour market. According to Herbst *et al.*, (2007), this confirmed that women are pursuing careers today and in many cases are compelled to in order to add to household income and this has resulted in dual- income couples. Casale and Posel (2002) add that the increased number of women in the labour market in South Africa may be the reflection of the erosion of traditional male income support for example in the case of divorce. There has also been a profound increase in labour market feminisation with regard to professional women entering the professional labour market in South Africa. When assessing the numbers of women entering professions that were previously male- dominated professions in the past, there exists an increase in these numbers. According to the South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (2011), in 2000, women CA's accounted for no more than 20% of the qualified jobs. In 2008, the number increased to 40%, as well as there being an increase in number of black women CA's. Ncayiana (2011) adds that there has been an increase in women in the medical profession in South Africa, stating that women graduating in the medical profession increased from 46.6% in 1999, to 55.1% in 2007. The figures are in line with global trends, as in the US, women make up more than 50% of matriculating medical students and 25% of practicing doctors.

The statistics of South Africa resonate with the international labour market in developed countries, such as the US. The US saw in the year 2004 that around 60% of women over 16 years old were involved in paid work of some kind, and 73% of mothers with children under the age of 18 years, were involved in formally employed work (U.S. Department of Labour, 2004). According to Cooke- Reynolds and Zukewich (2004) over the past 30 years there has

been a substantial increase in the number of women in the labour force in all industrialised countries. Cooke- Reynolds and Zukewich (2004) focused on developed countries in their study and showed that by 2001, the Canadian feminisation of the labour force had risen to 71%, similar to that of the US at this time. Female labour force participation is said to be the greatest in Sweden with 76% of the labour force being women. Labour force participation is seen to peak for men and women between the ages of 25 to 54. Women of this age were shown to be active in the labour force in 2001, a high in Sweden with 86%, Canada and France with 79%, the US with 76% and the UK and Australia with 71%. There has also been an increase in women's participation in the professional labour market, thus allowing for an increase in substantial economic improvement. In Canada, the number of women who are Doctors and Dentists has increased from 44% in 1987 to 54% in 2002, thus showing a 10% increase over the course of 15 years. In Canada and Australia, Sweden and the US, women have also made gains in managerial and high status work positions.

Richardson (1993) states that a woman's decision whether to work or not is subject to many issues, namely; how many children she may have; availability of day- care; the encouragement and opportunities to work outside of the home that are available to women; whether she enjoys her job and wants a career and the amount of money that she can earn. According to Bullock (1994), women may work because they are compelled to in order to survive. Attitudes vary in some degree as to whether a woman is seen as having to work for the family or on the other hand works to satisfy her own needs. In reality women enter the workplace for numerous reasons. It may be to support the family; in this case the public may be assumed to have a sense of sympathy toward the women, as they do not have the choice to be with their children; and these efforts are seen as self- sacrifice. If not working for financial purposes, then women may be seen as working for personal self- gain and may therefore be looked upon as selfish. Women today are also seen to have the choice to work, as we live in a time with opportunities to do so. The increase in women's participation in the labour force over the years has resulted in an overlapping of crucial issues; the greater choice available to them and the pressure to work for survival of their families. There is an added reason for women to want to work and that is the gaining of a sense of self worth and confidence through identifying themselves with a purpose and so developing self- confidence. The reasons for working with regard to reward vary hugely between industrialised and developing countries, between classes, ethnic groups as well as age groups (Bullock, 1994). Being a working mother can affect women in many positive ways according to Richardson (1993), it

can enhance self- esteem and self- image, creating economic independence and a sense of power. However Richardson (1993) states that it can also lead to family- work conflict and stress. According to Bullock (1994) the balancing act of the daily process of motherhood and work life may result in women not doing either job to any great satisfaction, leading to high levels of frustration, guilt and fatigue. It can also evolve to a sense of failure within the individual at the high level demands of both issues. Mothers, according to Medina and Magnuson (2009), in professional work positions, are affected greatly by the mothering bind, in that it brings with it the challenge of balancing both spheres and fulfilling either role.

According to Medina and Magnuson (2009), even though a woman may be at work, she is still a mother and thus time may be spent worrying, planning and thinking for the children, this will perhaps affect productivity at work. The main reason for a mother working however rests on the notion of whether she needs to work for financial reasons. In many families today, women are the breadwinners, thus their wages are the dominant source of income for the family. The class issues come into play with regard to considering women who work in relatively low status jobs, low pay and no real opportunity for promotion, this being very different to the middle- class women who may represent a differing ethos with regard to career ambitions and aspirations. In this instance one may ask why these women work outside of the home and away from their children and motherly responsibilities if they do not need to. According to Oakley (1981), asking this kind of a question to women and not to men is fundamentally sexist in terms of feminist ideology. Women may feel essentially lonely at home with the children all day, and perhaps use work as a reason to exit the home for a different mental stimulation. Another reason for their movement to the workplace may be due to the attractiveness of paid employment (Medina & Magnuson, 2009).

A particular reason why women who are middle- class may feel that they have failed in the combining of both responsibilities- motherhood and a job- may be due to the fact that there is this newly evolving image of the 'superwoman'. The makings of a woman like Margaret Thatcher, the first female prime minister of the United Kingdom or Shirley Conran, British novelist and journalist, produce a certain stereotype that reflects a woman who can do everything. The stereotype includes woman who are managers, company directors or story writers with best- sellers and in addition, having beautiful children and a well kept family home. This type of women shows that one can have it all and still be successful in their careers and personal lives (Richardson, 1993).

In a study done by Stone and Lovejoy (2004), a problem with regard to women entering the workplace was that of the 'maternal wall'. The maternal wall is "an invisible barrier that is supported by employers' expectations that motherhood would impede women's professional lives" (Medina & Magnuson, 2009, p. 93). Women were shown to have left the workplace in order to be stay-at-home mothers. Most of the women resigned from their jobs due to the maternal wall. The mothers in essence were given undesirable functions at work. The result showed that women leave their professional jobs in the response to the belief ideology that women should be home mothering their children if possible.

Another reason for women to work is that, according to Bullock (1994), in all parts of the world, the family is contracting. In the developing countries, although they are multi-generational, they too are becoming narrower with regard to fewer adult siblings living in the household. In most areas, there are in addition fewer children born each year, as well as the fact that there are greater numbers of older people due to the fact that the level of life and healthy life expectancy has increased. Another factor that has become more common is that of the rise in deaths due to HIV aids, which principally affect the adults in the prime of their lives and thus children, are losing parents and households. This has particularly impacted Africa where two thirds of total infections are found. The women have to take on the responsibility for childcare although being affected more rapidly than men (Bullock, 1994). Women today are increasingly finding themselves the only adult in the household and in many regions globally there has been a rise in the number of female headed households; in most cases rising well above twenty percent. In many cases this tends to affect the poorer areas with high levels of poverty, such as Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean. One of the issues of a poverty stricken household is the breaking of the family; due to family members leaving provisionally or permanently in order to find better work elsewhere (Bullock, 1994). This resonates with the South African context; whereby there is still income segregation. According to a study by Christopher (2001) on urban segregation in post-apartheid South Africa, the majority of Africans have over the years become more integrated, but are constrained in their choice of residential options due to the general levels of poverty that still persist. Asian and coloured people have witnessed declines in segregation levels as they return to areas they were removed from in previous years. Nevertheless there still continues to be exceptionally high levels of segregation in the country.

2.6. Women and Professional Work Roles

Professional women can be regarded as high achieving or successful, characterised as “women who have reached a relatively high level in their occupation or profession” according to Lirio *et al.*, (2007, p. 29). In the US, according to Biernat and Wortman (1991), women do not only make up 50% of the total workforce but are more than likely in addition to be in administrative and professional jobs, to be married as well as have children under the age of six than in the past. According to Wittenberg- Cox and Maitland (2008), the 20th century saw an increase of women in the population, and the 21st century will see the economic, political and social effects of this rise. Over the past thirty years women have been working beside men in the same jobs in the same companies and with the same levels of education, qualifications and ambitions. Today women have extraordinary economic influence, representing the majority of the talent pool and most of the market. Women are according to Wittenberg- Cox and Maitland (2008) one of the three rising forces influencing the 21st century along with global warming and the internet; they are called the three W’s- weather, women and web. As stated by Wittenberg- Cox and Maitland (2008. p. 2) “In America, for example, women make 80% of consumer purchasing decisions”. Women in the US according to Kephart and Schumacher (2005) account for more than 50% of the professional and managerial jobs, an increase in comparison with the 34.8% in 1976. In the UK, this statistic is much the same as that of the US. Sweden on the other hand was 50% in the year 1980.

When women arrived in the world of work in the 20th Century according to Wittenberg- Cox and Maitland (2008), they stimulated an economic revolution and with it came unique consequences. The developed countries saw the rise of women as being central to labour markets as a solution to the constant challenges of an aging workforce, falling birth rates and a shortage of skills. The developing world on the other hand saw the rise in women’s economic participation as being the answer to sustainable development (Wittenberg- Cox & Maitland, 2008). Barnett and Hyde (2001) note that the 20th and 21st Century have seen a fast pace rate of change in work and family roles in the US. Women have graduated from professional schools at a greater and equal pace to that of men. Women hold positions of power today, and even though they are still under represented they hold positions in Congress, Judiciary, Professional sports and Military.

According to Dunlop (2009), improved technology, higher education and the contraceptive

pill have allowed women to acquire skills and knowledge, improving their value in the job market. Women have thus shifted in roles rapidly from stay at home mothers to successful professional women. Organisations, as stated by Wittenberg- Cox & Maitland (2008), have had over the years to understand the reality of a dual- income earning family and need to keep facilitating conciliation between the family and the workplace, in order to prevent the loss of their top female workforce.

Men and women have differing career life cycles according to Wittenberg- Cox and Maitland (2008). Women are more inclined to leave at different stages to men due to differing consequences. A study that was done in the US on 3000 women and men showed that 37% of high- achieving women had a break from the workplace and all but 7% of these women wanted to return to the workplace. Rejoining the workforce however was harder than expected, and thus only 74% managed to re- enter back into the workforce with only 40% returning to the category of being in full- time jobs. The reasons for the women taking time off from work was due to differing issues; the main issue was that of childcare and elderly care mentioned by the women from differing economic regions. Research, internationally and sector specific has revealed a picture that has shown professional women moving out of the corporate sector and away from these kinds of jobs in order to attain more control over their personal and work lives. The studies have shown that the most complex decade is that of a woman's 30s. Studies have also shown in France, that women who leave their jobs in their 30s are not necessarily leaving them to be at home, but they are finding jobs that make it easier to manage their home and work lives - a not so demanding job, such as being a teacher or a part- time receptionist (Wittenberg- Cox & Maitland, 2008).

According to Wittenberg- Cox and Maitland (2008), one of the biggest and almost ignored differences between men and women is that of their career 'life cycles'. This difference is often socially and culturally constructed. Women, who have children, have what is known as an M- shaped career curve. Abbott, Wallace and Tyler (2005) acknowledge that in France, UK, Germany and the Netherlands, the activity of women closely bears a resemblance to the M- shaped curve. It was further noted that the reality of this curve however does differ between countries. Women, according to Wittenberg- Cox and Maitland (2008), start out with a strong curve and then start to feel the turbulence of their 30s which causes their career curve to 'dip' and then pick up again somewhere in their 40s and then dip again in a time of retirement. Men's careers usually start in their 20s and rise in a straight line until they stop

abruptly at the age of retirement. Thus a woman's career often peaks a decade later than a man's career, due to the need for them to leave their career for a period of time to have children and focus on the family. Once having had children in their 30s, early 40s, a woman's career commences again.

When the time comes for a woman to start a family, women according to Wittenberg- Cox and Maitland (2008) may leave the workplace indefinitely, however according to Loten (2007) women in some cases do not leave the workplace. Wittenberg- Cox and Maitland (2008), state that the movement of women to a more motherly role in society is known to usually be the first fork in their career path. This time overlaps with that of women on the fast track being placed in management positions. Having children is not the only difficult situation hindering a women's movement up the leadership ladder but it is the prominent one. In some countries and cases, women may only have children in their 40s. Studies globally have shown that women will usually move into positions of teaching or administration as these jobs allow a level of balance for home and work life. A woman's reason for leaving large organisations is stated by Wittenberg- Cox and Maitland (2008) as due to them wanting a sense of control over their lives. Occasionally women feel that by the time of their second or third maternity leave, they are unsatisfied by the four day week and have tried the options of flexibility. In leaving this type of corporate all involved work life, they are in essence looking for fulfillment in integrating their family and work roles (Wittenberg- Cox & Maitland, 2008). Loten (2007) states that in some cases women do not leave the workplace and in order to seek improved work- life balance, they negotiate flexible work schedules. This comes in the form of flexible work hours or limiting work tasks, business travel or working late at night. Women according to Loten (2007) are becoming known as 'self-agents' in this regard.

2.7. Multiple Roles of a Working Mother

Women perform domestic labour that includes housework tasks, for example, cooking and cleaning; as well as childcare and over the years researchers have broadened this area to include emotional labour. This comprises a sharing of an intimate relationship with partners, to manage conflicts that may arise as well as to maintain relationships. As mentioned earlier in relation to gender- related assumptions, Tingey, Kiger and Riley (1996) expresses that

even though husbands 'help out' in the home they are merely helping out and thus at the end of the day the working mothers tend to take the responsibility for domestic – labour management even when husbands are helping out. Chasteen and Kissman (2000) support this by stating that although men are taking on the co- partner role they do play the 'help- role'. The juggling of multiple roles for working mothers can lead to work- family conflict, role overload as well as stress. When there are high demands at both work and at home, this leads to greater stress for working mothers. When role- overload occurs, the positive effects of being employed disappear. According to Tingey *et al.*, (1996) the over demanding nature of juggling multiple roles causes a great deal of stress for working mothers. Tingey *et al.*, (1996) reveal that their findings show that the more the partner's work- family spillover, and the less the working mother's happiness with the childcare arrangements, the higher the perceived stress is for working mothers. In this regard it shows that while a working mother may have control over her own work- family spillover, she may not be able to influence her partners' own work- family conflicts.

According to Roehling, Moen and Batt (2003) when work- family conflict arises, work- family spillover occurs, and the stability of the partnership relationship and the work needed in this regard normally falls on the women. Further, work- family spillover causes a woman to have much less control over the outcomes than with her own conflicts and this can be associated with high levels of stress, strain and poorer physical health among working mothers. Childcare is not a scheduled procedure as it is with household tasks. Childcare cannot be rescheduled if time is running out; it is thus a full time commitment, and because working mothers have the responsibility of managing the family household as well as paid employment, stress can occur when childcare arrangements, being a relatively inflexible demand, are faced with resistance from male partners. Thus in the face of cultural differences and understandings Tingey *et al.*, (1996), suggest that women should ideally take principal responsibility for childcare, predominantly when the children are young. Couples may have built an understanding that relates to both being able to take care of the children; however fathers tend to rarely take primary responsibility.

Tingey *et al.*, (1996) indicate that working women perform a 'second shift' of unpaid work at home once having worked in paid employment in a full- time job during the day. The 'double duty' of this can lead to a sense of role- overload as well as being incapable of balancing home and work life. A study by Barnett and Baruch (1985) showed that women in their

middle ages feel more stress when in the role of mother than as a paid worker. Working women in professional positions, according to Paden and Buehler (1995), have a degree of expectation attached to their performance with regard to both the workplace and the home. At work they are expected to be aggressive, competitive and committed while at home they become nurturers to their children and compassionate and caring toward their husbands. This can bring with it huge amounts of stress and exhaustion from trying to juggle so many roles simultaneously.

According to Amatea and Fong (1991), studies have shown over the years that role- overload and conflict for women have been linked to weaker physical and psychological health. A further body of research takes the negative outcomes of working mothers into mind, suggesting that being a working mother can lead to role overload and work- family spillover. Tingey *et al.*, (1996) suggest that there are circumstances when the working mothers have an absence of stress. These circumstances include that of satisfaction with the dividing of household tasks; satisfaction with emotional labour in the relationship; as well as that of the mothers own work- family spillover and status of being employed. Working mothers also gain a certain amount of power in overseeing the family needs and issues and they also receive a sense of gender confirmation with the fact that they have done a good job in keeping the family together. In a similar fashion there exists the socialised view that emotion work is the responsibility of the female, and thus perceived stress about emotional labour is lessened in this regard. The study carried out by Tingey *et al.*, (1996, p. 189) noted that “stress develops when an individual lacks a sense of control over the demands of multiple roles”. An interesting part of the study showed that full- time or part- time employment did not show a difference, suggesting that when employed part- time the multiple roles were somewhat eased and when working full- time the energy created for their work balanced the multiple role demands. Tingey *et al.*, (1996) state that the multiple role demands placed on working mothers are predicated upon the significance of control. The reasons for stress among the women in the study showed that stress was created through the partner’s work- family spillover; and the frustration related to arranging childcare responsibility.

Barnett & Hyde (2001) state that through the expansionist theory, the occupation of various roles, may expand a person’s energy supply, and further have beneficial effects. Tingey *et al.*, (1996) further states, that the more roles a woman occupies, the better her physical and/or psychological health will be. According to Tingey *et al.*, (1996) researchers have over the

years turned their attention to working mothers and their well being. One set of findings by Tingey *et al.*, (1996) shows that when a mother participates in the labour force, her self-esteem improves as well as her status and resources. Barnett and Baruch (1985) suggest the same findings, and found that married women with children, who held high status work roles, reported a high level of well-being. Another set of findings, on the other hand, suggests that working mothers can be associated with stress, due to the fact that they carry extreme responsibility for their household and children, as well as the demands of their work jobs. (Tingey *et al.*, 1996). The juggling of multiple roles for working mothers can have positive and negative outcomes as discussed. Research proposes further that employment for mothers allows for a sense of liberation. Further research shows that paid employment for mothers increases autonomy and independence as well as power, status and self- efficacy. Tingey *et al.*, (1996) suggest that through their study, employment for mothers brings with it less anxiety, less depression and less feelings of stress.

The cost of living in South Africa is high according to Franks *et al.*, (2006), and thus South African women are encouraged to enter the labour market. In moving in this sphere, they have appeared to place increasing importance on the family domain. This has increased stress on time and energy needed for the multiple roles of life. In addition, due to the diverse nation, one needs to understand the different groups of women and how they may assign meaning to their life roles and how they expect to incorporate these roles.

2.8. Work- Family Conflict

According to Phillips and Imhoff (1997), sources of conflict between work and family roles have become an area of significant research in the past decade. Whitehead and Kotze (2003) state that the two most important domains in adult lives are family and work, and that the conflicts that may arise in these areas create unfavorable effects for individuals, families and organisations. Women experience the highest level of conflict between work and family, since women are still expected to perform the bulk of household responsibilities. As society moves to a more equal distribution of work and family responsibilities between male and female, conflict and confusion between the two roles thus becomes a major concern for the individual and the individual's workplace (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003). Past research by Gray (1983) has shown that married working women have experienced role- conflict for a while.

Gray (1983) identifies a study carried out by Johnson and Johnson in 1977 that found that women reported major concerns with regard to the experiences of conflict between their children and career. The conflicts brought on feelings of fatigue, emotional depletion as well as a sense of guilt.

According to Farel and Dobelstein (2001) the employment of mothers outside of the home creates complex issues in many families. It comes face- to- face with the traditional beliefs about the relevant roles of a man and woman. The structure of a traditional nuclear family is questioned in light of concern over the employment of mothers and creates anxiety with regard to the changing of women's roles and dedication to their families (Farel & Dobelstein, 2001). It has become apparent that the rise in the number of women who have entered the workforce has represented an exit from the historical patriarchal stereotype of the 'appropriate' roles that women should engage in, namely home makers and child bearers. Women are now taking on an additional role of the working mother- a dual- role. Whitehead and Kotze (2003) state that professional women of the 21st century have the extraordinary challenge of trying to balance the multiple roles of homemaker and worker, and thus fulfilling roles of mother, caregiver, spouse and employee simultaneously. The employment of mothers into the workplace is a complicated issue that raises many questions with regard to the raising of children. The development of a society that incorporates the number of working mothers into the workplace, and thus outside of the home has had a great influence over the traditional role of mothers. An issue that becomes prevalent in such circumstance is that of inter- role conflict and work- family conflict (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003).

Men and women throughout their lifetime have many roles to fill; the act of balancing the various roles becomes a challenge and is often a difficult task to accomplish. When one of the tasks starts to conflict with the other, such as when work and family roles are incompatible, it results in inter- role conflict. This is characterised by the pressure of multiple demands and can further be related to significant levels of stress for employed parents (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1985). The instance of work- family conflict exists when family tasks override work tasks or vice versa. This is stated by Keene and Quadagno (2004) as the type of tension that is present when a person's roles are both parent or spouse on the one hand and then an employee in the workplace on the other hand. Work- family conflict is a form of inter- role conflict. According to Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1985) work- family conflict exists when the participation in the work (family) role is made difficult by the participation in the family

(work) role. This concept is characterised by a strain on the amounts of time, physical energy and psychological efforts which can have negative consequences. The problem that comes into play is when the two facets interfere with one another. When a person is at work, they are missing out on family responsibilities; when a person is at home and not at work; this can also have negative work consequences for the individual. According to Falzon (2007) when work and family life come into conflict, it can be for many reasons. For instance, mothers who at some point feel the need to advance in their respective careers by for example obtaining a promotion, are not able to as they have to leave work at a specific time in order to care for their children. The action of performing multiple roles is what is termed “family-work spillover”. The term mentioned has to do with the family and work life interrupting one’s ability to perform in the workplace efficiently.

Academic and corporate research is verifying that work- to- family and family- to- work spillover does exist. Research highlights the importance of healthy work-family life. A negative outcome of work- to- family spillover can be withdrawal from interaction with the family, increased marital conflict, less knowledge of children’s experiences in life, greater likelihood of alcohol abuse and an overall decline in quality of life. Examples of family-to-work spillover include; increased psychological distress due to reduced parental and marital role quality, decrease in job satisfaction, decreased quality of work- life, and increased absenteeism (Falzon, 2007).

According to Noor (2004) work and family are two crucial areas in most links in most adult’s lives. Increasing amounts of research has explained the association between these two areas of interest due to demographic changes in the workforce over the years. Most research in this domain has focused on work and family and its connection to perceived conflict. Researchers have established work- family conflict as a development of inter- role conflict through the notion of work and family roles being conflicting, thus meeting the demands in one area makes it difficult to meet the demands in the other area at the same time. Researchers over the years have investigated two kinds of work- family conflict, namely work- interfering with family (WIF) conflict as well as family- interfering with work (FIW) conflict. WIF conflict involves work related activities that interfere with the family role, and FIW conflict occurs when family responsibilities hamper work roles. Noor (2004, 391) suggests that “work-family conflict has been associated with diminished satisfactions and lower levels of psychological well- being”.

A Canadian study was conducted by Schieman, Mc Brier and Gundy (2003) investigating the effect of home- work conflict and its association with anxiety and distress. The study showed a positive relationship between the two spheres of interest. Current US and Canadian labour market trends, show a growing number of married women with small children as well as dual- income earning women having entered the labour force. More women are shown to be living a work- role and family- role, as well as trying to cope with full- time career ambitions. The study proved that home to work conflict is more distressing when work activities are routine and monotonous. The results of the study showed that home to work conflict and distress is stronger for women when their occupation entails routine work.

According to Williams and Alliger (1994) the balancing act associated with the demanding roles of work and family has over the years become an important daily undertaking for numerous employed parents. The changes in the demographics in the workforce globally over the years has proven to be a key reason for this as well as the attitudes that society places on the work and family life of individuals. Recent research studies have focused on the psychological effects of juggling work and family responsibilities/roles, and it can be concluded that multiple roles provide individuals with advantages such as greater self-esteem, increased status and ego satisfaction. However these are not without their disadvantages such as role accumulation, role strain and distress.

A study completed by Houle *et al.*, (2011) examined the importance of self- efficacy in facilitating the combined management of work and family as well as predicting employed mother's well- being. Data was obtained from 300 full- time professional women with regard to work interfering with family, as well as family interfering with work. The findings indicated that the greater the interference between work and family the more the women felt emotionally fatigued, less committed as well as wanting to change their jobs or leave the labour market. Self- efficacy proved to be a crucial predictor of WIF and FIW.

The study according to Houle *et al.*, (2011) showed that juggling multiple roles, demands and goal progress affected the mood in work and family functioning. The unpleasant moods of individuals leaked over from work to family and vice versa. However pleasant moods had little to no affect on work and family. The results of the study showed that the states of individual's moods, juggling of roles and levels of role involvement showed work- family

conflict. The study also proved that the daily involvement in the family roles, distress experienced while involved in family activities and family interferences into work actions, were positively related to the fact that family interfered a great deal with work roles (Houle *et al.*, 2011).

2.9. Stress Related to Work- Family Conflict

According to Quick, Murphy and Hurrell (1992) conceptual literature on stressors suggests that working women are prone to the same stressors as working men. Women also however have additional unique stressors such as discrimination, stereotyping, and social isolation and work- home conflicts. Empirical research examined sex differences in particular work stressors. A survey was carried out examining British managers and found major differences. Female managers were reported as having stressors that were discriminatory in nature, and characterised by stress in the home and social arena in comparison with those of the men. Other studies have also concluded that work- home conflict has had problematic effects on working women. Over the years, women have come to be in a position of a dual- income earner with their partners, but men on the other hand have not adapted to sharing the domestic responsibilities with the women in the home. A study on Canadian managers showed that work- home conflicts are more stressful for women. Another study showed that male and female managers rated work- home conflict to be a reliable cause of poor job performance of women in the workplace as opposed to that of men. Thus by looking at the results of these studies, women are more likely to experience work- home conflicts, due to the multiple roles that they take on, as well as the unwillingness of the men to share in these roles actively with the women. These conflicts can thus be said to cause a higher degree of stress for women than men. There has over the years been research investigating the sex differences of distress or strain on men and women. Women have been known to have greater overall levels of psychological distress than men, which are reported as cases of anxiety, depression and sleep disturbances. There thus exist significant differences in the symptoms of distress and strain that are felt by men and women (Quick *et al.*, 1992).

According to Falzon (2007) women today are increasingly faced with the need to juggle their mothering and working roles. Some studies have indicated that employed women experience high levels of stress compared to unemployed mothers, and other studies suggest that mothers

who are employed benefit largely for numerous reasons. Research has concentrated on the two contending theories; namely the role enhancement theory and the role overload theory. The role enhancement theory states that paid employment has a beneficial impact on women socially and psychologically through greater social interaction as well as greater self-esteem that comes with being financially independent and having a form of status. Other research has focused on the role-overload theory and argues that working mothers are faced with demands and pressures of juggling multiple roles, which inevitably leads to physical and emotional exhaustion.

According to Franks *et al.*, (2006) there is also a degree of stress and strain placed on working mothers who may feel a sense of guilt over not devoting enough time to childcare, thus resulting in less sleep or free time. Martikainen (1995) notes that competing work and family obligations demand enormous amounts of time from people. Pressure on time is particularly important when balancing these roles, and can lead to guilt over not spending enough time on the family or enough time on work. Folbre and Himmelweit (2000) point out that society still expects a woman to be more dedicated to her family. Martikainen (1995) also holds that having simultaneous roles with diverse expectations can lead to role-overload and increased levels of stress.

Farel and Dobelstein (2001) further note that the structure of the traditional nuclear family, consisting of two parents and children, has also come into question with regard to the changing roles of women, and the degree to which women can dedicate themselves to their families. Despite these tensions women are increasingly taking on two major roles; that of the mothering home maker and the working mother. Bianchi and Milkie (2010) add that the mother playing a dual role, has become a relatively common phenomenon, and its increased occurrence over recent years necessitates a need for further research in this area.

2.10. Work- Life balance

According to Hill, Hawkins, Ferris and Weitzman (2001, p. 49), work-life balance is defined as “the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional, and behavioural demands of both paid work and family responsibilities” Whitehead and Kotze (2003) identify the following variables as an influence on the

experience of women's work- life balance:

- 1) The multiple roles performed by women.
- 2) Role strain experienced due to multiple roles, i.e. role conflict and role overload.
- 3) Organisational culture and work dynamics; organisational values that support work- life balance has positive consequences on work and personal well- being.
- 4) Personal resources and social support.
- 5) Women's careers need to be looked at in light of their life course and time lines.
- 6) Coping and coping strategies. Women use both emotional and problem- focused coping strategies to deal with role- conflict.

According to Vermeulen (2006), work- life issues have traditionally always been perceived as the exclusive problem of working mothers. Over the last five years, people's lives are getting busier, and increasingly men, are being asked the same questions with regard to the demands on their time. Globalisation, technological advancement and the restructuring of businesses are challenging the notion of traditional paid work, as well as the consequences of conflict upon individuals, households and families. Men and women are thus questioning the impact of low working hours, increased stress levels, low energy, and extended travel on the quality of their lives.

According to Franks *et al.*, (2006), young women are becoming increasingly career- oriented, with high educational aspirations and future career ambitions. This is due to this move toward being more education and career- oriented. At the same time these women are maintaining traditional female values of caring and nurturing. Thus in recent years the best means of finding a balance between work and family has become more a focal point. The phrase "work- family" came into effect in the 1980s, a time when women were entering the workforce at an increasing rate, and where these two spheres were more divided than today. The influx of women into the labour force, has added additional challenges for women who are expected by society to integrate the different roles of life. According to Naidoo and Jano (2002), the shifting economic and social situations and trends have had an impact on the traditional family structure. It has in addition had an effect on gender roles and the division of domestic labour. Married women over the years have engaged in paid employment outside of the home and the reforming of relationships has given rise to the reality of dual- career or dual- earner couples and families.

According to Hill *et al.*, (2001), demographic composition of the US workforce has had a dramatic change in recent years. The work force now includes an increased number of dual-earner couples who in addition still have to care for their children. The workforce has also come to include more dual-earner professional couples, where they not only have jobs but also careers. According to Naidoo and Jano (2002), the primary responsibility for managing the home and family responsibilities predominantly lies on the women in a dual-career relationship. Women who are in dual-career marriages with children have a 'double shift', in that they have paid employment in the workplace as well as the demanding role of being the mother in the home. The problem comes with regard to the balancing of these two roles. The gendered expectations of women with regard to the domestic, social and childcare for women suggests that when marriage is added to this, it puts enormous amounts of pressure on the professional women, who already work long hours in jobs that demand a certain level of skill and commitment. Dual-career women do not in essence have the time to perform the tasks of all the different roles that they may occupy, thus resulting in them having to make a form of compromise between work and family – impacting either work or family life. Research has found that women experience a high rate of role overload and this has an impact in their lives.

Due to corporate downsizing and lengthening of working hours for employees, it now means according to Vermeulen (2006) that for dual-career parents the balancing act of juggling work demands and home responsibilities has become more difficult. A consequence, due to the traditional socialisation process of women, is that women are still taking the bulk of responsibilities of the home. The US, Sweden and the Netherlands showed that women in dual-career families work an extra month of work each year, proving that a man's average is 68 working hours a week and a women's is 78 hours a week (Vermeulen, 2006).

According to Vermeulen (2006), South Africa has the increased problem of poverty, unemployment and affirmative action. In trying to deal with these basic concerns, developed countries have put work-life balance first in humanising the workplace. With regard to South Africa's white collar workers, many dual-income families are able to afford full-time childcare as well as having the option of a domestic worker. This proves to be a trustworthy option for the caring of children, but the only concern is that the domestic worker may not be skilled in dealing with the full-spectrum of childcare, thus necessitating the need for parental

involvement in areas such as; medical appointments, extra mural activities and helping out with homework.

A study undertaken in Canada, according to Vermeulen (2006), reported high levels of stress as a resulting effect of work- family conflict. The main issues for people experiencing high levels of work- life conflict are; a lack of time; low energy levels; lack of control over work arrangements; stress, anxiety and guilt over not being able to do everything all at once and greater need for work- life satisfaction. The conflict is particularly felt by women, especially women with pre- school children; there is however also a growing concern for men, reporting some sort of work- family stress. In order to cope and manage work- life stress, according to Vermeulen (2006) employees are using sick leaves as a coping strategy in dealing with the demands of family responsibility, showing a change in the order of their main concerns. When looking at particular challenges facing women, in the US and European regions, women are leaving corporate companies in their masses due to this shift in priorities and more of a focus on family life.

In South Africa, according to Vermeulen (2006), a spokesperson on behalf of the Independent Counseling and Advisory Service (ICAS) stated that an international study showed South African women as having an increased amount of stress related to work- life issues. This is explained through the notion of women taking on senior positions, whilst at the same time carrying the responsibilities of home life.

According to Gregory and Milner (2009), work- life balance in recent years in developed countries has come to the fore of policy discourse in many countries. Globalisation and fast technological change are associated with this, with concerns over an aging population; labour market participation and lower fertility rates. According to Crosbie and Moore (2004), new discourse in recent years around the issue of work- life balance has come into place. Regardless of an individual's age, race or gender, everyone needs to find a pattern in order to help them cope with combining work and family responsibilities or aspirations. The work- family balance in essence, entails changing patterns of work in such a way so as to allow for the achievement of this pattern. One of the methods of balancing has been suggested as working from home – that of paid work carried out primarily at home.

According to O'Driscoll, Brough and Kalliath (2011), numerous researchers have studied the

changing demographics, work conditions, family role expectations as well as other factors that have added to a sealed relationship between areas of work and family. Increasingly sophisticated technologies such as cell- phones and laptops, have allowed for increased flexibility and the notion that ‘work can be done at any time in any place’. This has increasingly become a reality for many people, but although the technologies provide flexibility in terms of job related responsibilities, they do however distort the boundaries between job and off- job roles. Conflict is likely to come about in attempting to balance these two domains. However, it is also apparent that engagement between job roles and family roles can give positively to each other and lead to increased quality of life for some.

2.11. Coping Strategies

2.11.1. The Definition of Coping

According to Phillips and Imhoff (1997), given the stress and conflict involved in the balancing of a dual- role lifestyle, women have formulated coping strategies and support systems in order to balance the two role demands. Phillips and Imhoff (1997) found that there exists a large body of research that has developed the area of coping strategies and interventions for helping women cope with role stress and conflict. Herbst (2006, p. 12), defines coping as “an effort to create conditions that permit an individual to continue moving toward desired goals”. Further stating that “coping can thus be seen as a response that follows a stressful experience” (Herbst, 2006, p. 12). Coping is further defined by Higgins *et al.*, (2008, p. 12) as “any response to external stressors that serves to prevent, avoid or minimize emotional distress”. According to Higgins *et al.*, (2008), over the years, researchers have become interested in understanding the strategies that individuals and families use in order to cope in times of stress and other such circumstance. In understanding that different coping strategies are used in differing circumstances, individuals and families are better able to manage certain situations of conflict in either the home or the workplace. A focus is placed on women in the study and thus, Ahmad (1995), states that women who find themselves in multiple role situations, need to decrease the amount of conflict they experience, and this is done through the use of coping strategies.

2.11.2. The Five Functions of Coping Behaviour

According to Higgins *et al.*, (2008) coping behavior has five functions:

- 1) It decreases the individual or family's prone- ness to distress by removing causes of stress.
- 2) Strengthens and maintains the resources used to protect the individual or family from damage, for example; family cohesiveness and adaption.
- 3) Decreases or eliminates stressor events and their corresponding adversity.
- 4) Actively manipulates the individual or family's environment by actively seeking to alter the societal circumstance.
- 5) Controls the impact of stress and its destabilising impacts on the individual or family, if stress cannot be avoided.

Over the years, according to Higgins *et al.*, (2008), catastrophic events, such as unemployment, disease, death, family separation and bankruptcy have called for the study of coping and its response to such life events. However researchers have also recognized that coping takes place in response to 'normative' stressors too. These stressors are picked up steadily and tirelessly, such as that of the conflict between work and family life. Although research has focused on coping strategies and its procedures, there proves to be little incorporation of the study of family coping, individual coping and organisational support mechanisms (Higgins *et al.*, 2009).

2.11.3. The Two Main Models of Coping

Two major theories will be discussed below in order to set a framework for coping with work- family balance. The two different theories were developed by Lazarus and Folkman 1984 and Hall 1972. The main difference between the two theories, as stated by McVeigh (2003), is that Lazarus and Folkman's model sets out two types of coping in order to deal with stressful situations and Hall's model recognises three different types of coping in terms of role- conflict.

Lazarus and Folkman (1984) establish their model of coping on the response of people in stressful situations. Coping is acknowledged as a person's ongoing cognitive and behavioural

attempts to manage the demands of stressful conditions. The theorists identify two functions of coping: emotion- focused coping and problem- focused coping. The coping functions in this regard are established by an individual in order to manage certain demands, and thus are neither observed as good or bad (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Emotion- focused coping, according to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), consists of efforts to decrease emotions of distress that are caused by obstacles, which consist of either re- evaluating the problem or dealing with the emotion at hand. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) add that emotion- focused coping relates to the managing of feelings and emotions via positive thinking and attempts to refrain from any negative obstacles. The person in this case changes the meaning attached to a situation without essentially altering behavior or events. It involves the maintaining of optimism, or denial of certain demands as a misrepresented reality. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) establish that problem- focused coping on the other hand is an attempt to lessen or eliminate the stress, comprising of active attempts to eliminate a problem or to decrease the impact of it. This is done by defining the problem and finding an alternative method. The strategies used in this regard can be either inward or outward. Inward problem solving has to do with changes that are made on a personal level, outward problem solving on the other hand involves changes that are made in the environment in which the problem exists (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Hall (1972) on the other analyses coping in relation to role- conflict, portraying roles as a form of a person's identity that compete for a part of the total identity of a person through a frequent link in the core. Hall (1972) states that the greatest role- conflict that a working women experiences comes from inter- role conflict. Hall (1972) establishes three different types of coping strategies that can be used in dealing with work- family conflict. The strategies include: structural role redefinition; personal role redefinition and reactive role behavior. Structural role redefinition is the "altering external, structurally imposed expectations relative to one's role" (Hall, 1972, p. 3). This has to do with a person lowering demands and setting new expectations. Personal role redefinition "involves changing one's expectations and perceptions of one's own behavior in a given role" (Hall, 1972, p. 3). This involves the requirement for the person to alter their own attitudes and perceptions concerning certain expectations. The final coping strategy is reactive role behavior which "entails attempting to find ways to meet all role expectations" (Hall, 1972, p. 3). This refers to an individual's improvement in role performance in an attempt to meet certain demands.

2.11.4. Factors that Influence Coping

McVeigh (2003) states that Lazarus and Folkman identify several resources that influence coping, including that of health, optimism, problem solving and social skills, social support and material resources. McVeigh (2003) adds that the aspects of an individual's life that can hamper coping include; the level of risk the individual is open to as well as personal and environmental limitations. Kenney (2000) supports this view and adds that there are a few qualities that women can take on and they include hardiness, assertiveness as well as the ability to love, trust and confide. Decent social skills and high self- esteem have also shown to prevent the negative effects from overload (McVeigh, 2003).

2.11.5. An Effective Means of Coping

On an individual level, coping is defined as the “means by which individuals and organisation's manage external or internal demands that tax or exceed the individual's resources” (Higgins *et al.*, (2008. p. 23). Coping strategies used by an individual include changing the situation (direct action); changing the way one thinks about a situation (cognitive appraisal); focusing on the stress reaction (symptoms management) as well as social support (getting help or support from others). Positive coping behaviours include; talking things through with family and friends, prioritising and getting help from family and friends. Negative behaviours include drinking alcohol and using drugs. Women may feel overwhelmed with the responsibility taken on in both the home and the workplace according to Chasteen and Kissman (2000). In order for them to get away from the problems of role-overload, they may act in a passive- aggressive manner and use alcohol and/ or drugs, as well as depression or overeating in resisting the demands placed on them for their time and attention. These women may be told they are depressed or alcoholics and thus their coping mechanisms are responding to a much larger problem. A strategy that mothers also use is indulging their children in order to make up for lost time with them as well reducing their guilt of splitting such time. Family conflicts are particularly hard on the women who feel that they are responsible for making a ‘happy home’.

Sonnech and Prach- Zahavy (2007), state that individuals use coping styles in order to manage both work and family roles. No one coping style is universally appropriate, as some may have enhanced performance with particular types of conflict situations or within

particular contexts - that of culture or personal values. According to Semmer (1996) not much is known about the coping strategies that people use, adding that there is no means of agreement in relation to the number and type of styles of coping used or developed. Sonnech and Prach-Zahavy (2007) state that the effective means of coping should lower work- family conflict. Stressors cause an imbalance in individual's lives and thus stimulate them to restore a form of balance. Social support in the form of interpersonal transactions; emotional concern as well as esteem, is seen as a crucial resource for individuals. Sonnech and Prach-Zahavy (2007) express that different styles have the capability of reducing distress, and research focused on coping with stress, has stated that problem- focused coping is the most effective - showing the importance of psychological control and self- efficacy. Nell (2005), states that some of the most useful coping styles include: seeking help, communicating feelings, taking rational action, drawing strength from hardship, using humour and upholding confidence and control. The least useful styles according to Nell (2005) include hostility, indecisiveness, self-blame and attempting to escape from the situation. Past research into coping with role conflict stated by Gray (1983) noted that the coping strategies of professional women have been seen to centre around; the help of family members helping with chores, acknowledgment of personal interests as being significant, scheduling and organising activities carefully. The study carried out by Gray (1983) found that married professional women should develop coping strategies in order to combine a professional work life and family successfully.

2.11.6. The Issue of Compromise as a Form of Coping

Women often adjust their career aspirations to allow for the balancing of work and family responsibility. Gottfredson (1996, p. 187) described compromise in his theory as an important process "as individuals often discover when the time comes, that they will be unable to implement their most preferred choices". Gottfredson (1996) stated that compromise has to do with an individual discarding their most preferred option. She explains it as the adjustment of aspirations in order to accommodate an external reality. Skinner (1980) notes that prioritising and compromising are coping strategies put in place by individual's in order to deal with role- conflicts between competing role demands. Skinner (1980) states that for example an individual can compromise on the standard of the household and instead focus some of that attention on labour work tasks, due to time and energy constraints

2.11.7. Social Support as a Form of Coping

As has been previously mentioned, women still take on more responsibility for the home, family life and childcare than men (Gordon & Whelan- Berry, 2004). Women and more importantly, working women thus look to social support in order to cope with the multiple daily roles. Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1994), state that examining an individual's social support can decrease stress, work- family conflict and overall well- being. According to Lirio *et al.*, (2007), there has been much research into the construct of social support relative to the issues of work and family life. Social support is defined by Shumaker and Brownell (1984, p. 13) as "an exchange of resources between at least two individuals perceived by the provider or the recipient to be intended to enhance the well- being of the recipient". Lirio *et al.*, (2007), notes that this social support comes from friends, family, peers as well as personal networks, and is different to organisational support.

Greenhaus and Parasurman (1994) state in their work , that there are four categories of physical and emotional support, namely; informational, such as information, guidance and suggestion; instrumental, being that of money, aid in time and other forms of help; emotional, involving affection, trust and esteem or appraisal, involving feedback and confirmation. Erdwins, Buffardi, Casper and O'Brien (2001) note that studies that include emotional and information support as well as instrumental support, show noteworthy relationships between a woman's role strain and support from their spouse. They discussed that the greater the support the less role- conflict occurs. According to Gordan and Whelan- Berry (2004), the support from husbands and partners allows for increased well- being for the women, providing for vital reinforcement that is deemed necessary for a working mother, juggling multiple daily roles. A study by Suchet and Barling (1986) in South Africa, found that spouse support induced marital satisfaction and buffered inter- role conflict, with regard to working mothers and the negative effects on the working mothers themselves. A Japanese study by Matsui, Ohsawa and Onglatco (1995) mirrors this, and found that husband support buffered the relationship between parental demands and conflicts between work and family. The support from husbands is acknowledged to be a tool used in order to overcome the negative effects of being in a dual- career couple for example, the limited personal time that an individual can spend on themselves and the high levels of stress. Ahmad (1997) carried out a

study in Malaysia exploring work- family conflict and social support for working women. The study found that support came from the working women's husbands, but also came from family and friends and was further associated with lower levels of psychological strain. Greenhaus and Parasurman (1994) propose three functions of social support, namely; stress prevention, health sustaining and buffering. The functions are seen to be relevant to a more comprehensive understanding of the work- family conflict process.

Within the context of work- family conflict Greenhaus and Parasurman (1994) state that social support is seen to prevent or reduce stress for an individual within the roles of work and family. The support from the work and family domains are assumed to decrease the time demands of respective roles. This can come for example in the form of a co- worker taking on additional work, or a supervisor that extends a project deadline or in addition, a flexible work schedule policy in the workplace that allows a reduction within the work role of an employee's demands on time. In a similar fashion, Greenhaus and Parasurman (1994) state that within the family role, it can comprise of a spouse who takes on extra household chores, or a child who prepares dinner, this can thus allow for relief on the time demands of the family role. The key function of social support is to prevent or lessen work- family conflict through support that reduces the pressure placed on time demands and enhances an individual's well- being.

2.11.8. Coping Strategies for Working Mothers Internationally

Franks *et al.*, (2006) states that among the many roles that women play, the most common one is that of the mother. Working women in the developed countries are seen to rely on a form of social support as a coping strategy in order to assist them in their responsibilities of childcare and overall homemaker. The increase in women's participation in the labour force, according to Franks *et al.*, (2006), has come with a decrease in the number of relatives that can help in childcare. Thus in order to cope, women are either depending upon organised childcare facilities or undergoing major changes in their employment styles, for example working from home or working part- time.

A study completed in Canada by Higgins *et al.*, (2008), showed that coping strategies were associated with lowering four forms of work- life conflict, role- overload, work- to- family

interference and caregiver strain. The individual coping strategies included having fewer children, delaying the starting of a family, working harder and prioritising; as well as family coping strategies such as working different hours than the spouse, planning family time together and gendered division of labour. The study showed that high work- life conflict was associated with a degree of poor physical and mental health problems. Individuals who are stressed, depressed and burnt- out are not as productive as the individuals in good mental health states. This showed that it is also linked to a higher level of absenteeism from the workplace, increased use of prescriptive medication, lower levels of creativity, innovation and risk taking which can have a negative impact in the workplace, in addition showing a negative association with family roles and the individual's ability to care for their families (Higgins *et al.*, 2008).

Amatea and Fong (1991) completed a study on the impact of role stressors and personal resource on the stress experience of professional women in the US. The coping strategies and responses were grouped into active and passive coping strategies. There existed six types of active approach strategies and three passive, avoidance type of strategies. The active types of coping included strategies such as; restructuring role expectations, role co- operation or the seeking out of resources externally. The passive types of coping include the actions of, for example, externalising the blame and/ or the responsibility in attempting to meet expectations of roles (Amatea & Fong, 1991).

Amatea and Fong (1991), show that women experiencing high levels of personal control are reported as having lower psychological and physical strain than women with lower personal control. Personal resources that reduce the demand strain include active coping strategies as well as social support mechanisms. Active or approach coping strategies including that of information seeking, logical analysis and problem solving action have been proved to be positively related to middle- class adults. On the other hand avoidance coping has been negatively related to psychological change. The perceived social support, for example the feeling related to being cared for and being seen in a positive light by others, has shown to have a positive connection with greater psychological adjustment for working mothers (Amatea & Fong, 1991).

On a family level, according to Chasteen and Kissman (2000) the movement toward a decrease in stress for working mothers in this case, shows that the coping strategy that is

developed is teamwork and support from partners as well as other members of the family. Individual interventions are another strategy that can empower women in making sure that they receive the right amount of support from crucial people in the family including that of their partners and children. This form of individual intervention also ensures that women take care of their own needs and do not become too over- nurturing to their families. A strategy for coping for these women is also put forward by Chasteen and Kissman (2000) as the use of support from other women in similar positions and experiencing the same kind of problems, and thus using this mechanism to discover what brought the crisis and problem solving as a solution. Support groups are a powerful support system for working mothers. Women can benefit from the use of such groups for the challenges involved in juggling multiple roles; or changes in the family life cycle; or helping in identifying strengths with regard to help with childcare and connecting with the children on all relevant levels.

Coping strategies used within a family according to Chasteen and Kissman (2000) include; strengthening and adapting family roles, for example encouraging children to help out as well as helping out with household tasks and planning family time together; putting family first such as limiting workplace commitments so that more time is spent with the family and planning work needs around family needs; leaving work problems at work; sacrificing one's own needs such as having less sleep, leaving house chores undone around the house, attempting to be more flexible in arrangements and cutting down on out- door activities; as well as obtaining help from others, for example hiring help for children, relying on extended family members and hiring help to care for elderly dependents (Chasteen & Kissman (2000).

The study by Chasteen and Kissman (2000) showed that the majority of Canadian families cope by sacrificing personal needs and in doing this, restructuring and strengthening family roles. They deal with work- life issues by making adjustments in their own personal or family lives. This suggests that the families that put their family first are more able to balance work- life conflict. The study showed that leaving work related problems at work and adjusting work schedules to personal life helps to cope with role- overload. Cutting back on sleep made things worse and cutting down on outside activities made no difference. Leaving things undone around the house allowed for relief of work- life conflict. Moderate reliance on support from extended family helps women cope with role- overload as well as social support. Hiring help from outside the family helped as well as moderate care for one's own children allowed for a decrease in role overload. Hiring help for the elderly dependent also

allowed for a decrease in a woman's caregiver strain (Chasteen & Kissman, 2000).

A US study by Piotrowski (1979) on the work and the family system of working- class and lower- middle- class families, found that successful women do not have the psychological or physical energy for their personal lives, after working so hard on their careers. Women used compartmentalisation as a coping strategy in attempting to manage their roles of work and family conflict. They used this strategy as a method of separating work and home lives. In doing this they carefully planned or physically distanced themselves from the work and home roles and in doing this they would for instance work late at the office in order to prevent bringing work home.

A Hong Kong study by Lo, Stone and Ng (2003) found that the working women all employed a domestic helper as a source of coping with their dual- role of being a mother and worker. A domestic helper in Hong Kong plays a more central role in the family than a domestic helper from the west, which is normally a 'live in nanny' or 'cleaning lady'. The study showed that professional working women in Hong Kong look to their domestic helper as a crucial means of coping on a daily basis. Lo *et al.*, (2003) further stated that in Asia, in order to eliminate household and childcare pressures for working women, a domestic helper is employed.

According to Cox (2007) over the last decade, employment of au pairs has been increasing in Britain and other parts of Europe in order to help with childcare for working mothers. Bikova (2008), states that the families that hire au pairs are predominantly middle- class, career oriented, two parent families. Bikova (2008), further notes that it is popular to hire au pairs in Norway in order to care for the children and this allows for working women to keep their jobs. Over the last fifty years social changes have occurred in Norway. Traditionally women relied on their mothers; however due to an increase in life expectancy, grandmothers of the children need to work, as well as their aunts and cousins. The care resources of the traditional nuclear family have thus diminished. The working women of Norway are seen to use au pairs as a coping strategy and in addition use improved kindergarten and affordable day- care due to compensation by the Norwegian government state.

Tobio (2001) completed a study on working and mothering in Spain and noted that most of the working mothers in Spain work full- time and thus are developing a variety of private, individual strategies to help them balance their work and family life. The main strategy that

was found in the study was that of the 'substitute mother' being that of relatives or someone hired for childcare responsibility. The strategies developed were also that of; the organisation of time and management of time, reducing distances between work, home and schools so as to lessen the time taken to get to all locations as well as collective childcare and help from husbands.

2.11.9. Coping Strategies for Working Mothers in South Africa

South Africa's socio- economic, political and societal situation, according to Brink and de la Rey (2001), will influence an employee's experience of coping with work and life responsibilities differently when compared to other countries. Individuals and groups in South Africa's previously disadvantaged and excluded group have become part of the workforce potentially transforming traditional culture specific family roles. In the South African context, a study by Whitehead and Kotze (2003) showed that coping strategies for working mothers, included planning and proactive problem- solving, as well as the operating of support structures in the form of 'planning of a week'. It also included changing the situation, rationalising, obtaining social support, accepting responsibility and a need for support from husbands or partners. A study by Easton (2007) identified the coping strategies of working women as that of domestic support networks such as support from husband or partner, extended family, friends and formal childcare facilities. According to Brink and de la Rey (2001), working mothers used both emotional and problem solving focused- coping strategies in dealing with the strain of work- family roles, including reappraisal, plan- ful problem solving and seeking social support, incorporating not just one but a combination of all the strategies. Anderson (2001), states that in Southern Africa, many families in order to cope on a daily basis, have live in domestic workers and that this has evolved into a major occupation for unskilled migrants. She states that there is a high demand for domestic workers in private households as cleaners as well as a form of childcare for working mothers.

There appears to be little research, according to Easton (2007), undertaken in South Africa as to coping strategies working women use in order to balance work and family responsibilities, and so it is shown to be an area that needs further exploration. Nadioo and Jano (2002) note that there is an increasing amount of literature recording the experiences of working women and the interaction between their work and home life, however there is a lack of South

African studies focusing on this area of interest. Losoncz and Graham (2010) state that mothers who can learn to combine the aspirations of careers, family and child responsibilities successfully in this regard, will benefit from enhanced personal satisfaction and a stronger financial position - which will then benefit the family.

2.11.10. Concluding the Main Ideas

The literature addressed many areas concerned with women's movement into the labour force, as well as the movement of women into professional work roles. It considered several issues that have evolved as a result of this movement, such as that of the conflict women experience between the home and workplace. In an effort to balance the two domains, coping strategies and support systems that women develop and use were further emphasised on a South African and international basis.

The main issue that surfaced in the literature was that although there remains a wide range of literature researched internationally on work- life balance and the coping strategies of working mothers, there is however limited studies conducted in South Africa. Easton (2007) states that in South Africa there is very little research on coping strategies of working women in balancing work and family responsibility and thus this is an area that needs further research focus.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Question and Aims

The aim of the research study was to develop insights into the dynamics involved in work-family conflict, balance and coping strategies of professional working women in positions of Accountants, Lawyers or in the Medical Profession. It focused on the coping issues that these women face on a daily basis with regard to satisfying their work and family roles and responsibilities. The study examined aspects of being a working mother with regard to work-family conflict; as well as making the time and energy to satisfy career ambitions. It further investigated levels of support, coping strategies and compromises made as well as any feelings of guilt or regret toward the demand of both the workplace and the home. The study was guided by the following broad research question:

How do women, who are also mothers in professional work status positions, balance their mothering roles and responsibilities as well as fulfilling full-time career aspirations and ambitions?

This broad question was addressed by investigating the following three sub-questions:

- 1) What are the perceptions of the mothers in terms of the level of work-family conflict they experience and to what extent do these mothers experience it?
- 2) What coping strategies, including support systems, do these working mothers in professional positions in Grahamstown use to balance their career aspirations and ambitions as well as their family responsibilities?
- 3) What compromises do these women make and to what extent, if any, do they feel a sense of guilt or regret toward the demands of both the home and the workplace?

3.2. The ‘Reality’ to be Studied

The contextual literature lent itself to conducting research in a more interpretive paradigm, allowing the researcher to study the subjective world of women’s individual perceptions. The research study was conducted using a qualitative interpretative paradigm that is characterised by “an emphasis...upon description rather than explanation, the representation of reality through the eyes of the participants, [and]...the importance of viewing the meaning of

experience and behaviour in context” (Henwood & Pigeon, 1993, p. 16). The interpretive paradigm assumes that the “reality to be studied consists of people’s subjective experiences of the external world” (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 1999), p. 6). Thus in saying this, each individual experiences his or her own unique internal reality. These characteristics guided the research process and influenced the researcher’s questions and aims.

3.3. Planning

The first stage of the research process was mapping out what the study was striving to achieve. The researcher assessed that an area of research which proved to need more exploration was that of coping strategies for working women in professional jobs with young children living in a small city such as Grahamstown. Thus the researcher was interested in finding participants who would yield information to answer the main research question and aims. The researcher identified that the best way to gain this kind of information would be to talk to women in this particular situation and gain an understanding into their ‘working mother’ position. It was further identified that the study required the researcher to perform a semi- structured qualitative interview with the working mothers so as to explore their perceptions of their experiences in trying to balance work- life and family responsibilities.

3.4. Interviews

3.4.1. Designing the Interview Guide

Conducting a literature review and identifying pertinent aspects to the study

Once the researcher had determined the research question and sub- questions for the study, the researcher further conducted a review of existing literature on working mothers, focusing specifically on literature relating to the research questions outlined. This review allowed the researcher to become more familiar with the research topic to be explored as well as to identify the important factors associated with each question according to the literature. For example, determining whether the working mothers experienced work- family conflict would require a definition of work- family conflict and what it involves. In addition the coping strategies that the women use, would require a definition of what is meant by coping

strategies and what it entails for women juggling two roles- that of the working role and mother at home. The various definitions in the literature allowed for aspects of the study to be highlighted, such as the benefits and costs of being a working mother, conflict, coping strategies, level of support and compromises made. Such aspects of the study could then be used to form questions and prompts for the interview schedule in order to stimulate discussion with regard to the coping strategies that the women use and the experiences they have of being in a dual- role, with regard to work and family responsibilities. The researcher developed research questions, using Arksey and Knight's (1999) work, relating to the research areas of interest that fully covered the content area of existing literature. This procedure allowed for the enhancement of content validity.

Forming an interview guide

Having conducted the in- depth research in the literature review, the researcher then investigated the techniques of conducting qualitative interviews. The researcher, in doing this, used the guidelines stated by Arksey and Knight, 1999; Kvale, 1996 and Taylor and Bogdan, 1998 as a basis for developing the interview schedule. The researcher, having gained critical background knowledge, was aware that the literature had to be put aside, and the focus changed to accessing the working mothers' own views regarding the research areas of concern. The questions developed from reading the literature were then categorised and put into a few broad areas of research concern relating to the areas that the researcher was focusing on shown in (Appendix A). These included; The role of the working mother; business career; changing role of the mother; becoming a working mother; parenting responsibilities; work- family conflict; coping strategies and support systems and then compromises made. The researcher then took the eight broad themes and formed them into simple open- ended questions (for example, 'How would you describe your lifestyle as a mother who works, in terms of its benefits and costs?') in order to allow the participant to express themselves in this regard. The researcher had formed eight key interview themes as well as one main broad question under each theme. The researcher in addition added further sub- questions under each of the eight broad interview questions. These sub- questions were only seen by the interviewer and were almost used as a check list so as to ensure that all areas of the key themes were addressed. For all the questions, the researcher was aware of using simple and unambiguous language so that the participants (including those with possible language concerns) would be able to understand them.

3.4.2. Ensuring Informed Consent

The involvement in the study was determined according to the participant's personal choice. All participants were asked to sign an Informed Consent form (see Appendix B) which detailed the aims of the research study as well as the nature of their involvement. The form stated that the participants may withdraw at any time during the study, should they feel at all uncomfortable with its proceedings and that they would not be forced to yield any information which they were not willing to give. It was important that the participants were aware of their rights to confidentiality and anonymity, and thus so it was stated that no identifiable information would be mentioned in the final research project relating to the participant's names and some of their details were changed and altered in order to protect their identity. The researcher has kept the signed forms confidential in order to honour the privacy of those involved. The participants were also informed that a copy of the final research report would be made available to them in the Psychology department at Rhodes University.

3.4.3. Sampling and Participants

The basis of the study was to identify participants who would yield information appropriate to the research questions as determined by the researcher. The inclusion criterion stated that the participants had to be women and mothers currently living with their children below the age of 12 years; as when children are young they require more intensive parental care, and more pressures are involved in balancing the dual roles. The participants also had to be professional women who are; lawyers, accountants or in the medical profession on a full-time or part-time basis, in professions that have required them to undergo highly intensive training. This meant being in professions demanding a degree of responsibility, long work hours, possible travelling as well as continuous studying. The exclusion criteria specified cases where a mother does not live with her child (i.e. in the case of divorce) and where the children were older than 12 years. The reason for the latter exclusion criterion is that the study sought to examine the pressures that exist when full-time parental care is required. The study is thus interested in women who are active in childcare as well as in professional work status positions.

The researcher was able to gain participants through the use of purposive sampling and was able to select a sample of women who best fitted the inclusion criteria. The sampling technique that was used involved the researcher speaking to a woman who is an acquaintance of the researcher, namely Jan, and who had a client base that consisted of women who she mentioned, had suited the inclusion criteria of the study. The researcher and Jan started by searching through a client base and selected women that the researcher felt was suitable for the study. Once the relevant women had been selected closely by the researcher, Jan further emailed the women, asking them if they would be willing to participate in the research study. The women that agreed to participate in the study were then directed to the researcher and the researcher further emailed the participants, explaining the study and informing them on the ethics of the study with regard to an informed consent form that they would sign before the interview would take place, ensuring the participant's anonymity and privacy. The researcher further discussed where and when they would be able to meet for an interview. Suitable participants were identified by the researcher on the basis of the rigid inclusion criteria using purposive sampling, meaning that their inclusion in the study was not only due to their availability and willingness to participate but also on the basis of them engaging in the activities of interest to the research at hand (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). Seven participants were chosen so that the sample would be large enough to incorporate a range of different experiences into the developing theory, but yet small enough so that each case could be analysed with a certain degree of depth (Willig, 2001).

The sample of this study was comprised of different racial and ethnic groups of women. The researcher made an effort to gain participants of diversity. Among the women there were five white women (two of these women are accountants and the other two are lawyers and one a dentist); one coloured woman who is a pharmacist and an Indian lawyer.

3.4.4. Data Collection

The qualitative data collection technique used in the study consisted of one in- depth semi-structured interview with each of the seven women in the sample. According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) semi- structured interviews are generally organised around a set of predetermined open- ended questions as well as other questions that emerge between the

interviewee and interviewer during the interview process. The interviews were audio- taped allowing maximum thoroughness in the collection of data and allowed the researcher to engage more with the participants, generating valuable discussion without interrupting the flow of communication by note taking (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006).

The researcher conducted one- on- one interviews over a period of two weeks. Four of the interviews were completed at the participants' homes and three of the interviews took place at the other participants' place of work. The in- depth one- on- one interviews, offered the opportunity for the researcher to explore the participant's individual subjective experience and to ask inquiring questions that would reveal a deeper understanding of the issues that the women were experiencing (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). According to Arksey and Knight (1999), validity is able to be enhanced by interviewing techniques that build a rapport as well as trust and openness, enabling the participants to express the way they really feel about certain issues. The researcher thus strived to create an informal and comfortable atmosphere by introducing herself, explaining the need to have a tape- recorder and reiterating the purpose of the study and the confidentiality involved. Informed consent was ensured through asking the participants to sign a consent form before the interview started in order to confirm that they were satisfied with the conduct of all aspects of the study therein. The interview process lasted approximately one hour each; some interviews were longer than others. This enabled sufficient exploration of the participant's views while being concise enough to retain their interest and avoid imposing on their work or time with their families. At the end of the interview, the researcher thanked the interviewee for their time and confirmed what would happen next.

The study followed an abbreviated form of Grounded Theory research design (Willig, 2001), used due to time constraints in the research process. An abbreviated grounded theory analysis was used to analyse the interview transcripts. Willig (2001) explains that it is different to that of full Grounded Theory in that it involves; a smaller number of participants; a semi-structured interview format; as well as working with the original interviews only, so the researcher is not required to go back into field of study to gather further material. Within the guidelines outlined by Willig (2001), interview transcripts were analysed following the principles of Grounded Theory, whereby according to Cresswell (1998) the theory is 'grounded' in the original data. This involved a process of coding and constant comparative analysis. Abbreviated grounded theory according to Willig (2001) allows for the collection of

data to be directed by the surfacing themes. Analysis is able to take place through the creation of an index system of 'concepts'; this is done through the coding of relevant sections of each interview on a sentence by sentence basis, capturing their meaning through the application of labels. The process involved is that of open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Cresswell, 1998). Connections within the coding scheme are then recorded and the categories are then integrated increasingly into the main themes and sub- themes that emerge across the interviews. The method of constant comparative analysis according to Willig (2001) is used to ensure the analysis moves back and forth through similarities and differences in the identified opinions of the participants. This is done in order to find examples of exceptions within conceptual themes as well as examples confirming the emerging ideas. The aim of the process is to ultimately develop a theory from the interview material, integrating the categories that emerge across the responses of the women, and propose conditional hypotheses about the coping strategies the women use to deal with the dual- roles of working and mothering (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The researcher ensured that the time and venue of the interviews were arranged depending upon the convenience for the individual participants. The researcher strived to meet the participants in either their workplace or in their home setting, as these are essentially the two realms of research interest (Terre Blanche *et al.*, 2006). In the case of each of the seven participants, four elected to be interviewed in the home after hours and three were in the place of work at a time that suited the participants with regard to their work. Prior to the interview scheduled date, the researcher e- mailed the participants and stated what the research study was all about as well as attaching the interview schedule a day before the interview date so they were able to read it before the actual interview. This allowed for the participants to prepare in advance in order to form logical answers to the interview questions. The researcher further attached the consent form in the email, allowing the participants to view their rights in the study, and further allowing them the opportunity to pull out of the study before the interview would take place. When it came to doing the actual interview with the seven participants, the researcher took the care to establish a rapport with them before and during the interview session. This was done in order to ensure the participants felt comfortable speaking openly about their personal experiences and allowed them the confidence to open up on certain issues pertinent to the research study. The researcher remained polite and understanding throughout the interview process so as to allow the participants to be comfortable and allowing them the opportunity to be relaxed and

forthcoming with all information for the study. According to DiCicco- Bloom and Crabtree (2006) the process of establishing a rapport is a vital part of the interview process. DiCicco- Bloom and Crabtree (2006, p. 316) state that “it is also a means of establishing a safe and comfortable environment for sharing the interviewees’ personal experiences and attitudes as they actually occurred”. This relationship building strategy proved useful and effective in gaining useful and valuable interview material for the research goals and aims.

3.4.5. Data Analysis

Taylor and Bogdan (1998, p. 141) state that, “data collection and analysis go hand in hand”. In the light of this observation as the interviews progressed over time, the researcher was able to become more aware of emerging common themes that appeared important to the women. The recordings of each of the interviews were transcribed verbatim by the researcher, allowing her to gain an overall understanding of the main issues involved in the activity of interest and to become familiar with the research matter (Cresswell, 1998). The researcher also kept a diary of issues important to the research study during the transcription process of each of the interviews and these proved useful when performing the data analysis.

Participants were offered the opportunity to verify their own interview transcript, ensuring that the material had been correctly captured and to remove any identifiable biographical information that they felt may compromise their identity. The participants did not ask for this but some of the participants asked if the researcher was transcribing as well as if their names would be shown in the final study. The researcher ensured that their names would not be shown and that she would be doing all the transcribing of the interview data. The material was then subject to the systematic process of Grounded Theory Analysis.

Within the guidelines for data analysis outlined by Willig (2001), interview transcripts were analysed following the principles of Grounded Theory which involved the procedure of coding and constant comparative analysis; but theoretical saturation and negative case analysis were only implemented within the original interview transcripts. The central focal point of Grounded Theory, as stated by Cresswell (1998), is that the theory being generated should be ‘grounded’ in the original data at all stages of the analysis.

An abbreviated grounded theory analysis was used to analyse the interview transcripts. Willig

(2001) explains that it is different to that of full Grounded Theory in that it involves; a smaller number of participants; a semi- structured interview format; as well as working with the original interviews only, so the researcher is not required to go back into field of study to gather further material. Within the guidelines outlined by Willig (2001), interview transcripts were analysed following the principles of Grounded Theory, whereby according to Cresswell (1998) the theory is ‘grounded’ in the original data, and according to Willig (2001) it has to do with the integration of ‘categories of meaning’ from the data. Willig (2001), states that the method of category identification and integration leads to the production of a theory, providing the researcher with an explanatory structure with which to understand what the study is investigating.

This process of Grounded Theory involves coding and constant comparative analysis. Abbreviated Grounded Theory according to Willig (2001) allows for the collection of data to be directed by the surfacing themes. Analysis is able to take place through the creation of an index system of ‘concepts’; this is done through the coding of relevant sections of each interview on a sentence by sentence basis, capturing their meaning through the application of labels. The process involved is that of open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Cresswell, 1998). Connections within the coding scheme are then recorded and the categories are then integrated increasingly into the main themes and sub- themes that emerge across the interviews. The method of constant comparative analysis according to Willig (2001) is used to ensure the analysis moves back and forth through similarities and differences in the identified opinions of the participants. This is done in order to find examples of exceptions within conceptual themes as well as examples confirming the emerging ideas. The aim of the process is to ultimately develop a theory from the interview material, as stated by Willig (2001, p. 34) “grounded theory is designed to facilitate the process of ‘discovery’, or theory generation”. This is done by integrating the categories that emerge across the responses of the women, and propose conditional hypotheses about the coping strategies the women use to deal with the dual- roles of working and being a mother (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

4. Grounded Theory Analysis

From the interview material received, the next two chapters will be involved in analysing and discussing this data and developing a theory following the principles of an abbreviated form of Grounded Theory analysis. The process of analysis followed three main stages that of open coding, axial coding as well as selective coding, the process followed on to a discussion of core categories that reveal an explanatory theory for the experience involved in being a professional working mother. In the initial open coding stage, the researcher was able to identify phenomena across the interview questions asked in the semi- structured interview schedule and was in essence able to label these codes. The codes involved in this process were in effect predetermined by the interview questions themselves but spontaneous codes were also able to emerge in the data and were identified at this stage. These initial codes will be discussed as part of the six categories which were identified by way of grouping related codes together.

4.1. Axial Coding: Analysis of Categories

The axial coding stage of the analysis involved an assessment of the initial codes as a result of open coding by the researcher and the grouping of these together based on similarities and relationships between them. These groupings formed the seven comprehensive categories of the study to be analysed.

4.1.1. Category 1: Being a Working Mother

a) Benefits

All of the professional working mothers with high status work positions, who were interviewed, acknowledged that there are numerous benefits involved in having a professional work career. Each one of the women mentioned in the interview that they enjoyed working. They discussed the personal satisfaction that they gain as a result of being a working woman as well as gaining their own identity in the process. One of the women, a full- time Attorney with three children, said:

You have your own identity, you are not just a mom, and you are also at work.

Another woman, a full- time Lawyer with one child, added to this and mentioned that you have your own identity in the fact that you are part of a professional organisation, and that numerous people, if not working may struggle with that identity. Annie, a part- time Professional Accountant with two children and a baby, further stated that it is the benefit of being out of the house, the benefit of earning your own income and allowing for a sense of your own identity. It was also acknowledged and further a consensus that having a career provides mental stimulation and was mentioned by six of the women, as relating to the notion of adult conversation and the ability to keep the mind active during a period of the day. One of the women mentioned that having a job allows for you and your partner to have something different and interesting to talk about. There was in addition the mention of being able to have an all rounded experience in life, as opposed to the alternative of being a stay at home mom. A divorced part- time Pharmacist and full- time PhD student with one child drew on this issue and said:

The benefits I think would be the luxury of having a sort of well rounded experience as a human being, I think that if you can have a fulfilling career and have a child, then you are very lucky.

Another of the women mentioned that working allows for your children to have someone to look up to, as a 'role model', further adding that it allows for the ability to have a life outside of your children. She said:

You have a life outside of your children from a very young age so maybe that will help with the empty nest syndrome.

All seven of the women mentioned that the benefits outweigh the costs and that they would not have it any other way. They also all mentioned the financial benefits of maintaining a career. All of the women revealed that of earning their own income and thus allowing for the extra financial capacity to do additional activities. This was further linked with the identity felt from having their own occupation and own independence in a separate sphere from the home. One of the women mentioned that she enjoyed working as well as having the 'extra cash'. Five out of the seven women said that they were in the fortunate position that allowed them to work for personal reasons, they do not necessarily work to bring in disposable income but that they work for either personal reasons or to benefit them from the added extras that their income allows. The two other women however noted that they needed to work as their financial positions were such that they were required to work; they mentioned

that it is a financial necessity for them to work. Not surprisingly, these were the only women who acknowledged that one of the main shortcomings to maintaining a career is the lack of attention and time given to your child and to yourself and that essentially is the one thing that you forfeit in the process.

b) Costs

The costs of being a professional working mother were seen to stem from the lack of time the women are able to spend on their children and on their families. One woman stated that a relative disadvantage is that working imposes on one's family life. She notes:

There are times when you think that you would like to fetch them or do things with them after school or get more involved in their after school activities, and then I suppose that is the cost.

It was interesting to detail that the women with young children noted that they would ideally prefer to spend more time with their children and less time at work. The study also recognised through the interviews that all of the women who work full-time felt that to be in the most 'balanced' situation would entail them working a half day job as well as having more time off during the year, allowing them the ultimate situation of maintaining a work life as well as being able to be with their children in the afternoons and holidays. The constant problem of juggling became apparent when attempting to balance the two different spheres. One of the women, a full-time Lawyer with two children, added that a mother is constantly running around everybody else and 'burning the candle at both ends'. Another mentioned that it is a constant struggle to juggle everything simultaneously and a third added to this, stating that the drawback comes in with the constant juggling on a daily basis and constantly feeling at fault that may be a socialised feeling. She said:

You are constantly juggling and constantly feeling guilty, it's that you aren't giving your work enough attention or you are not giving your child enough attention let alone not giving your husband enough attention, or yourself attention, so there is that guilt, and I think that guilt is a socialised one, we don't necessarily have to feel guilty some of us just do.

Another of the woman added to this type of sensation and mentioned that there is in essence less time for numerous activities and that time for yourself is a challenge and something you give up in the process. All of the women acknowledged the costs of maintaining a career and the sense of guilt from having two jobs, work and family, and most of them seemed to experience the guilt related to possible absences from their children. Regardless, they would

still want a career, thus resounding to the attempts to constantly juggle and create methods in order to balance all activities on a daily basis.

The overall feelings of the women were that the benefits outweigh the costs shown through Heidi who as an example stated:

I think having a family life for me as I say outweighs any of those costs.

All of the women made the decision to remain in their jobs and fields of expertise and thus it may be presumed that the benefits of having a career and being a working mother outweigh any of the costs involved in such a decision to have a family and working life.

c) Childcare Responsibility Placed on Women

All the women during the interview commented on the fact that at the end of the day the childcare and household responsibilities do ultimately fall on the woman. Even though all the women who have husbands acknowledged that their husbands do help out in the home with numerous tasks and responsibilities. The women all felt that even with all the help, the children more than often look to the mother for the answers or help in whatever they may be doing. It was mentioned that someone has to be in the position to ultimately coordinate childcare activities and it essentially is the mother. She said:

A child doesn't normally relate to its father the same way as it relates to its mother, so if there's a problem, if it is sick or something, it needs its mother, it doesn't help for it to be the father or the nanny, or, and if this whole thing of running a home, and providing meals and the coordination of school and extra murals, one person has to do the coordinating so even though a husband may be very helpful and do whatever he is asked to do, the responsibility can only be on one person's head. One person has got to be thinking of all these things, and it can actually become too much and becomes impossible to be as compos mentis as you used to be I find.

Rachel further added to this and said that the children look to their mother in times of need and not necessarily to their father, and stated:

It is mainly focused on the women, the kids will always look to the women to do it, not to the father, the father is always working and doesn't matter if dad isn't there. My husband travels a lot so I am often alone anyway, so they will naturally look to me to do all the stuff and then there is conflict, because I am doing something, there are times when I have to say to them, sorry you know I can't do it now and they have to wait. I will also put work aside for them, if they need something done I will.

Heidi said that in her situation, her husband is willing to help the children with their

homework or other activities, but in theory it is their mother that they essentially want, she said:

The children will want to do their homework with me and I am busy cooking and I'll say don't ask me now go and ask dad, why can't you go ask dad, he is sitting there watching TV, but he says the same to them he says come and ask me, but they will come to their mother.

Kate stated that she and her husband share the responsibilities involved in split childcare and household tasks when necessary. She also mentioned the importance for women to accept help when they need it and that woman must not be afraid to feel that by asking for help, they are failing. Kate stated that in terms of culture in this regard, the responsibilities do ultimately fall on the mother and that there are certain things that mothers are just expected to do and that that it forms a fact of life.

Annie mentioned numerous times that she has a fantastic husband who is very much involved in the lives of the children and that they enjoy spending time with him. She mentioned that when he is available, he does all activities relating to childcare and further stated that they have always shared this responsibility. She added that when the children were sick in the night, he would get up and care for them, thus they would share responsibility even though he has always worked more hours than she has since having had children. Even with this said, she mentioned that women do take on most of the responsibility of childcare.

In analysing the responses of the seven women, it can be deduced that the women who have husbands all feel to some degree that even though their husbands are very supportive with childcare responsibilities, the sense of duty does ultimately fall on the woman. Thus working mothers also carry the responsibility of their jobs in the workplace, it can therefore be assumed that working women carry more responsibility in both the home and the workplace on a daily basis.

4.1.2. Category 2: The Experience of Work- Family Conflict

a) Feelings of Work- Family Conflict

All of the women mentioned in the interview that they experience a level of work- family conflict between their work- life and mothering responsibilities. One of the women

mentioned that it would be difficult to say that there was no conflict. Rachel, a full-time Professional Accountant and Financial Manager with two children said:

There is always conflict; it is very difficult to say there is not, because there always is, because a kid will get sick and then what do you do, somebody has got to take that child to the hospital, or mommy come fetch me or mommy do this.

Some women even stated that this conflict occurs on a continuous basis. Lily mentioned that this conflict occurs most of the time and that it is a case of conflict management that needs to come into effect. She said:

You are constantly feeling insecure and you are constantly feeling inadequate, I suppose you are never on top either and I think that if you are a working mother then this is what it is going to be like.

Susan stated that there are numerous times when there is conflict between the two spheres in her life. She stated:

Lots of time, when I have been away for work and not wanted to be away, commitments for work and not wanted them, like last week my son was in a concert and I was in Johannesburg, so there are lots of times when I would like to be available to him and I cannot be, so it is conflict. At the end of the day you need your salary so it is easy for work to get the upper hand.

Amanda, a part- time Dentist with two children, added to this sense of guilt and stated that the conflict comes in when the children want her to be around them all the time, she said:

They do mind if I am not the one to take them to school and fetch them from school, and they do mind if I don't take them to their extra murals and wait with them or watch them, so there is a guilt issue with not really being able to do that all the time.

Kate mentioned that there are days when she would prefer to be at home, further stating that it is just in those moments, however when one looks at the bigger picture, the advantages of working outweigh those sorts of moments. She added to this and mentioned that any job will have its frustrating days but one needs to find a method of coping with certain situations to further be able to move forward from them.

Heidi mentioned that the conflict was more apparent when the children were very young, when she was 'permanently exhausted', and stated that it resounded when there was no apparent help, and that this is when the coping strategies come into effect.

In analysing the responses from the women, it becomes apparent that they all experience work- family conflict and that there are times when feelings of guilt do come into the

equation. The responses gave a consensus to that fact that the women on the whole feel that there is more guilt in relation to less time spent with their family and/ or children and less guilt placed on not putting enough time and attention into work. Thus one can infer that all the women feel a sense of guilt toward not always being present for their children and family as a whole at times and the feelings attached to moments when they would rather be at home with their family in a secure environment.

b) Feelings of Stress Related to Work- Family Conflict and in Comparison to other Working Mothers

Five out of the seven women said that they are the type of women that have stressful personalities and thus they feel that they tend to get more stressed about things than other people may do. Lily mentioned that it poses a challenge in her life and said:

I don't think I am managing them very well, I think that is a big problem and something that I think I need to work on, but I think it is more my personality than necessarily having to do with the fact that I am a parent.

Amanda added to this kind of feeling and stated:

I think that I don't cope with stress as I like things to be organised and I can't stand a mess, so I am that kind of person, so it does make it hard to relax, I am not easily able to relax about things.

Two of the women mentioned that coping with stress is not a great problem, one of the women said that she is not the type of person who gets stressed easily and thus this does not pose as a challenge for her as she seldom feels that she gets 'worked up' about something.

Rachel said:

When you do feel stress, you know you can only take things one step at a time, you just have to stop and sit back and say okay so let's prioritise, make a list of what is urgent and do as much as you can in the time that you can, it is no use, getting yourself in a tizz.

Kate feels that she is able to cope with stress. She said:

I have always been able to deal with stress. If it happens you moan about it or whatever but there are certain things that can't go away and certain things that will be there and you have to deal with it and get it out and there are times when I will just moan.

When relating stress and how the women cope with it in comparison to other working women they knew, the general consensus revealed that the women deal with matters in their own

unique way and that different people in different situations have to cope with different stressors, thus one cannot compare one's own situation to that of another working mother.

Susan mentioned a feeling of stress in relation to a friend in Johannesburg. She said:

I am less stressed than a [pause], well I was going to say that I am less stressed than a working mother in Johannesburg but I don't know, I think I have got a normal level of stress, that anybody who works hard, I mean my colleagues wife is a teacher and she can go home at two or three most days, but when she gets home she has two little kids to deal with, so it's not exactly relaxing, and I can't say that she gets more time at home so her life is less stressful than mine.

Heidi expressed that the question posed relatively general and thus difficult to answer but said:

I mean the thing to do is to not dwell on it, if you are in that situation and if you are going to start dwelling on it I think you have gone mad, but when times where the toughest, yes I did not dwell on it and got through every day.

Kate expressed that people have their own methods of dealing with stress and said that it is important for working women to understand that they can accept help. She said:

I just think that the problem with working moms is that they don't understand that everything is not all about them, the responsibility of their children is not theirs solely, because we are on an equal footing, there are some of us who have higher positions than men in our job situation, and for men and women I think that it is important to understand that you need to share those responsibilities and that you must accept help

Lily had a similar view about other working mothers but also expressed that because she has had health scares over the years, she feels that she copes better than her other friends do, but that it remains relative, adding that some women are single mothers and do not have a co-parent to assist them, thus they are 'burning the candle at both ends' and eventually they do collapse.

In analysing the level of stress in the women's lives, it is further made evident that the majority of the women feel that they are 'stressed people' due to their personality traits and as a result feel on the whole that they do not necessarily deal with stress very well. In relation to other working mothers that they know, as a general consensus the women agreed that it would depend on a woman's particular situation and that stress differs for people on different levels as people lead different lifestyles with differing daily demands.

c) Level of Frustration with Work and/or the Home

When asking the women if they ever feel frustrated with work due to their preference to be at home and vice versa, three of the women stated that they feel more frustrated with work because they would rather be at home or they would like to be more a part of their children/s extra mural activities. Kate stated that there are times where she would like to be at home.

She said:

Maybe sometimes at work, you just want to get home, you know when you are having one of those funny days and clients don't appreciate you.

Susan added to this feeling and said:

Yes, I feel frustrated with work and I would rather be at home, and because of the age of my child, I don't normally feel the reverse, but when he was young, there were times when it was very nice to come to work.

Heidi, expressed that there are times when her children have an activity at school or extra mural activities, and she is unable to attend due to work commitments. She said:

There is always conflict, there's always something on, on a particular day and then you would like to be there, but you can't because you have to work, but again it is just something you have to accept.

Rachel expressed the opposite and stated that she would prefer to be at work and further said that she is a workaholic and enjoys working as opposed to being at home. She remained different in her view points to the other women interviewed. The other three women stated that they feel a bit of both at times and that there are situations where they would rather be at home due to challenging work demands, and times when they would rather be at work due to constant home life demands. Annie remarked in this regard. She said:

Both of these things, my children drive me completely nuts and I often would rather be at the office for some peace and sometimes you are sitting at work and its holidays and you know, they are all sitting at home and you could be playing with them and having fun.

Lily had a similar response, and stated:

Yes all the time, all the time. There are times on the weekends where I will just be dying to get work done, and I have to sit and play with my child and I am frustrated with my child, and that's not his fault that is my problem and vice versa, there are times when I am at work and I am in a meeting and all I want to do is drop my child off at school and he waned at me all sad because he didn't want to go to school and I didn't want o go to work either, I would have loved to have just picked him up and go home and we could just cuddle and chat and watch TV together.

Amanda highlighted the connection to the age of one's children, stating that when the children were young, she experienced times of needing a break from them and be at work.

However now that they are older, the roles have reversed slightly and one starts needing them more than they need you. She acknowledged both aspects but focused particularly on the situation relating to the age of one's children.

In analysing the responses of the women, three of the women who are all full-time lawyers, would in most instances rather be at home than work. One of the women stated that she would rather be at work than home and the other three feel a bit of both and this being related to the age of the children. It can be said that the women mostly feel that work poses more of a challenge when they would rather like to be spending time with their children and family.

4.1.3 Category 3: Compromises Working Women Make

a) Compromises Made

The women were asked about the compromises that they have to make on a daily basis with regard to both the home and the workplace. All of the women mentioned that there are compromises that have to be made continuously on both sides of the spectrum. On the one hand they make compromises for work and on the other hand, compromise for their children as well as compromises for themselves.

Heidi mentioned that there are compromises that have to be made with your children and you have to work something out with them, further mentioning strongly about the compromises for yourself, she said:

There are definitely compromises and I think the compromises unfortunately not to the family or the work, they are actually to yourself.

Lily also made mention of the compromises one makes to oneself and said:

I really miss my exercise, I miss my running, that is a big sacrifice I feel that I have had to make of late and that is just because I can't fit it in.

Kate mentioned that the compromises that are made are more to do with her children. She mentioned that some moms at her children's schools do not work and thus are able to spend time with their children at the school during the week and do puzzles with the children. Kate, having a full-time job, works during these hours and thus has worked out a compromise with

the situation. She goes to her daughters' school on a public holiday and does puzzles and other activities with them in order to make up for the times when she is not present for them due to work demands. She said:

What we do now is that Melissa goes to school during holidays as well, during public holidays, so that gives us an opportunity, so on a public holiday well now they are closed for this month, so she is fine for this month, normally if there is a public holiday there will be school as well, so what we do, normally I would drop them off and then I would go with her to school, spend a little time with her, with the puzzles and whatever else and then I take Ally to school and do the same with Ally then fetch them and then just watch their ballet and certain other things.

Annie and Amanda were two of the women that made mention of the fact that work has in some cases taken to second place to their families and home life. Annie said that she works part-time as a compromise due to that fact that she wants to be at home in the afternoons for her children, thus her career has in essence slowed down due to having a family life. Amanda had a similar response and said that she considers her work part-time as she works all mornings and three afternoons. She revealed that she does not work all afternoons as she needs to spend time with her children in those afternoons during the week. She also mentioned that she has a responsibility to her patients in the afternoon, thus it is a compromise to both domains.

The women overall feel that they do make compromises; some feel that they are compromises at home or at work, but ultimately, compromises have to be made in order to balance the two spheres. The feelings of guilt and/or regret that the women feel will be discussed further.

b) Feelings of Guilt and/or Regret toward the Home and/ or the Workplace

When asked about whether or not the women feel a sense of guilt or regret toward the demands of both the home and the workplace, four out of the seven women mentioned that they did not feel any guilt and the other three women mentioned that they did. Five out of seven of the women mentioned that they felt no regret and two of them mentioned that they did. The women who did feel a sense of guilt were Lily, Amanda and Susan. Susan mentioned that she felt guilty with regard to not giving her child enough attention, she said:

I mean I do feel guilty, I don't like working when he is on holiday and I don't like not being available because I must work so, but I do think that yes I do feel guilty that I am not giving him as much attention as I could and am not available as I could be and that I am more stressed than I should be because obviously when I am

stressed it impacts on him because I get more impatient. Sometimes I feel that I am not giving my job enough attention and not working as hard as I should be, so there is a lot of guilt I pay the price both sides.

Amanda mentioned that she did not feel guilt, but when the feeling starts to emerge, she believes that it affects her more than the children. Amanda stated that she felt that all mothers have some sort of feeling of guilt, she said:

I think all mothers who work feel a bit guilty, because you can see that your children actually would like you to be with them all the time, you also hear things from other mothers that make you think, well maybe, or teachers that make you think that your children would be better behaved or better adapted or better adjusted if you did not work at all. I mean, I'm not sure that that's true, but it's always in the back of your mind.

Amanda also mentioned that she felt no regret and said:

I don't feel regret, I mean when I don't work I'm not very pleasant to be around, so I don't think that would be good for my kids either, so I need to work just for my own sort of self-esteem really, so no regrets but there is a sense of guilt.

Annie mentioned that one must not allow themselves to feel guilty and stated:

You just simply can't, whenever I am feeling that I am letting somebody down or that I am guilty about something, I just remember that if I was actually home every single day I would actually not be a nice parent, I would not be a nice enough mom, I would not be as calm a mom, I would not be a happy mom, so actually working, you know being at home, would not be a good option, so when I start to feel guilty that I am not there, I think well what is the alternative, if I don't work I stay at home all day and they drive me nuts and then I am not a happy person and they are not happy people.

Rachel revealed that it is her life and so she does not feel guilt, she remarked in this regard and said:

I don't feel any guilt or regret that is the one thing that I don't feel. You know what at the end of the day it is my life, my children must fit in with what I do and if I am going to sit at home and be unhappy then it is not going to pan out, it is not going to work, I think my kids get enough attention if anything I think they are a bit spoilt, so really I honestly believe that. You know, as long as kids are in a stable home relationship.

Heidi stated that she did not experience feelings of guilt, and stated:

I have never experienced guilt, and I think, that it is also kind of ridiculous to feel guilty, why should one feel guilty, I mean if you are neglecting your children then definitely, if you have done something wrong then, but I haven't done anything wrong, so why must I feel guilty I have never really felt guilty about working, that is who I am. I am not going to change so I don't feel guilty for my children's sake that I work.

Heidi however made mention of feelings of regret at times and said:

There is a little bit of regret in those small instances, those times when you wished you could have been at that assembly, it would have been nice, but yes it is a natural regret but it is not going to change the world and you often find that your children are happy with it too. You work out something with them. You say well I can't be at your school play on Thursday night, but you will go on Monday night when it's the rehearsal and the children are quite happy with that.

Lily mentioned that she felt guilt and regret at times and that the feelings of guilt and regret

were a continuous sensation. She said:

There is a lot of feelings of guilt and regret about a whole range of things all the time on a daily basis but I think once again that is just part and parcel of being a working mother, having to rush my child because I want to get to work on time, you know those sorts of things sometimes you feel guilty about that, when he just wants to talk to you, yes those sorts of things.

Out of the seven women, the majority did not feel a sense of guilt toward the home or the workplace. The majority of the women further mentioned that they did not feel a sense of regret toward the home or the workplace. There were however some cases where the women felt a sense of guilt or regret or a bit of both and this guilt and regret was mainly caused by their inability to be present for their children at times of importance.

4.1.4 Category 4: Being a Professional Working Woman

a) Traditional Stereotypes of Women and Impact of own Mother's Role

When asked to comment on how they felt with regard to the traditional stereotype that a woman's place is in the home, most of the women suggested that this statement has no place in modern times as it is outdated and that it is not surprising to find women in the workplace. Some of the women also mentioned that it depends on each individual's situation, Susan responded by saying:

I mean these days a lot of women work, I mean a lot of my friends are working but a lot of women still don't work and that surprises me.

Annie had a strong view on the traditional stereotype and said:

Oh I don't agree with it at all, I think that marriage is very much a joint partnership so I think it is a horrible stereotype.

Kate said that nowadays people are questioning why women are staying at home and not working in today's economy, as families require two incomes in order to have a suitable lifestyle. She added an interesting perspective saying:

Especially talking to my cousins you know around my age group and even younger and everybody, they are also looking for career women, they don't want this lady who is going to stay at home, men are thinking for that sort of thing, especially the ambitious ones.

A few of the women suggested that they do not believe in it but at the same time, they do not

have a problem with it, as it depends largely on the individual's situation. Heidi stated that she thinks that there are families where the woman stays at home as it is deemed to be the suitable thing to do. Rachel added to this and said that if that is what people want to do it is their choice and should be up to them to decide. Lily further stated that it also depends on the needs of the children and if they may need the extra attention from a mother. She stated:

It depends on your children's needs, I mean you may need to, you may have children that have health or educational problems that require you to spend a lot more time with them and in which case it may be in their best interests if you stay at home.

Amanda commented that somebody's place has to be the home, not the actual home as such but somebody has to be in a situation where the home can take priority.

As the traditional view goes, the women felt that on the one hand it has no place in today's society and that most women today work either because they have to financially or because they choose to use their knowledge and skills. On the other hand the women also mentioned that it would depend on the individual's situation and what the right thing would be to do in certain individual circumstances.

When the women were asked what their childhood experiences of their own mother's role in the family were and had that impacted on their own motherly role, five out of the seven women said that it had impacted their own motherly role. Out of the five women, one had an absent mother, one had a very hardworking mother who worked hard long days and the other three women noted that their mothers were housewives.

Lily mentioned that she had an absent mother which impacted on her own motherly role greatly. She felt that she did not have a role model growing up and thus did not have any experiences to draw on she therefore had to rely on her instincts. Lily revealed that it has made the relationship between her and her son very strong, they talk regularly due to the fact that she needs to hear from him, what he needs and not, as she said 'merely intuit it'.

Heidi stated that she had a mother who worked hard long hours as a nursing assistant and said that it did impact her on her own motherly role in that it is easier for her to accept that she is a working mother. She said that it was never something she did not think would happen, as she chose to work. She further added that she believes that when you study, you are choosing to

work, but when having children and working, she said that it becomes a different and increasingly difficult situation to cope with.

Susan mentioned that she grew up on a farm and that her mother was a housewife and did not have a career. Not having a career and living on the farm allowed her mother to constantly be available for the needs of her children. She revealed that it has had an impact on her in the sense that she feels worse about not being available for her son due to working a full-time job. She finds the holidays are the more difficult time due to not being present to her son. Kate, too, had a mother who was a housewife and mentioned that her mother was always available for her and thus she has always been aware of the fact that she too needs to be available for her children. Her mother has always encouraged her to work, but she would prefer her to have a half day job rather. She stated:

My mom was at home, it was very comforting to know that when I got home, my mom was going to be there, and I know that when I get home I am going to get a hot meal or going to have somebody to talk to or share all these things with, my entire bad day or good day or whatever, and I had my mom at home, so I think it impacted my life greatly, um firstly as much as I had somebody there and that sort of thing, she sort of motivated me to go out there and make something of myself.

Annie in addition mentioned that her mother, having never worked was a housewife and was always available for her. She said that making an effort to be at her children's events such as a hockey or rugby match has come from her mother in that she was always present to support and encourage her children where necessary. Annie has made it a point to try and be at all of the important events in her children's lives and has said that this has definitely come from her mother.

Rachel and Amanda mentioned that their mother's role in the family had not impacted on their own motherly role. Rachel stated that both of her parents worked from home thus they were permanently at home, she revealed that she was fortunate to have had this situation as her parents were constantly available for her needs. They were also in favour of her getting an education and doing what makes you happy. Amanda said that her mother worked and was a teacher, but not usually full-time. She stated that it has not had an impact on her own motherly role in any way.

The majority of the women felt that the experience of their mother's role in the family impacted on their own motherly role. Most of these women were affected by their own

mother's role in a positive light, mentioning that it has made them more aware of the fact that they need to be available for their children's activities and necessary obligations.

b) Change in Ambitions after Children

When asked about whether or not their ambitions had changed since having had children, four out of the seven women believed that they had changed. Susan was one of the women who believed that her ambitions had changed, and said:

My ambitions have changed in that I would not take a career change that would mean time away from my child and so your opportunities are limited, if you want to earn more money, they would require me to work a lot more time, and I am not prepared to do that, so they have changed and I can't easily work from home.

Heidi also mentioned that her career ambitions have changed and stated:

Yes my career ambitions have changed a little bit since having had children, I have thought of studying some more and then I have changed my mind, I have said , much that I'd like to do it, I would then be burning the candle at both ends, and I just thought, I am not going to do that to myself.

Annie mentioned that she has also changed her ambitions and because of having children, she has changed to a more contained job where she works mornings only. In the past she had her own business, but once having had children, she mentioned that one cannot work those long hours at night and that it becomes too stressful. Amanda added to this and mentioned that she had moved to Grahamstown to have her children and one cannot have a career as such in Grahamstown. This meant that moving had affected her ambitions thus giving up on her career ambitions in a big city.

There were three women who mentioned that their career ambitions had never changed. Kate said:

My career ambitions have never changed and will never change, I know what I want to be and it's a magistrate and it will eventually happen, and while this is happening I am happy to be at Legal Aid.

Rachel mentioned that her career ambitions have not changed either, she always wanted to work her way to the top, and she has always worked hard and had always believed that she did not just want to be a normal worker. Lily also believed that one still has their goals and ambitions for themselves and mentioned another way people can look at this kind of situation:

I think having a child, you have more dreams and ambitions in addition to the ones you had for yourself because now it is yourself and your child, you still have your goals and ambitions for yourself, you then have a child and you wish obviously that they are happy, thriving, you know, successful in their own right, but I don't think it detracts from your own.

In assessing these responses, it would seem that the majority of women feel that their ambitions have changed and that they have altered their life in such a way as to accommodate the two spheres of work and family. A large minority suggested that even once having had children, their ambitions had not changed and further mentioned that positivity can be shown through assessing it in a way that assumes you have more ambitions once having had children as well as your own.

c) Nature of Being a Professional Working Woman

With regard to working full- time or part- time, out of the seven women, five of the women work full- time and the other two women work part- time. The women that work full- time include two women who work to bring in disposable income as it is a necessity for them to do so. The other three women work full- time in order to earn the income necessary to fund for the extras such as holidays; private schooling for their children as well as extra mural and curricular activities. These women have support from their husbands financially. If they choose not to work in the future they are able to live off their husband's income if need be, but then may lose out on the extras.

The other two women who work part- time are two of the women that do not need the income per se, and work more for personal reasons. Thus it can be deduced that on average women who work part- time are able to due to the fact that they are not the breadwinner and their income is counted as an extra for the family. It can also be decided that on average women who work full- time either do so to bring in needed disposable income or more for the added extras that their disposable income allows.

With regard to travelling, six out of the seven women do some form of travelling. Rachel was the only one who mentioned that she travels on a regular basis. She revealed that she travels to Port Alfred twice a week for business, thus she travels regularly but not great distances. Three of these women mentioned that they do not travel regularly but they have had to travel

at times, mostly for a few days or so. Annie stated that she has done some work travelling, the longest was a week in Swaziland for a client and she said the children do not cope well with it and thus she does not like to leave them, lately she has not done much travelling as she does not want to leave her children.

Susan and Kate added that they do some travelling for certain courses, but not very much.

Susan stated that her job does require her to travel and said:

My job does require me to travel. I don't have to generally go away for that long, the longest I have been away for is about ten days, but my average, like this year the longest I have been away for is five or six days, but generally I do two or three day trips. I have good support structures in place, so I don't think my child suffers.

Kate also mentioned that she did do a fair amount of travelling for work purposes, and said:

Yes, just training courses and things like that, and it is not often, but then we can still cope with that when I am away, my husband and I try not to go away at the same time, but at the same time if it does happen, we have support structures in place.

There was only one woman, Amanda who mentioned that she does not do any business travelling and mentioned that she would not manage if she did. On the whole, most of the women do some work travelling but not for very long periods of time and if they do, there are support structures in place to keep the organisation and routine running efficiently in the home.

d) Opportunities in the Workplace Available to Women who do not have Children

Out of the seven women interviewed, five felt that there are more opportunities available to women in the workplace who do not have children. Susan said that it is easier if you do not have children as you can spend more time working and further advance your career, but one cannot if making family sacrifices and having children. Heidi suggested that women without children have more opportunity available to them, more so than other women. She suggested that women without children can go home and do the afterhours work and analyse the work activities that took place that day, However for women with children when they get home, they focus on something entirely different. She stated that it is true that you leave one job and you walk into another job. Heidi stated that the opportunities still exist but the ability to take them on is less when having small children. She also added an interesting perspective in saying:

We are now talking about when they were small, but once they grow up, I think you are on the same footing as women without children, when they are small all your time is taken up looking after them.

Annie agreed, saying that women without children do progress faster and have better opportunities but then adds that:

I have seen some very successful women who have children, and I think that if you are going to do that you have just got to be a very clever juggler of things and be there.

Lily also agreed with the fact that women without children progress faster in their careers, if one is looking at it in a linear fashion. However she also mentioned that having children can also advance one's career. She said:

However my personal experience with that, with friends of mine those that do have children, bring in a whole different dimension in the workplace and different sets of skills, which are beneficial to everyone and find that as a result of that they also succeed.

On the other hand, two of the women said that they did not feel that it made a huge difference in the workplace. Rachel stated:

I don't think it makes a difference whether you have kids or not, it is your personal motivation that is going to get you somewhere and the opportunities are there and it is for you to work to get them.

Kate said that in her case she did not in essence experience limitation of opportunities, as she worked in an office where women and children's rights were very important. Kate gave an interesting perspective in her response, adding that in her line of work she had seen that men are taking more responsibility for their children, as women want to advance their careers and feel that children could hamper a career. She said:

You would be surprised at how many men get their children now days in divorce matters and custody matters. They are actually asking for their children, and you would find that there is actually a shift in women now, and saying its fine, give him the child, because they want to carry on with their careers, it is surprising but true.

In analysing these responses, it would seem that the overall perception was that there is more opportunity available to women without children in the workplace. Due to the fact that women without children are seen to be able to focus more on work at work and at home as well as being able to do afterhours work and all the added extra's, they are seen to be able to further advance in their work and career positions.

e) Returning to Work after Having had Children

In many of the interviews the majority of the women (six out of seven) agreed that they re-

entered work with great ease. Susan and Rachel agreed that they could not wait to get back to work as they enjoy the mental stimulation and found maternity leave lonely at times. Two of the women, Heidi and Lily, felt they handled it with an element of ease as they had prepared themselves for it in advance. Lily, who had also been in a period of preparation to return to work, said that when she was fourteen she had listened to a radio show and it mentioned that the most difficult time in a woman's life is when she tries to get back into her career once she has had her children, and it stuck with her. She said:

I remember thinking just remember that and just make sure that you set things in place such that it doesn't become difficult for you if you go back, so I had that in mind before I became pregnant and while I was pregnant and after the birth of my child, I always had that in mind.

Heidi and Annie mentioned that going back to work initially was not the problem and that it was more the time when the children were small, the sleepless nights. Heidi added:

It was still a year or two years down the line, when your children were still small and you were getting no sleep and you were working every day, that was tough.

Amanda remained the only woman who could not get back into work very easily and she was desperate in her attempt to get back into it after the two year break that she had once having had her children. It is interesting to note that Amanda and Heidi had two boys very close together in age and found that having the two boys at a young age was extremely tiring. They both mentioned that a few years down the line, when their sons were one and two years old, it was a great relief to go to work and have a cup of tea in peace as home life was chaotic at that time.

In analysing these responses, it would seem the overall perception is that the majority of the women returned to work with ease due to a form of preparation as well as feeling relieved to get back to work for mental stimulation as well as a break from the home. But on the other hand returning to work was not the initial issue, but more the time of difficulty was when the children were young and working with sleepless nights became more of an issue at that time.

4.1.5. Category 5: Facilitative Factors

a) Financial Position

Five out of the seven interviewees confirmed that they were in the fortunate position that allowed them to work for personal reasons. All of these women said that they do not necessarily work to bring in disposable income but that they work for either personal reasons or to benefit from the added extras that their income allows. Rachel stated that she works because she wants to work and that the extra income allows her family to do things they may not be able to do, such as overseas holidays. Amanda mentioned that she only works for personal reasons. Heidi stated that she works more for personal reasons as well as to bring in disposable income. Kate said:

I think to have a better lifestyle I would have to work definitely, for a better lifestyle and to send my children to good schools and to make sure that they are exposed to extra- curricular activity and those sorts of things, so the added extra.

Annie said something similar to this:

We could survive on my husband's salary, but it does help with the extras when you have children as well and want to send them to private schools.

Interestingly all five of the women who confirmed that it is not a necessity to work, are also able to employ full-time domestic help. It may be deduced that being in a financially advantaged position, as a result of having a dual- income family, could provide the funds necessary to assist a working mother greatly in managing her responsibilities through being able to afford some form of childcare, babysitting and general housekeeping help. The other two women namely Lily and Susan conversely said that their financial positions are such that they are required to work in order to contribute to covering family expenses, and mentioned that it is definitely a necessity for them to work. Both of the women do not employ a domestic helper for childcare responsibilities and have both got one child each. It was suggested by the participants that greater financial resources can provide for more comprehensive assistance in the form of day- care, babysitters and au pairs.

b) Positive Reasons for Maintaining a Career

A factor that has been mentioned in the interviews as having made it easier for the women to cope with their conflicting roles is the fact that they generally enjoy what they do and are aware of the positive reasons for why they have chosen to be a working mother. All seven of the women were able to recall the advantages that make it worth the struggle for them personally. Each of the women stated that they enjoy their jobs and enjoy going to work and

the work that they do. Some of the women also mentioned that they need to work for their own self-esteem needs. Kate stated an interesting account and said:

I think it is also important to have a job, even in your relationship for you to have your own identity, for you to be yourself, then if you have your own identity. And if you are happy with yourself and content with yourself and life, that automatically goes into your family life then you have happy children because you are happy and your husband as well.

The women also mentioned that they enjoy getting out of the house and away from childcare responsibilities. Amanda said:

It's easier to be here than there in many ways, because here is quiet and you can have peace of mind, and concentrate and there, it is always chaos.

Annie had a similar response, and said:

I like the work, I do, I like to get out of the house, I need my space, I couldn't just be at home with these children all day. They would drive me nuts, I need to be able to apply my mind and have adult conversation, so on the whole I am happy to get out the house which makes me happy to come home.

Rachel added to this and said that if she had to sit at home all day, she would not be a happy person and that it would not work.

When analysing the interviews, what became apparent was that even the two women who acknowledged that they primarily maintain their careers for the financial gains, recognised the significance of this personal need to keep them going in their work jobs. Both Lily and Susan mentioned that they want to work due to the enjoyment of it and that it is important for them to be using their knowledge and skills. Susan stated:

I like coming to work and it works for me because I mean he goes to school, so to get him to school in the morning and I come to a nice environment, nice routine and I enjoy what I am doing.

It can be seen that each woman, in her own way and for her own personal reasons, recognises the rewards in having a career despite the stress that it causes when trying to balance work and family responsibilities.

c) Living in a Small City

It was interesting to note that there was numerous reference made to living in Grahamstown and how living in a small city caters to the needs of raising a family. The majority of the women commented on having a professional work life in Gahamstown and how it is the most

ideal place to bring up children and be able to hold a career. They noted the lack of traffic in Grahamstown, compared to the rest of the bigger cities, such as Johannesburg, and how it enables them to manage the competing demands of their lives much more effectively and efficiently. Susan explained this:

Grahamstown is a wonderful place to have children, literally it takes me, I can leave here at five to one and be at school to pick him up at one, and I mean people find it quaint that we have lunch together, because it is so completely unheard of in the city.

Heidi added to this and spoke about the ability to have lunch at home every day and said:

Living in Grahamstown is great because we go home for lunch time, when my children were very small I would see them for that hour. I think Grahamstown offers quite a balanced lifestyle if you have got a family, more than if you live in a big city, if you have to travel for an hour or so to get to work.

Kate mentioned the ability to be able to go to the school to watch a child and then be back at work in time. She said:

Everything in Grahamstown is different, in the sense that I am able to, in fact if my son plays a match during school time, I can actually go watch it and come back.

Where time seems to be the key element that these women struggle with and lack on a daily basis in their busy lives, this facilitative factor allows for a significant difference in their lives. Throughout the interviews each of the seven women mentioned how Grahamstown allowed for this kind of life and that they perhaps would not get this kind of lifestyle anywhere else.

4.1.6 Category 6: Coping Strategies for Working Women

a) Being Organised

When the seven women were asked about coping strategies that they may use on a daily basis in order to balance a work career as well as caring for their children and family, almost all of the women mentioned that organisation is a key strategy that they use daily. Lily said:

Yes I mean a working mother is probably the most organised human being you will ever come across, you just become obsessed, and everything has to be super organised, it's the only way, every hour, every thirty minutes of your day is accounted for.

Rachel mentioned the fact that one needs to be very organised and said:

You have to be incredibly organised, if you are not, it is not going to work. I will shop every Sunday so that my house is full and I don't have to ever shop during the week. I will make sure that I am the first up in the house and make sure the kid's lunch is all packed and they are ready to go to school and everything is organised. Lunches done and things like that done before school, you have just got to be organised, plan in advance.

Annie also mentioned organisation and said:

Part of being an accountant is that I am very organized and I plan things, so basically we have a very organized and structured life, so that I have time to do all the things I need to do for both sides and it can be a bit hectic and if my diary is not up together, then things do fall through the cracks, but basically it's about managing your diary and making sure you have time for all the different things and not taking on too much work.

Annie added to this and stated that her organisation is centred on routine, planning and structure, and that one needs to be organised if it is going to work, otherwise it would be overly stressful. Susan mentioned the need for planning ahead and that as a consequence of not being as flexible as she would be without a child. She mentioned that it has made her less adaptable in that it has 'taken away her flexibility' and that she constantly needs to plan in advance and think ahead.

The majority of the women interviewed mentioned at some stage that their lives have to be organised and structured in order for them to cope on a daily basis. This became a coping strategy that shows significance throughout the interviews with the women. One can deduce that from this, that organisation is crucial in the lives of these women.

b) Forming a Clear Line Between Work and Family Life

Susan mentioned that she was very clear about work time and family time and said:

If I have something urgent to do at home that is for work, I will make space to do it, but if it is not urgent then I will not do it so I am quite clear in my own head about the fact that I want family time and the fact that I am prepared to make it as it requires a personal decision, that you have to say I am taking this time now and it doesn't matter if there is work to do I am taking this time.

Susan also added to this and mentioned how work could easily enter into your home life and said:

I mean you know now with internet, and cell phones, it is very easy for this work to creep right into your home life, so you have to be just, you have to have clearly defined home and work times and I don't have a problem, I think being a woman it is a strength that I have not noticed in men in saying, look I am going to fetch my child from school now and I can't meet you.

Annie stated that work must be in work times and must not cut into family time she said:

Being able to say no and sometimes when a client approaches you and you think, oh well that will just take an hour or something, but it is an hour out of your child's time and you have got to say to yourself, look I am not prepared to take on another client so sorry I am full at the moment or whatever it is, it is basically planning forward planning all the time, constantly.

Kate added to this and mentioned that she leaves work at work and that she and her husband have found a means of dealing with stress before going home after work. She said:

I leave work at work, you know I don't bring, you know if I have a stressful day I prefer to have a cup of coffee and my husband and I normally have a cup of coffee before we get home, so we would go out to a coffee shop and we would have a cup of coffee, we would then relax, talk about it, let it go there and then come home.

Kate mentioned that there are standard times that need to be spent with the children and work must not interfere with these times. She said:

You have standard things that you have to do with your children like with the girls we have a standard night, every Friday night is our pajama party night, so that's our time together, now my son joins us only to watch the movie, after we do all our stuff we invite him to the movie, so he comes in for the movie and then, like the Friday that passed, I had so much of work to do, and I said to them can you guys watch the movie on your own, because if I do the work while they watch they movie I don't take away time from them, but they were like no, so please don't go, bring your work here you know that sort of thing, there are times when work gets into the way, but you just have to find that balance.

Heidi mentioned that her strategy was to do what it takes to get through the working day, and that one must do everything they can to get the 'hair out of the face'. She also mentioned that spirituality does come into it too.

c) Domestic Worker/s

Five of the seven women stated that they employed domestic workers to assist them in some way in order to manage household and childcare responsibilities. They all employ domestic help full-time. Some of them even employ up to two domestic workers. Rachel mentioned that her domestic worker helps care for her children when she is at work or when she does her business travel during the week to Port Alfred. Kate stated that they employ two people, so that somebody takes care of the children whilst they are at home, so there is always someone at home to care for the children besides her mother in law who supervises. Annie mentioned that she had two domestic workers up until recently and said that when the third child was born, she needed the two domestic workers to help her with the children and the household. Now she has only one domestic worker and another that comes in to help when needed.

Annie said:

I have a domestic and sometimes she has a helper, so when the children are on holiday, and I have got three at home and I am trying to work, then I have got my domestic workers and she has got a helper who will maybe come in once or twice a week, to maybe catch up on ironing, or whatever my regular nanny has not be able to get to, because I mean when the children are at home, her main responsibility is keeping the house at the bare decent level and then looking after the children and making sure they are satisfied and happy and have got what they need.

Amanda mentioned that she has two domestic workers whom she relies heavily upon, mentioning that she could not have coped without them and that they are her primary coping strategy, and said:

Well I have to say I would not manage it without domestic help, I don't know what other people do in other countries.

Heidi also expressed dependence on her domestic worker, mentioning that her main coping strategy is her nanny, and said:

The biggest one is our nanny, I could not live without our nanny, she is out and out my support system, she is very much part of our family, in fact my oldest child was about nine and he one day looked at me horrified to learn that I actually paid her, he just thought she just comes to our house every day, she's just one of us, she knows us through and through, she can read me like a book, and she is just fantastic, I could not live without her.

Two of the women said that they do not depend on domestic help when it came to household and child care responsibilities, Lily and Susan both noted that they do not need to employ someone to care for their children. One can see through analysing the results that the women with more than one child tend to rely on domestic workers to care for their children as well as help with household work. Another interesting fact is that the two women who stated that they do not employ domestic help were among the women who indicated that their financial situation was such that they had to maintain employment so as to cover family expenditure. Perhaps it can be deduced that the employment of domestic help can be considered a luxury available to the more financially advantaged working mother.

4.1.7. Category 7: Level of Support

a) Support from Husband/ Ex- Husband

It was interesting to note that all of the women mentioned that their husbands were the most supportive people in their lives and were interested and involved in childcare. All but one was

still married to the fathers of their children and received considerable amounts of support from them. The woman who was divorced, Lily, has one young son and even though she is divorced from her child's father, she said that they still communicate frequently and assist each other when needed for the child's needs, for example, during business travel or meetings in the afternoon, they would depend on each other in times of need so that their son is given the right amount of attention and care that is needed. The other six women proved to have husbands who are involved in the household and helped out with childcare. It is also important to note that out of these six women, in most cases the husband is the breadwinner or on an equal footing in the workplace with the mother. This would imply that these husbands have just as little if not less time to dedicate to childcare as they all work in full-time jobs. Most of the women however stated that their husbands make an effort to 'share the load' of childcare with them and the responsibilities of childcare when they get home from work. As an average three out of the six women are in positions that are known to be on a more or less equal footing as their husbands. There are however three of the women who regard their husbands as the breadwinners, namely Annie who remarked on the support she receives from her husband and said:

My husband is very good with the kids, he is very involved I mean, it is very difficult for him during the day but you know, he will make every effort to do everything and then in the evenings when it is bathing and supper time he is always available so we share those kinds of things very evenly and the kids, they adore him, so if its him or me doing things we can swop interchangeable.

Rachel mentioned that her husband travels regularly, but said that when her husband is at home he takes part in fetching children and helping with the cooking and organising around the house. Amanda said:

My husband is very helpful but I think because my children are quite difficult to most people's kids, he can manage if he just has to look after them, but if he had to cook at the same time, or you know if it had to be a whole day then it's really hard for him and he doesn't cope.

The three women who would seem to be on an equal footing with their husbands in full-time jobs also mentioned that their husbands help with childcare responsibilities. Heidi mentioned that she receives a great deal of support from her husband, saying that 'he has always helped from the beginning'. Kate noted that she has an understanding husband. Susan is the only woman with a husband who is in education at Rhodes University. She mentioned that she is friends with families where the fathers are very much involved in the children's lives and says:

Luckily my husband is there, he lectures at Rhodes so he is pretty much available so it makes it much easier if you have got another parent who is able to step in.

Lily is the only woman who is divorced and lives with her son. An interesting aspect to note is that even though Lily and her ex-husband are no longer together, they both decided to stay in Grahamstown to be involved in the life of their son. She mentioned that she and her ex-husband only talk about what is good for their son and also times of work demands that require their full attention, they will then assist each other. She also said:

I rely very heavily on my ex- husband to do things and he very similarly relies on me for dropping and fetching and what to do in the afternoons that are all pre- determined.

Through analysis of what the women said, it becomes evident that all the women have supportive and available husbands or an ex-husband who are willing to step in and be present for childcare responsibilities.

b) Support from Network of Family and/or Friends

Out of the seven women interviewed, four of the women said that they do not depend on family for support. Amanda mentioned that she has no family in Grahamstown and Rachel also mentioned that she has a mother who could help with support but she lives away from Grahamstown. Heidi mentioned that she does have one family member in Grahamstown, but he is not involved and a mother in law who comes down to visit and to give support and help, but ends up being another person to look after. Lily was also one of the mothers who stated that all her relatives live around the world thus are not able to give her support.

There were therefore three women that stated that they do depend on family for support at times. Annie mentioned that when her husband is away for long periods of time, they will ask either her mother or her mother in law from Cape Town or Swaziland, to come down and help out for a week as she feels that coping with three children in the evenings for long periods of time becomes tiring. Kate has a mother- in- law who lives with them in the house, she assists with cooking and homework, therefore the family is involved in household and childcare responsibilities. Susan mentioned that she has sound family support structures in place that help her in her role.

With regard to friends as a support network, five of the women mentioned that they have a

sound network of friends who they are able to call on in times of need, and at short notice to assist them in managing childcare responsibilities. It was interesting to note that the only woman who depends on her network of friends, is the woman who is divorced. She said that it is not something she relies on, on a daily basis but she relies on her friends frequently, Lily revealed:

I rely on my friends a lot, a lot more now than I used to because I realized that I needed a lot more support, I wasn't able to handle it all myself, so I rely on my support system in the form of my friends, and we have a little network, we just communicate and we just drop everything for each other if need be, that I think has been great and I think women are good at that actually.

Four of the other women also mentioned that they have friends that they could call on in times of need, Annie and Susan both mentioned that they have a couple of friends that they can get hold of and are available to pick up the pieces when they may be out of town on business. Amanda mentioned that because they are fairly new in town, they have only started to call on friends now and are only now starting to make the kind of friends that you can call on for favours. Heidi mentioned that friends have been a great help also said:

You find that when you are at the period, when your children are very small, you are so busy, you don't even have time for your friends, I really found that I sort of met up again with friends about three years later. That is what it was like, but friends are a great help.

Two of the women mentioned that they do not often rely on friends. Rachel mentioned that they rely on friends seldom and would rather rely on aftercare and babysitters. Kate was also one of the women who rarely rely on friends. She has a stay-at-home mother in law and mentioned that she may call on a friend to take one of her children to school if need be. She mentioned that there is a lady that she calls to fetch her children from school if need be, but this would happen very seldom.

It became apparent through the interviews, that the majority of the women do not use family as a main means of support; however a majority stated that they have a good network of friends that they are able to call on in times of need relating to childcare activities.

c) Support and Flexibility from Respective Work Organisations

Five of the seven women reported that they are given support and a degree of flexibility within their work organisations with regard to childcare and family responsibilities. Lily is a

trained pharmacist, and is also currently doing her PhD; she is in addition to this, a warden on the Rhodes University campus. Her occupation as part- time student, does allow her a degree of flexibility from the university.

The other four women work in full- time jobs in organisations that give them a relative amount of flexibility and support. Kate mentioned that she works in an office, where women and children's rights are exceptionally important. Heidi also mentioned that she works in a family friendly organisation. Rachel mentioned that she is fortunate to be in a position where she is a manager and thus can take time off and work the hours in after hours, as she has the flexibility to do so. Susan mentioned that she is more fortunate than most women in her profession as the large firms demand the 'chasing of fees' and there are a few women in law in positions of leadership, as they generally take time out to have children. She stated:

My son feels very at home at my work, I am lucky that I live in a building that looks like this and not an office block, so I have an understanding work environment.

Annie mentioned that when taking on clients for the organisation she works for, she will tell them that her family comes first unless there are unavoidable tax deadlines, she said:

Wherever I have gone I have been clear and upfront in saying that my family always takes priority so if I have two deadlines and it is something that is urgent and the child needs me, I will ninety percent of the time, take off and do whatever is required for the child and I will leave, I don't really mind what my employees think of me, it is something I have always said, when I start a job, my children will always come first.

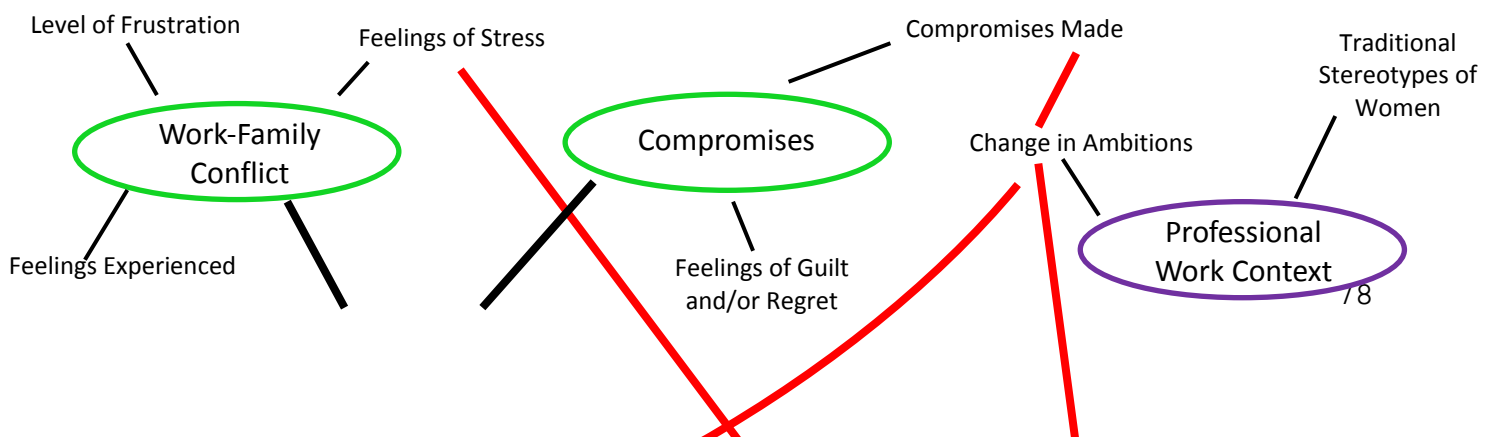
Amanda and Annie are two part- time working women, thus they are given a degree of flexibility automatically. Annie works mornings only and Amanda works all mornings and three afternoons. What makes Amanda different in terms of work is that she has her own practice on her home premises and mentions that living on the same premises is a great advantage. She said:

I think working and living on the small premises has been a big bonus, big plus, because at least I can relax so that if something is really wrong I am here, I can hear what is going on and I can hear screaming and fighting, so I know even if I am not with them, I know where they are on the property.

Through close analysis of the results, the five women who work for an organisation full- time are given a level of flexibility and support from their respective workplace in order to balance work and family life. The two women that work part- time have mentioned that they work

part- time due to the fact that they have children. They have also mentioned that through this they are able to put their children first unless in an unavoidable situation and further able to drop everything to be available for their child if the need arises.

5. Diagram of the Coding Process





5.1 Explanation of the Diagram and Coding Process

The above diagram provides for a summary of the coding process of this Grounded Theory study. The process evolved from the initial coding stage to the final stage involving the development of a theory about how women in professional positions, who are also mothers,

balance their mothering roles and responsibilities as well as fulfilling full- time career aspirations and ambitions. From the diagram presented of the analysis, one is able to recognise how the developing codes have been related and grouped into seven categories (axial coding) and these have been further incorporated into three core categories, at a higher level of abstraction (selective coding) (Willig, 2001). The core categories have further been synthesised to form an empirical theory which is grounded in the original data. However due to the fact that this study followed the guidelines of an Abbreviated Grounded Theory design, a version of Grounded Theory, the process did not conform to the systematic method of a true Grounded Theory design. A true Grounded Theory design would have involved purposefully gathering more and more material in order to saturate themes and links between them as stated by Willig (2001). Working with the thematic material of only seven interviews, the researcher was able to build a ‘theory’ of facilitative and non- facilitative aspects of balancing a professional career as well as mothering responsibilities.

The coding process essentially started with the six intermediate categories; namely: ‘being a working mother’, ‘work- family conflict’, ‘compromises working women make’, ‘being a professional working woman’, ‘facilitative factors’, ‘coping strategies’ and ‘level of support’. This evolved through the use of semi- structured interviews, which meant that the general ‘themes’ of the study and many of the initial codes were largely set up by the interview schedule (Willig, 2001). However throughout the coding process other codes were able to emerge from the material. The coding process thus moved from the intermediate categories out toward the primary codes, which were identified by the researcher as she observed them through the interview data, these included for example ‘being organised’ and ‘domestic help’. The coding then moved back from the primary codes to the seven categories as the researcher related and grouped these codes. The process further progressed inward toward the higher- order categories (selective coding). This process involved the researcher constantly returning to the original interview material, then confirming the presence, meaning and interrelations of the codes, and examining aspects of the emerging analysis, ensuring that it was justified by the raw material, encapsulating the Grounded Theory principle of ‘constant comparative analysis’.

The diagram portrays a graphical description of the process involved, creating a clear and inclusive map of the connections and interrelations between the various codes and categories. The diagram shows these codes and relevant connections that the researcher identified,

through the analysis of the interview material. The links and relations between the codes and categories show how phenomena have been integrated during the interview process, through the interviewee's information as well as the interpretations of the researcher, in suggesting possible causal relationships. The summarisation of the linkages became a useful tool to the researcher in formulating the discussion of the core categories and the establishment of a theory.

6. Discussion of Core Categories

6.1. Core Category 1: The definition of role- conflict and the extent of the conflict as per the working mother's experience.

The analysis of the axial categories function as a form of evidence that postulates that role-conflict is a phenomenon that has a significant impact on the lives of mothers who are seen as having a professional work status. The result of this conflict is compatible with previous

research findings that suggest that working mothers in professional work positions and in highly demanding professions increases the likelihood of the working mother experiencing role- conflict. Holahan and Gilbert (1979) found in their study, the women who are in highly demanding professions as well as having a family life proved to have a positive relationship between having a highly demanding profession and role- conflict. Role- conflict, according to Coverman (1989), is said to be present when persons, in this case women, fulfill multiple roles simultaneously; for example, being a mother and a paid worker. When the person has many role demands and too little time to dedicate to them, it results in role overload (Coverman, 1989). Role- overload is said to lead to role conflict only when the demands of one of the roles make it difficult to fulfill the demands of another role. Role- conflict, as stated by Coverman (1989), refers to the experiences of demands within one role that are conflicting with the demands that arise within another role.

Hall (1972) in focusing on a woman explains that women have overlapping sub- identities that result in them being in many roles at the same time such as wife, mother, housewife and employee. Hall (1972) stated that having these multiple sub identities can often result in conflict from the competing demands of these identities. The conflict that exists between the many roles a woman takes on is a matter of role- overload and the competition for time- a scarce resource. The limitation of resources is experienced, according to Grzywacz and Bass (2003), as the possibility of missing out on dinner with one's partner due to working late in the office or being physically exhausted at work because of spending the night awake with a sick child.

The women in the present study made reference to lack of time as a negative aspect of work, whereby they are not able to spend time with their families and children, and therefore have to constantly juggle these competing demands. According to Hall (1972), children do not find their mother's work, disturbing; the problem may arise when the children want to spend that time with their mother and would prefer that she spent time with them rather than work. In essence, role- conflict becomes apparent when a person experiences conflict between being a spouse or parent and being an employee. This causes further stress for the individual that can have harmful effects (Keene & Quadagno, 2004). Martikainen (1995) holds that having simultaneous roles with diverse expectations can lead to increased levels of stress. In the present study the participants related their levels of stress to their personalities and felt, on the whole that they did not deal with stress very well. It is evident from the responses of the

participants that the nature of having a professional work job often means that even if the women are working in a small city, they are often required to work long hours, travel and sometimes bring work home, which can cause increased levels of stress.

The presence of the two spheres causes work- spillover, which “occurs when emotions, attitudes, and behaviours generated in the workplace carry over into family life, or when work limits time spent with family” (Keene & Quadagno, 2004, p. 3). Work- spillover occurs when the work- life and family- life spheres overlap. The greater the over- lap the more the woman feels guilty about neglecting their family life or work life and the greater the role- conflict (Keene & Quadagno, 2004). According to Grzywacz (1999) negative spillover between work and family life can undermine an individual’s health and well- being.

Barling, Kelloway and Frone (2005, p. 115), define work- family conflict as “a form of inter- role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect”. Work- family conflict is thus seen by Barling *et al.*, (2005) as being conflict that exists when the participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by the participation in the family (work) role. According to Duxbury and Higgins (1991, p. 60), “work- family conflict is an important concern for individuals and organisations alike because such conflict, as a source of stress, has been correlated with negative consequences, including increased health risks for employed parents, poorer performance of the parenting role, decreased productivity, tardiness, absenteeism, turnover, poor morale, reduced life satisfaction, and lower mental health”.

A form of work- family conflict can be seen through the fact that in most cases women are the primary care givers in childcare responsibilities, and thus this role falls heavily on the woman (Biernat & Wortman, 1991). The women in the present study mentioned that their husbands provide great support to them and that most of them helped out with household and childcare responsibilities and activities. However, they also mentioned that the ultimate responsibility does more than often fall on the woman at the end of the day. Mederer (1993) completed a study on the division of labour in two- earner homes that mirrors the results found in the present study. The study found that when husbands ‘help out’ with household tasks and the management of family responsibility, their support is that of merely ‘helping out’. Working mothers were seen to take the majority of the responsibility for the accomplishment of household activities as well as the management of the family

responsibility even when husbands did help.

The idea of achieving a work- family balance is a significant concept in Role- Conflict Theory. Keene and Quadagno (2004) say that the concept of work- family balance involves the division of one's time and energy between two competing spheres of, in this case, a woman's life. When one aspect of their life is neglected, it will result in stress and frustration. Balancing these areas of a working mother's life can cause strain and can have negative effects on health and well- being, as discussed earlier. The responses of the women in the study suggested that they suffered from the effects of work- family conflict in this respect and experienced levels of conflict within themselves and exhaustion at attempting to satisfy their numerous daily roles, especially when their children were very young.

According to Rao, Apte and Subbakrishna (2003) role- overload and conflict involved in the carrying out of numerous roles can in many instances lead to guilt and anxiety for women. There were cases in the present study where some of the women felt a sense of guilt or regret towards the home or the workplace, or a little of both. This guilt and regret were mainly focused on not being able to be there for their children at important times. These women did not mention feelings of resentment, bitterness or anger towards their job or family, however, each of the women mentioned at some stage in the interview that they enjoyed working and would not have it any other way.

Role- conflict brings with it compromises that working mothers have to make in order to balance the different roles in their daily lives. A strong component was that a change in ambition for the women in the study became a form of compromise that they had to make in order to balance both spheres and in essence lessen the effects of role- conflict. The majority of the participants in the present study noted that their career ambitions had changed in that they could not work long hours and so work opportunities were limited due to the time factor in their day. This can also be linked to the opportunities available to women who do not have children. The participants in the present study revealed that women who do not have children have the advantage of furthering their careers. Women who do not have children were seen by the participants as being able to bring work home, work full- time, and do the added extras that can benefit career opportunities in the form of career advancement or a possible career change. The results of a study by Mavin (2001) on this issue noted that, there is no single and typical working pattern for modern working women, but that male career models remain

when women are stepping off the fast track in order to meet family responsibilities and obligations. Therefore working mothers continue to be at a competitive disadvantage in the advancement of their careers.

The women in the current study, although asserting that they experienced role- conflict, also received personal and family benefits as a result of performing many roles. This led to them making the decision to maintain their demanding and time consuming professional jobs. The reasons for these women remaining in their active and demanding careers resounds with those determined in the study by Rao *et al.*, (2003), who state that it can also bring about status, self- esteem, identity, privileges and mental stimulation that balance out the role- strain. As suggested by Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer and King (2002) women with multiple roles can have a further increased opportunity to increase self- esteem and confidence and thus increase levels of well- being due to personal challenge and self- fulfillment. The participants in the study acknowledged that having professional work allows them a sense of identity and that self- esteem increased ‘mind stimulation’ keeping their minds active and challenged. It also allowed for privileges in the form of increased disposable income and the independence as a result of earning their own salary. Whatever the individual reasons for having their careers might have been, in each case the benefits received from performing this role greatly reduced the experience of role- conflict as it provided the women with the positive support that they needed to accept their role as a working mother.

6.2. Core Category 2: Facilitative factors and how they assist the professional working mothers in maintaining a successful work- family balance.

The analysis of axial categories in the study provided for a thorough exploration of the factors that exist in the lives of the professional work status mothers in Grahamstown. The women recognised these factors as enabling them to form a balance or an attempt at forming a balance between their work and family roles. The facilitative factors are seen to interlink with one another through a number of underlying relationships that are supportive of maintaining a demanding professional career at work whilst still being a mother at home. Throughout the study, it became apparent that the level of support that a working mother received from the different areas of her life was of great importance in determining whether she could successfully manage a dual- role lifestyle. The current study found that women

used the support of their friends and family with regard to childcare and household activities. Friends proved more of a support in the lives of the women in comparison to family members. The majority of the women mentioned that their family members did not live in Grahamstown or close to Grahamstown and thus they could not call on them for support with childcare activities. The majority of the women however mentioned that they had a good network of friends in Grahamstown who they were able to call on in times of need relating to childcare. This view is seen to be compatible with previous research findings. A study by Walen and Lachman (2000) proved that friends and family are able to buffer the effects of strained interactions. With regard to social support Amatea and Fong (1991) state that the more family and friends a woman has surrounding her, the more her support resources increase, providing for this network of support. Amatea and Fong (1991) found that this type of social support is extensively related to strategies for coping with role- conflict. It was found that increased levels of support were associated with lower levels of role strain.

The crucial support that was continuously referred to by the women was that provided by their husbands, who adopted a supportive role for their wives as briefly mentioned earlier. The women mentioned that although the majority of childcare responsibility falls on the woman, their husbands, and in one case ex- husband, were a critical help to them in providing the women with assistance and reinforcement at numerous levels. This is consistent with the findings in a study that was undertaken by Walen and Lachman (2000), which found evidence that supportive networks consisting of partners, family and friends could buffer the harmful effects of strained interactions. The study found that if a woman's partner helps with home life activities, it can drastically reduce the burden on her to accomplish all the daily duties by herself, thus allowing her, with this support, to also concentrate on her career and professional work. The husband support linked with the coping strategy of hiring domestic help, because the women who did not necessarily need to work for financial reasons all employed domestic help to aid them with childcare and household activities. Employment of domestic help can thus be considered a luxury available to the more financially advantaged working mothers. The findings of the current study suggest that the financial support of the women's partner's income contribution to the family finances was directly related to a mother's ability to be able to afford help and support for childcare responsibilities in the form of domestic workers, au pairs, baby sitters and day- care. This allowed the women to spend more time working and concentrating on their professions. It can thus be deduced that the financial position is linked to a professional working mother's ability to employ domestic

help. The support of domestic help was regarded as a crucial coping strategy that the women mentioned they could not live without. Some of the women even employed two domestic helpers to help in the household and regarded the domestic help as a critical success factor as it allowed them to be assisted in numerous ways, namely; having a person/s to take care of the household tasks such as cleaning, enabling the women to have more time to attend to work matters and issues as well as an increased amount of time to dedicate to their children. The presence of a trustworthy care-giver made for reduced anxiety and conflict, when the time came for the working mother to attend to her work place responsibilities and leave her children at home. Some of the women mentioned that they could not cope without the assistance they received from their domestics helpers and added that being so reliable, trustworthy and regularly present, they were “almost part of the family”. Being in a sound financial position is a facilitative factor because it also allows the women to maintain a career for reasons of self- fulfillment and personal reasons as opposed to working in order to bring in necessary disposable income.

The findings of the current study indicated that positive support from the women’s workplaces proved a significant factor of support. This allowed the women a degree of flexibility and understanding when it came to childcare requests. The women in the study used a method of work time restructuring in order to be able to attend mothering responsibilities such as school assemblies or sporting fixtures. This work time restructuring came in the form of, for example, working over a lunch break in order to attend a sporting event in the afternoon as well as taking time off work in the morning in order to attend a school activity. The women in the present study stated that the degree of flexibility in their relative organisations allowed them to attend their children’s activities, as their workplaces had the understanding that ‘the work will get done’. They all mentioned at some point in the interview that at the end of the day, the work will be done and that their workplaces trust that they will make time to finish their work tasks.

The women acknowledged that they were given support and a degree of flexibility within their work organisations in Grahamstown with regard to childcare and family responsibilities. This lessened the strain placed on having multiple roles and resonates with a study by Warren and Johnson (1995) on workplace support. This study showed how such support can play an important role in helping working mothers with the co- ordination of employment and family roles, and that it lessened the strain placed on the women caused by their involvement in the

two domains. The study also showed that having a family- friendly work environment formed a significant part of how business organisations can aid employees to balance work and family demands. A study by Greenberger, Goldberg, Hamill, O'Neil and Payne (1989) found that employed women with pre- school children reported low levels of role- strain when they perceived their immediate supervisors as flexible with regard to family obligations and commitments. Support from co- workers was also mentioned as well as the degree of autonomy that the women were allowed. Some organisations had the view that the work would eventually be done and that unless there was an emergency, they were prepared to allow time flexibility. Living in a small city such as Grahamstown, allows people to be able to get to places in a short amount of time. The support from employing organisations can be linked to the facilitative factor of living in a small city that allows people to engage in mothering activities and still be able to get professional work done. The women acknowledged that they were able to attend school activities between work demands, because of Grahamstown's small size. Being able to attend a child's sporting match or other activity was possible because the women were able to attend the activity and be back at work in a minimum amount of time, without being disadvantaged by traffic delays. A flexible work place can also be linked to the coping strategy of forming a divide between work and family life. The women mentioned that they left work at work and thus were able to focus on a different part of their lives when they got home- their family. A supportive organisation that understands that a working mother also has to focus her attention on the needs of her family at the end of a working day, allows the women to be able to leave their work lives at work and the flexibility to possibly not bringing work home unnecessarily.

The participants in the current study were able to balance the two spheres of their lives by strategically using the coping strategy of being constantly organised. The women mentioned that being organised and planning in advance was a critical factor in their lives and allowed them to fit in all activities and still balance them to a certain degree. The structuring and planning of a day proved to be a fundamental factor in the lives of the working mothers and was recognised as revolving around set routines whereby each hour is accounted for in order for everything to be done in a working day.

6.3. Core Category 3: The issues that come into effect when a mother is a professional working woman.

The third and final core category focused on the lives of the professional work status women working in professions in Grahamstown. It involved an exploration into their lives which allowed certain issues to be revealed about both the nature of being professional working women and the aspect of having both a professional work- life and the role of a mother. It further assessed the issues that come into effect because of traditional stereotypes and the changes in one's professional work- life after having children.

Duxbury and Higgins (1991), note that the increase in the number of women entering the workforce, has led to an increase in the number of nuclear families including that of two working parents. This has led to a change in the traditional division of labour between partners. The traditional stereotypes of 'a woman's place is in the home' is shown by Duxbury and Higgins (1991) as no longer being seen by society as an option in today's world. Women increasingly have to deal with job demands that reduce their family role performance. In the present study the women participants noted that this statement had no place in modern times. The women said that it was not unusual to see women in the workplace, and people were even questioning why some women were not working. Families needed the dual- income in order to have a good lifestyle. Through the analysis of how the women felt with regard to their own mother's role, there was a consensus that it had a great impact on their motherly role, making them more aware of the fact that they needed to make time for their children.

Larwood and Gutek (1987) present an important issue which still divides men and women in terms of career ambitions. Women are seen to be in a position where they have alternative possibilities. For example, if women feel that their career is leveling off; they may renounce their career and focus on having children and a family. Such a possibility is not seen as feasible for a man. Following on from this, Mavin (2001) comments on the fact that women are often forced to choose between advancing their career (following their ambitions) and family stability in the home or even having a family at all. The women in the study noted a change in ambitions since having had children, and that the altering of their lives to suit the change in lifestyle with regard to accommodating work and family was inevitable. According to Mavin (2001) the structures of organisations can work against the accommodating of work and family roles, and women are in essence at a disadvantage due to the fact that they still take responsibility for the main caring roles in the family. This links to the childcare

responsibilities that are placed on women.

Being a professional working woman often involves business travel. The women noted that they had experienced times of work travel but that they did not have to do too much of it. The fact that travel reduced family time for the women and made the children feel disrupted in their routine and stressed had an influence on the women's decisions to choose not to travel often. A study by Espino, Sundstrom, Frick, Jacobs and Peters (2001) added to this view and showed that frequent business travel has a negative effect on spouses as well as children (particularly young children) and that the strain on families contributes significantly to the stress working women feel about work travel. Systems and procedures have to be put into place in homes when the mother of the family travels on business, and did not frequently occur in the lives of the women in the current study.

For women who do not have children, business travel may not seem to be that much of an issue and may increase the opportunities available to women who do not have children. The women in the present study mentioned that they felt that there were more career opportunities available to women who did not have children. The opportunities were highlighted as those relating to the women being able to further their careers because they had more time to work after hours (taking work home) and were able to focus on one thing in comparison to working mothers who had to make family sacrifices. A study by Gupta and Smith (2001) endorses this viewpoint and notes the effect of children on a woman's capacity to work more and earn more. The reduced focus on work matters is further caused by the increased responsibility in the home. Gupta and Smith (2001) also note that career interruptions result from women having children. Better opportunities available to women without children are thus seen to exist and this factor is linked to the women changing their career ambitions once having had children.

Davey, Murrells and Robinson (2005) state that Hakim developed a preference theory and further suggested a threefold ideal-type classification of women in relation to work. It reveals that a 'home-centered' woman will always prioritise her family, and a 'work-centered' woman will always prioritize work and her career. An 'adaptive' woman will try to combine work and family. Approximately 20 percent of the women in this study were home-centered, 20 percent of women were work-centered and 60 percent were adaptive women. These proportions may vary by approximately 10 percent in each direction depending on

social, family and employment matters. The women in the current study generally returned to work with ease and were relieved to get back to ‘mental stimulation’, ‘adult conversation’ and ‘peace of mind’, although when the children were young they battled with the lack of sleep. The women would thus be recognised as ‘adaptive’ women, as they returned to work with the attempt at combining the domains of work and family.

7. Conclusion

This chapter will briefly evaluate the nature of the research context, and reasons for the research project. It will discuss the extent to which relevant information was attained with regard to answering the three research aims. It will in addition review a reflection of the research process from the researcher’s point of view and further look into the strengths and limitations of the study as well as possible avenues for future research.

7.1. Contextually Based Reasons for the Research Study

As discussed in Chapter two, women have become increasingly more involved in the world of formal work in professional positions in organisations. Women have through this movement, taken to positions of power in the workplace (Wilson, 1991). In the developed world of today, women perform multiple roles, namely; mother, wife and paid worker. Women experience the highest level of conflict between these roles, namely; work and family roles, since they are still expected by society to perform the bulk of household responsibilities (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003). Professional women of the 21st century, according to Whitehead and Kotze (2003), have the extraordinary challenge of trying to balance the multiple roles simultaneously. The problem revolves around the ‘balancing act’ of these multiple roles (Naidoo & Jane, 2002). An issue that rises in this regard is that of work- family conflict. Work- family conflict according to Greenhaus and Parasuraman (1985) occurs when the participation in the work (family) role is made difficult by the participation in the family (work) role, and vice versa. This concept is characterised by a strain on the amounts of time, physical energy and psychological efforts that could have negative consequences. In attempting to balance the multiple roles set out for a working mother, coping strategies and support systems are put into place in order to balance a professional career as well as motherhood. Coping according to Latack (1986, p. 377) refers to “efforts to master conditions that tax or exceed adaptive resources. In understanding the different coping strategies and support systems that are put into place, individuals and families are better able to manage certain conflicting situations in either the home or the workplace (Duxbury & Lyons, 2009).

This provided a context for the current study. Women who are constantly juggling multiple roles have to constantly develop and use coping strategies and look to support systems in time of need. Being more aware of the impact of having a professional career as well as a family, can provide for vital strategies to be put into place, so as to aid in balancing the roles of both mother and professional worker. The possible compromises that working women have to make and possible feelings of guilt and/ or regret, need to also be addressed. They need to be dealt with in order to learn how a professional woman balances a demanding work profession as well as motherhood. These ideas formed the aims of the current research study. This study is appropriate as it is motivated to fill this gap in the body of relevant research pertaining to a professional woman’s work- life balance (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003).

7.2. The Relevance of Information Provided for Answering the Research Aims

As seen in chapter four, useful information was attained with regard to the three research aims. More specifically, it was found that the participants all experience work- family conflict and that guilt is a feeling that is attached to this issue. The women expressed a consensus to that fact that they feel high levels of guilt with regard to not spending enough time with their children and family, and they feel less guilt in not spending enough time and attention on their work. The women feel a sense of guilt toward not being there for their children and family as a whole at times and the feelings attached to moments when they would rather be at home with their family in a secure environment. In light of coping strategies and support systems, various factors were identified as having a significant influence in balancing family responsibilities and work ambitions for the women. The women used a range of support systems and coping strategies. The coping strategies were in the form of; being organised and planning in advance; forming a line between work and family life as well as having domestic help. Being organised and the help of domestic workers were seen as the most dominant coping strategies. The support systems for the women were in the form of having a network of family and friends; support from husbands and an ex-husband; as well as support from relative organisations where the women work. Finally in addressing the third research aim, compromises made for work and family life were revealed by the women as occurring continuously on both sides of the spectrum. Some of the women felt that compromises are made at home and/or at work, but on the whole, compromises have to be made in order to fit everything into a day. With regard to feeling a sense of guilt and/or regret, the majority of the women did not feel a sense of guilt or regret toward the home or the workplace. There were however some cases where a few women felt a sense of guilt or regret or a bit of both and this was mainly situated around not being able to be there for their children at important times in their lives.

The research proved to be successful in achieving the research aims, further developing insights into the dynamics involved in the lives' of professional working mothers in Grahamstown. It was concerned with the working mothers' ability to balance a professional career with their mothering role through the use of various resources available to them and the various strategies they have learned in order to develop ways of easing their experience of

work- family conflict. This caused by the fact that they are required to divide their scarce resource- time, between their demanding work and mothering roles.

7.3. Reflection of the Research Process

Due to the nature of the research topic, the researcher chose to do a qualitative research study which proved appropriate to the material at hand. There is no doubt that a working mother feels the conflict between her work- life and her family- life, and the use of qualitative research methods are a tool able to uncover and explore the complicated issues involved in the attempt to balance both domains. Research on the topic of work- family balance, incorporating the spheres of conflict, coping strategies as well as compromises can be acknowledged as useful research. The women participants who were involved in the study appeared to be interested in the research topic, proving that this research area is highly relevant to these women whose experience it reflects. With further research this may have value to professional women as it provides coping strategies and support systems that they could use to their benefit on a daily basis in order to cope with the competing demands of both the home and the workplace.

The use of the abbreviated version of the Grounded Theory approach, allowed the researcher to uncover significant issues in the data and develop a theory concerning the balancing act of having a professional career as well as being a mother in the geographical context of the small city, Grahamstown. The approach allowed for the different stages in the process and the interpretations to be grounded in the original data. The process of Grounded Theory allowed the researcher to focus a large amount of valuable material into fewer and more concentrated issues- the core issues. In doing this the researcher was also able to concentrate this material without excluding significant material from the discussion. The core categories were chosen in accordance with their significance in answering the broad research question and further, the research aims. They were also selected as means of covering the crucial codes that emerged in the process of interviewing.

The research process allowed for the development of a theory. It commenced with broad research questions and research aims, and followed a sequence of events and processes that led to the evolving of a final empirical theory. The process had fewer obstacles or

interruptions along the way, enabling it to move at a steady pace throughout the process. The most challenging part of the study was deciding who the participants would be. This process became a challenging aspect of the study, due to the fact that the researcher wanted to gain participants who were racially diverse. The challenge of obtaining professional working mothers in Grahamstown was however unproblematic, as the researcher was fortunately able to attract racially diverse participants who were willing to participate in the study, relatively easily. The study uncovered the issues that were in the most part expected by the researcher, but there were some issues that came up that were unexpected.

7.4. Strengths and Limitations of the Study

The strengths of the study are seen to be in the fact that the study explores the work-family balance of professional working mothers, which is a population that has not had much research focus. The study of professional working mothers in Grahamstown has not been covered by previous research, thus the study may create a platform for future research into this area, with a theory for understanding how women in professional positions who are also mothers, are able to balance both domains on a daily basis. This study can also be seen as an inspiration to women who want to have a successful work career as well as have a family. The exploration into the participants' lives creates a realistic view of how this balance comes about and can be inspiring or useful to women in their 20s and 30s entering this area of concern. An added strength of the study can be seen through the participants being racially diverse. The researcher set out in attempting to gain participants from different racial groups, in order to analyse possible racial differences that may be of importance. Due to the fact that South Africa is a multi-cultural country, the researcher found it important to include racial diversity.

The research study, as well as having its strengths and successes, also came with its limitations and areas that could have been improved. Firstly the researcher could have sampled a few more participants for the study. The researcher acknowledges that the 'theory' developed through the research study is based on interview material gained from only seven participants out of a relatively large population of professional working mothers in Grahamstown. However, this being said, due to the fact that the researcher was specifically looking for a range of diverse mothers living with their children below the age of 12 years, in professional work positions, the process became a little more difficult and thus fewer

participants were gained. A limitation can also be seen through the study being a version of Grounded Theory, and thus did not allow for saturation and hypothesis- testing of the theory with further interviews. This may be acknowledged as a drawback of the study, but the scope of the project and limited time available for the project, hindered the ability to gain further participants. Even though there are limitations of the study, the researcher believes that the theory resulting from the analysis and discussion is a fair reflection of the main issues facing professional working mothers, due to the fact that similar issues were brought up in each of the interviews. These results, nevertheless are based on the geographical area of Grahamstown, and thus cannot be transferred to individuals outside of the area due to the unique nature of the small city, thus the differences of living in a small city need to be taken into consideration in future research.

7.5. Possible Avenues for Future Research

An evaluation of the research study has shown many avenues for future research. There are many areas that can be developed with this developing theory in mind that concerns professional working mothers and the work- family balance involved. Future research, with this developing theory in mind could use a full Grounded Theory research design. This would allow the researcher the opportunity to go back into the field and conduct further interviews as the emerging theory grows, as well as the ability to carry out repeat interviews with the participants in order to further examine and confirm specific areas that may be of potential significance.

An increased amount of time and scope for the study could allow for focus group discussions with the sample of women in order to generate a discussion of their joint experiences, issues and concerns with regard to balancing work and family life. The husbands of the participants could also be interviewed and possibly be further involved in focus group discussions on the phenomena at hand. This would further allow subsequent information to arise pertinent to the research study. It would in essence prove interesting to the study to take into account the husbands' points of view.

Due to the fact that women are increasingly in professional work positions, and at the same time may be starting a family, the significance of carrying out future research into this area

proves crucial. Future research in this regard has the potential to be integrated into a comparative analysis between professional working mothers in different regions of South Africa, allowing the research to be conducted with a broad scale approach in mind. The research could thus be a comparison between the main cities in South Africa; namely; Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and Port Elizabeth. As previously mentioned, an increased amount of time and scope would allow for the many avenues of future research to be explored and investigated.

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9. APPENDIX A: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

THE ROLE OF A WORKING MOTHER:

- 1) How would you describe your lifestyle as a mother who works, in terms of its benefits and costs?

BUSSINESS CAREER:

- 2) Tell me about your career in terms of- what are your qualifications and experiences?
How did you come to be in the work position you are in today?

THE CHANGING ROLE OF THE MOTHER:

- 3) How do you feel with regard to the traditional stereotype of the “woman’s place is the home”?

BECOMING A WORKING MOTHER:

- 4) At what point in your career were your children born? How many children do you have and what are their ages? How would you describe your working life since the birth of your first child, has it changed?

PARENTING RESPONSIBILITIES:

- 5) Have your career ambitions changed in any way since having had children? And, how much time are you able to spend at home- working and/ or with your family/ children?

WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT:

- 6) Have you experienced times of work- family conflict between your work- life and mothering responsibilities? If so, to what extent have you experienced it and does this feeling manifest itself?

COPING STRATEGIES AND SUPPORT SYSTEMS:

- 7) What coping strategies including support systems, do you use on a daily basis in order to balance a work career as well as caring for your children/ family? And, how much support do you receive from your partner/ relatives/ friends?

COMPROMISES MADE:

- 8) What compromises do you make and to what extent, if any, do you feel a sense of guilt or regret toward the demands of both the home and the workplace?

10. APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

<p>RHODES UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY</p> <p>AGREEMENT BETWEEN STUDENT RESEARCHER AND RESEARCH PARTICIPANT</p> <p><i>Updated 26 January 2011</i></p>
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I, _____ agree to participate in the research project of ANDREA GUNTON on the coping strategies that working mothers use in order to balance their work life and family responsibilities.

I understand that:

1. The researcher is a student conducting the research as part of the requirements for a Masters by thesis (MBT) degree at Rhodes University. The researcher may be contacted on 078 168 4875 or g06g6512@campus.ru.ac.za. The research project has been approved by the relevant ethics committee(s), and is under the supervision of Mr Mike Routledge in the Psychology Department at Rhodes University, who may be contacted on 046 603 8504 or m.routledge@ru.ac.za.
2. The researcher is interested in exploring and investigating what coping strategies, professional work status mothers, develop and use in trying to fulfil their career ambitions as well as succeed in their personal lives with regard to being a mother to their families on a daily basis.
3. My participation will involve my partaking in a personal interview which will take about 60 minutes.
4. I may be asked to answer questions of a personal nature, but I can choose not to answer any questions about aspects of my life which I am not willing to disclose.
5. I am invited to voice to the researcher any concerns I have about my participation in the study, or consequences I may experience as a result of my participation, and to have these addressed to my satisfaction.
6. I am free to withdraw from the study at any time – however I commit myself to full participation unless some unusual circumstances occur, or I have concerns about my participation which I did not originally anticipate.
7. The report on the project may contain information about my personal experiences, attitudes and behaviours, but that the report will be designed in such a way that it will not be possible to be identified by the general reader.

Signed on (Date): _____

Participant: _____

Researcher: _____