

**GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND DIFFERENCES IN WORK-LIFE  
BALANCE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN A SOUTH AFRICAN SAMPLE**

by

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### **GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND DIFFERENCES IN WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN A SOUTH AFRICAN SAMPLE**

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## **UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA**

### **GENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND DIFFERENCES IN WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING IN A SOUTH AFRICAN SAMPLE**

#### **SUMMARY**

This study examined the work-life balance (WLB) and subjective well-being (SWB) of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y in the current world of work. The instruments used in this study for data collection was Work-life Balance Scale, the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, and the Work Engagement Questionnaire. The research was conducted from the perspective of a positive psychological paradigm and investigated the interrelationship dynamics between the constructs of generations and work-life balance and work-life balance and subjective well-being, as well as the differences between the levels of work-life balance and subjective well-being across generations in a South African sample.

This study calculated Exploratory Factor Analyses (EFA) and Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) to examine the psychometric structure of a proposed SWB construct and to test the hypothesis that SWB is a latent variable comprising of Happiness, Optimism, Self-Esteem, and Engagement. Based on the results of the two EFA and CFA models, there is enough statistical evidence to accept this hypothesis. Correlational analysis and structural equation modelling revealed the relationships between work-life balance and subjective well-being. Regression analysis and tests for significant differences identified the differences in work-life balance and subjective well-being levels across the generations. The results revealed that there were some statistically significant differences between generations. For Baby Boomers and Generation X work-life balance was influenced by SWB factors, whilst Generation Y were mostly influenced by biographical variables. The results showed that hours worked, and hours paid were predictors of work interfering with personal life (WIPL) for both Generation X and Generation Y. Self-esteem was a significant predictor for the Baby Boomers. With regards to personal life interfering with work (PLIW) hours worked and happiness were found to be predictors for Generation X, whereas hours paid was a negative predictor for Generation Y. Furthermore, hours worked, happiness

and engagement were found to predict work and personal life enhancement (WPLE) for Generation X. An overall difference was noted for happiness across the generations, with Generation Y employees having significantly lower levels of happiness than Generation X, whilst no significant difference was noted between Generation X and Baby Boomers. The current study linked the emerging constructs of positive psychology in general by investigating the relationships and differences between generations, WLB and SWB. The results could be used as a framework for IOP. The research makes a contribution to the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology on three levels, namely, on a theoretical, an empirical and a practical level.

**KEY TERMS:**

Generations; Baby Boomers; Generation X; Generation Y; Work-life balance; Subjective well-being; Happiness; Optimism; Self-esteem; Engagement; Positive psychology; Flourishing; Languishing

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## **CHAPTER 1: SCIENTIFIC ORIENTATION TO RESEARCH**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the scientific background to the research. In this chapter, the background and motivation for the research, the problem statement and the aims of the study are provided. The relevant paradigms, theories and models applied in the study are also listed in this chapter. In addition, the research design and method are explained. The chapter is concluded with an outline of chapters to follow.

### **1.2 BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH**

The current study examined the work–life balance (WLB) and subjective well-being (SWB) of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y in the current world of work, as an area of research and practice in Industrial and Organisational Psychology (IOP). The instruments used in this study for data collection were the Work-life Balance Scale, the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue), and the Work Engagement Questionnaire (WEQ28).

WLB has been a concern of those interested in the quality of work-life and its relationship to broader quality of life (Becton, Waker, & Jones-Farmer, 2014; Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008; De Cieri, Holmes, Abbott, & Pettit, 2002; Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003; Guest, 2001; Patel, Govender, Paruk, & Ramgoon, 2006; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge, 2010; Urick, Hollensbe, & Fairhurst, 2017; Veiga, 2009). The pressures of work, such as the advances in information technology (IT), the need for speed and response, and the importance attached to the quality of customer service, together with the implications thereof in terms of constant availability, and the pace of change with its resultant upheavals and adjustments, all demand time and energy (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014). Longer working hours and increased intensity of work are common expectations from employers. Longer hours lead to an increase in evening and weekend work and leave little scope for ‘quality’ *other* time (Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). This has an effect on the individual’s well-being in organisations (Barnett, 2008; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015).

Researchers and managers have generally recognised that a lack of SWB can

potentially affect employees and organisations in negative ways. Studies show that having WLB, or companies who promote WLB tend to have a positive influence on improving well-being (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011; Clark, 2000; Diener, Kesebir, & Lucas, 2008; Diener, Pressman, Hunter, & Chase, 2017; Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska, 2015; Park, Peterson, & Ruch, 2009).

Many changes in the workplace and in employee demographics over the past decade have led to an increased concern for the boundary between employee work and non-work life (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011). The changes in the workplace are not confined to Western societies, as many African countries experience similar trends (Prakash, 2018). The increased utilisation of information and communication technology, globalisation of markets, the changing structure of the workforce, increasing flexibility of work, the creation of a 24-hour economy and recent recessions, have all led to fewer people doing more work, feeling more insecure and being managed very differently (Robbins & Judge, 2013; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015; Urlick et al., 2017).

### **1.2.1 Various generations in the world of work**

While organisations continue to tackle diversity issues, such as gender and race, there is another element very much part of the mix, namely that of age diversity. For the first time there are four, soon to be five, generations working side by side, each bringing different sets of values, beliefs and expectations to the workplace (Benson & Brown, 2011; Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008; Howe & Strauss, 2007; Jonck, Van der Walt, & Soyayeni, 2017; Kennedy, 2002; Novkovic, 2007; Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018; Sayers, 2007).

These workforce demographics coupled with the rapid advancement of digital technology are shaping the workplace of the future. Managed correctly, a diverse workforce, including members from different generations, enhances performance and productivity (Weeks, Weeks, & Long 2017). The generation in which an individual grows up has a key influence on his or her adult behaviour, and the different characteristics of each generation can strengthen an organisation if properly understood. It was found that by acknowledging the differences between generations, organisational effectiveness could be maximised (King, Murillo, & Lee, 2017).

The majority of working individuals in the current corporate market form part of the Baby Boomer, X and Y generations (Fry, 2016; Van der Walt, 2010; Weeks et al., 2017; Zemke, Raines, & Fitzpatrick, 2011). A typical characteristic and motivational driver of these generations is giving greater priority to seeking a balance between work and the rest of life (Constanza & Finkelstein, 2015; Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Urick & Hollensbe, 2014). Whilst the Baby Boomers (born between 1950 and 1969) are faced with raising children and caring for the elderly, Generation Xers (born between 1970 and 1989) have been regarded as believing that one should work to live, and not live to work, while Generation Y has never known a world without WLB (Becton et al., 2014; Gursoy et al., 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010; Urick et al., 2017; Van der Merwe, 2005).

The WLB challenge is generational and ongoing, and the complexity of the various generations requires a shift in thinking and social perceptions (Mageni & Slabbert, 2014). The universal adoption of the term 'work-life', as distinguished from work-family, has had positive consequences such as legitimising non-standard work arrangements for a diverse range of employees (Casper, Dehauw, & Greenhaus, 2018; Freedman, 2011; Ong & Jeyaraj, 2014). South African legislation defines a working week as 48 hours, and research by Sparks, Cooper, Fried, and Shirom (1997) on work and health indicates that people working more than these hours start showing deterioration in both health and performance. Bannai and Tamakoshi (2014) support this notion in their systematic review outlining studies that conclude that longer working hours – working more than 40 hours a week – leads to conditions such as heart disease, sleeping conditions and a depressive state.

Different generations in the world of work view the WLB from a different frame of reference. Although the Baby Boomer generation has not traditionally prioritised WLB (Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010; Zemke et al., 2011), more recently, this generation has been trying to find WLB and started seeking more time with their families and personal interests (Campbell, Campbell, Siedor, & Twenge, 2015; Weeks et al., 2017). Generation X views WLB as a right and not as a privilege and does not equate work with self-worth and personal effectiveness (King et al., 2017; Maroun, 2013; Robinson, 2009; Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018; Twenge, 2010; Urick, Hollensbe, Masterson, & Lyons, 2016). Generation Y

views WLB as both achievement and enjoyment, including work, family, friends and self (Lester et al., 2012; Williams, 2009).

Striving for WLB is not unique to any generation. Research shows that WLB is favoured by all generations in the current workplace (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Maroun, 2013; Urick et al, 2016; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010; Weeks et al., 2017; Zemke et al., 2011). No longer young, the Baby Boomers are considering new possibilities as they realise, they are not ready to retire and still want to live a quality life. Generation X is trying to balance personal and external demands of quality and quantity time between work and life, whilst Generation Y has never known a world without a focus on the WLB (Campbell et al., 2015; Constanza & Finkelstein, 2015; Maroun, 2013; Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2017; Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018; Twenge et al., 2010; Weeks et al., 2017).

### **1.2.2 Work–life balance in the current world of work**

Debates about WLB often occur without any clear or consistent definition of what it is. Many definitions of WLB can however be found in previous research (Casper et al., 2018, Chandra, 2012; Clark, 2000; Evans & Young, 2017; Fisher-McAuley, Stanton, Jolton, & Gavin, 2003; Greenhaus et al., 2003; Guest, 2001; Millward, 2011; Noor, 2011; Ong & Jeyaraj, 2014; Prakash, 2018; Shoptaugh, Phelps & Visio, 2004, SkillSoft, 2011; Veiga, 2009; Yeandle, 2005) and, although definitions and explanations vary, WLB is generally associated with equilibrium or maintaining an overall sense of harmony in life.

In the above conceptualisations, work–life balance and imbalance are not seen as inherently beneficial or detrimental for PWB and quality of life. Instead, Greenhaus and Powell (2003) state that it should be empirically tested whether equal time, involvement and satisfaction balance is better for an individual than an imbalance in favour of either the work or family role. The advantage of a components approach to WLB is that one can use conceptually based measures of balance that tap into the different aspects of WLB. These aspects form the overall evaluation of how well an individual is meeting role-related responsibilities (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). Urick et al. (2017) highlight that WLB includes balancing remunerated work and non-remunerated work, which could include work at home, work on one's personal

development, and work in the family. They continue to accentuate that WLB can be influenced not only by time, but also by emotions and behaviours.

The subject of how WLB can be achieved and enhanced has received significant attention from researchers, employers, workers, politicians, academics and the media (Copp, 2012; Guest, 2001; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Prakash, 2018; Veiga, 2009; Weeks et al., 2017; Welch & Welch, 2005). WLB is considered disrupted for an individual when the amount of time spent in one area causes some sort of conflict or stress in other areas of life. Brooks and Goldstein (2004) report that many working people are having difficulty finding balance in their lives because there have been cutbacks or layoffs where they work. During the economic downturn, the critical need to ensure an adequate WLB for individuals has largely been neglected by employers as more pressure has gradually been put on employees. With the global recession affecting all organisations worldwide, it has become less feasible to offer secure progressive careers and justification for workers to be committed. Research undertaken by the Corporate Executive Board Company in 2012 found that, among the 50 000 global workers studied in the economic environment at the time, WLB ranked as one of the most important workplace attributes, second only to compensation (Corporate Executive Board, 2012). They also found that participating employees, who felt they had better WLB, tended to work 21% harder than their counterparts, were more committed, and stayed resilient and loyal, despite the changing environments and circumstances.

The world of work is changing, and if organisations want to stay globally competitive, they need to understand the different needs of different individuals and implement different ways to foster WLB in the workplace. Factors such as technological advancement, globalisation of markets, demographics and societal changes are affecting the world of work and WLB (Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010; Lester et al., 2012; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Rost & Mostert, 2007; Urick et al., 2017). Organisations globally are increasingly considering the benefits of ensuring that their employees achieve WLB. As a direct consequence of globalisation and internalisation, retrenchments and lay-offs are ever-present realities in South Africa, according to Mageni and Slabbert (2014), and WLB seems to be regarded as an economic luxury. Rothmann and Cooper (2015) found that all these changes in the work environment

influence individual well-being in organisations.

### **1.2.3 Work life balance as a factor influencing subjective well-being**

Work–life balance (WLB) has been found to influence subjective well-being (SWB) and vice versa (Clark, 2000; Clarke, Koch, & Hill, 2004; De Klerk & Mostert, 2010; Gonzalez-Mulé & Cockburn, 2017; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Keyes, 2007; McMillan, Morris, & Atchley, 2011; Nizam & Kam, 2018). Merrill and Merrill (2003) report that individuals experiencing more balanced lives had higher job satisfaction overall, and were more productive and motivated workers who enjoy their work and life interests. According to Yeandle (2005) and Millward (2011), having balance between work and family or life outside work is encouraged because it reinforces social values and inclusion as well as effective functioning of people and overall well-being.

It has been found that the pursuit of WLB reduces the stress that an individual may experience (Copp, 2012; Greenhaus & Powell 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). If an individual spends the majority of his or her time on work-related activities and feel as if he or she is neglecting the other important components of his or her life, stress and unhappiness will result (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004; De Klerk & Mostert, 2010; Jacobs, Mostert, & Pienaar, 2008; McMillian et al., 2011). The literature also indicates that conflict between work and life could lead to lower loyalty to the organisation, reduced job satisfaction and reduced feelings of well-being (Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska, 2015). According to research (Frye & Breugh, 2004; Heathfield, 2013; Hudson Global Resources, 2005), a lack of WLB causes the perception of decreased control over work and non-work demands, less productive individuals, less committed individuals, and individuals who are less satisfied with life. Furthermore, in a study by Frone (2000), it was reported that individuals who experienced low WLB were nearly 30 times more likely to suffer from mood disorders, such as depression, 10 times more likely to have anxiety disorders, and 11 times more likely to have a substance dependence disorder, such as heavy drinking. These individuals are also more likely to suffer from reduced PWB and poor physical health (Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001). These all resemble the characteristics of languishing individuals (Keyes, 2007; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015).

Empirical research by Welch and Welch (2005), involving 9 000 people from around the world, revealed some astonishing results. Individuals who reported having a healthy WLB stayed twice as long in their jobs as their least happy colleagues, spend double their time at work focused on what they were paid to do, took ten times less sick leave, and believed they were achieving their potential twice as much, which led to even higher overall life satisfaction (Welch & Welch, 2005). These all resemble the characteristics of flourishing individuals (Keyes, 2007; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015). Hoffmann-Burdzinska and Rutkowska (2015) found that WLB of an individual is one of the factors that affect the satisfaction or happiness with life as a whole and can be measured through the construct of SWB.

Positive psychology studies include:

- individual characteristics, such as well-being (Lyubomirsky, 2001);
- human strengths, such as emotional intelligence, self-esteem (Lopez & Snyder, 2003) and engagement (Rothmann, 2002);
- emotional experiences in the present, such as happiness (Buss, 2000; Diener, 2000a); and
- constructive cognitions about the future, such as optimism (Peterson, 2000; Schneider, 2001).

It is generally agreed that WLB is important for an individual's psychological well-being (PWB), and that the following can be regarded as indicators of a successful balance between work and other life roles (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004; Kuykendall & Tay, 2015):

- happiness (Diener et al., 2008; Ötken & Erben, 2013; Park et al., 2009);
- optimism (Diener, Oishi, & Tay, 2018; Diener et al., 2017);
- high self-esteem (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003; Frone, 2003; Hsieh, 2004; Rashida, Nordin, Omar, & Ismail, 2012); and
- engagement (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Rothmann, 2014)

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

WLB and SWB remain important areas for IOP (De Cieri et al., 2002; De Villiers & Kotze, 2003; Diener et al., 2018; Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Warren 2016; Wayne, Buts, Casper, & Allen, 2015).

The importance of WLB has increased as an outcome of increasing workforce diversity and changes in the current world of work. There have been arguments for the need for organisations to adopt WLB interventions that accommodate the needs of a diverse workforce, including individuals of all ages (Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Meister & Willyerd, 2012; Millward, 2011). According to Weinberg and Cooper (2007), for organisations to survive in a continuously changing environment, they need healthy and motivated employees. Understanding the levels of WLB and SWB of different generational cohorts could assist organisations to manage their human capital and develop an advanced understanding of employee behaviour (Jonck et al., 2017).

Previous studies indicated that WLB had been studied across mainly three fields, namely the causes of work–life imbalance, the consequences of work–life imbalance, and the need to address the challenge of WLB. However, limited research is reported on WLB and SWB related to generations, and the influence of relationships and differences in the workplace. Despite the importance of relationships and differences with respect to WLB and SWB across generations, there is a paucity of research, especially in the South African context. The uniqueness of the South African context and its social divisions means that not all social groups were equally affected by historical events in the same way (Jonck et al., 2017).

The democratic South Africa inherited a divided nation with many social, political and economic inequalities (Department of Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation, 2015). Due to various factors including economic, political, social and cultural changes, work-life balance and subjective well-being have become an increasingly difficult challenge for South Africans (Amoateng & Richter, 2007; Bond, 2014; Sekwena, Mostert, & Wentzel, 2007). South Africans are also affected by challenges such as poverty (poverty rate of 49.8%) and unemployment (29.1% rate) as reported by Statistics South Africa (2019) social injustice, escalating divorce rates, single-parent households, failing education systems, natural disaster, increasing crime rates, a lack of security and a number of health issues such as the Covid 19 epidemic (Koen, Van Eeden, & Rothmann, 2012; Netcare, 2020; Roman, Schenck, Ryan, Brey, Henderson, Lukelelo, Saville, 2016; Sekwena et al., 2007; Theron & Theron, 2010). South Africa's credit rating has recently been downgraded to junk status, which is predicted to have a negative impact on South African's day-to-day standard of living (Cronje, 2020).

Whilst the South African Board for People Practices Women's Report for 2011 (SABPP, 2011), reports that more women in South Africa are entering the workforce in order to aid, amongst others, gender transformation and empowerment of women. This supports the view that work life balance and subjective well-being cannot be separated, and that there is a need to find a balance between these (Clark, 2000).

This shows the need to study the relationships and differences in WLB and SWB across generations in a developing country such as South Africa, to foster an understanding of these constructs.

Results have also shown that WLB and SWB are strongly connected and have many common areas that can be researched (Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska, 2015). Although both the topics of WLB and SWB have been well researched, little research has been done on the linkage between the two, especially in different generations within the work environment. Furthermore, numerous studies have focused on individual well-being, but relatively little scientific research has focused on the influence of WLB and SWB on one another. In recognition thereof, researchers should invest effort in understanding the relationship between WLB and SWB.

The current study investigated the relationships and differences between WLB and SWB across various generations in the world of work, which is an important direction for future research. While examining the relationship between WLB and SWB, it was thought that generational difference might be an important variable that should be taken into consideration. Generations differ depending on their characteristics, life experiences, work values and attitudes. If the current South African working population is taken into account, it should therefore be possible to find relationships and differences between Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation WLB and SWB.

Based on what has been presented, the following research questions were formulated:

- How can the construct of generations be conceptualised within the context of this research project?
- How can the construct of work–life balance (WLB) be conceptualised within the context of this research project?

- How can the construct subjective well-being (SWB) be conceptualised within the context of this research project?
- Are there relationships between WLB and SWB across the generations in the current world of work?
- Are there differences in the WLB levels and SWB levels across the generations in the current world of work?

## **1.4 AIMS**

The following general and specific aims were addressed in this study:

### **1.4.1 General aim**

The general aim of this study was to determine whether relationships and differences existed between WLB and SWB as manifested in a sample of respondents across generations in the South African working population.

### **1.4.2 Specific aims**

The specific literature aims were to:

- (1) conceptualise the construct of generations;
- (2) conceptualise the construct of WLB;
- (3) conceptualise the construct of SWB; and
- (4) conceptualise a theoretical model of the relationships between generations and WLB, and WLB and SWB as well as the differences in the WLB levels and SWB levels across generations in the current world of work.

The specific empirical aims were to:

- (1) investigate the relationships between WLB and SWB across generations in the South African working population;
- (2) investigate whether significant differences existed in the levels of WLB and SWB across the generations in the South African working population; and
- (3) formulate recommendations for organisations, IOP, as well as future research, based on the results of the research project.

## **1.5 PSYCHOLOGY PARADIGM AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The purpose of this section is to demarcate the research study in terms of the underlying behavioural assumptions.

### **1.5.1 Subject boundary**

This research was conducted within the field of Industrial Psychology, more specifically in the sub-discipline of Organisational Psychology. Bergh and Theron (2003) define industrial psychology as the field of study that has as its basic aim the understanding, explanation, prediction and influence of human behaviour and experience in the work context, and organisational psychology as the study of organisations, the elements and systems that constitute them, and the factors that influence their effectiveness.

### **1.5.2 Meta-theoretical concepts**

Theoretical concepts that were accepted on a meta-level and relevant to this study were the individual, work, life, satisfaction and well-being. These concepts are accordingly defined below.

#### *1.5.2.1 Individual*

An individual can be defined as a human being leading a physical, psychological and spiritual existence, which cannot be separated from each other (Wilson & Barker, 2018). For the purpose of this study, the individual was the unit of analysis.

#### *1.5.2.2 Work*

Work is a domain of life that shapes how people experience life in the workplace and their lives in the broad sense and in the developmental life cycle. Individuals are likely to be engaged in complex relationships in the world of work (Barker Caza & Wrzesniewski, 2014). Work is defined as paid employment, a source of income, a vocation or career (McMillan et al., 2011).

### 1.5.2.3 *Life*

Life is defined as all other activities outside of work, such as family, friends, leisure, learning and self (McMillan et al., 2011).

### 1.5.2.4 *Satisfaction*

Satisfaction as a construct refers to the level of happiness with work and non-work roles as globally evaluated by the individual in terms of his or her life (Frone, 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Hudson Global Resources, 2005, Rezvani, 2010). Satisfaction is linked to self-esteem, the quest for quality of life and overall well-being (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Shogren, Lopez, Wehmeyer, Little, & Pressgrove, 2006; Stoddard & Madsen, 2007).

### 1.5.2.5 *Well-being*

Well-being as a construct refers to the inherent qualities and internal driving forces of the individual that enable the individual to stay well and succeed physically, socially and psychologically (Clark, 2000; Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Lyness & Judiesch, 2014). Well-being is linked to the constructs of self-esteem, happiness, optimism and engagement from the positive psychology paradigm. Well-being is experienced when the individual functions well (Rothmann & Cooper, 2015).

## **1.5.3 Positive psychological paradigm**

Thematically, the literature review covers generations, WLB and SWB. The literature for these constructs is presented from the positive psychology paradigm (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2010; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The field of positive psychology is defined as the application of positive psychology research to the facilitation of optimal functioning and well-being. According to Schreuder and Coetzee (2010), positive psychology focuses on facilitating positive psychological capital or resources in organisations regarded as important in keeping employees healthy and resilient to hardships. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) define positive psychology as the scientific study of optimal human functioning that aims to discover and promote the factors that allow individuals to flourish on multiple

levels, such as the biological, personal, relational, institutional, cultural and global dimensions of life.

The underlying assumption of this paradigm is the need to move away from focusing on the negative side of human behaviour to paying attention to the positive side (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It assumes that the individual is not a passive vessel, but rather an active decision-maker. The focus in positive psychology is on rebuilding human strength and fulfilling the lives of healthy people and, more importantly, correcting the weaknesses (Luthans, 2012; Seligman & Csikszantmihalyi, 2000). This paradigm was chosen as the researcher was interested in studying psychological wellness and the optimisation of positive behaviour.

#### **1.5.4 Behavioural model and constructs**

Thematically, this paradigmatic perspective relates to the conceptualisation of well-being from the mental health continuum positive psychology model (Keyes, 2007).

The mental health continuum model was operationalised by Keyes (2007), building on the research of SWB, psychological well-being (PWB) and positive emotions. This model has been validated in the South African context (Keyes et al., 2008). Well-being on the positive health dimension is conceptualised on a continuum between flourishing and languishing (Keyes, 2007).

‘Flourishing’ is defined as the appraisal the individual makes regarding the quality of life as expressed in terms of multidimensional indicators, consisting of two dimensions, namely feeling good and functioning well (Cilliers & Flotman, 2016; Keyes, 2007; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015). Flourishing employees show the Psychological capital (PsyCap) behaviours of self-efficacy, optimism, hope, and resilience. Such employees also experience engagement in their work, purpose, meaning, EWB, and positive emotions, such as joy, interest, contentment and happiness (Rothmann, 2014).

The opposite to flourishing is languishing. Languishing individuals do not feel good or do not function well (Cilliers & Flotman, 2016; Keyes, 2007; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015). ‘Languishing’ can be defined as the absence of mental health, and is characterised by feelings of emptiness and stagnation, as well as a life of despair (Keyes, 2007; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015).

According to Keyes (2007) this mental health continuum model consists of three main components, namely psychological well-being (PWB), social well-being (SoWB) and emotional well-being (EWB) (Keyes,

Table 1.1: Three components of the mental health continuum model

<b>Components</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
PWB	Refers to functioning well on individual level	Self-acceptance Autonomy Personal growth Positive relations Environmental mastery Purpose in life
SoWB	Refers to functioning well on a social level	Social coherence Social actualisation Social integration Social acceptance Social contribution
EWB	Functioning well on an emotional level	Positive emotions Interest in life Satisfaction with life

According to Rothmann and Cooper (2015), individuals flourish when they experience at least one symptom of EWB, as well as high levels of at least six measures of PWB and SoWB and languish when they experience low levels of at least one symptom of EWB as well as low levels of at least six measures of PWB and SoWB.

Personal effectiveness and productivity are important to all generations in the world of work, as well as feelings of well-being and positive emotions (Casper & Harris, 2008; Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Lyness & Judiesch, 2014; Stoddard & Madsen, 2007). There is a positive relationship between flourishing and fewer minor illnesses and absenteeism (Keyes, 2007), quality of life (Wissing & Temane, 2013), satisfaction of life, self-regulation and perceived social support (Wissing et al., 2008). A positive relationship between flourishing and resilience has also been found (Keyes, Dhingra, & Simoes, 2010).

Keyes's mental health continuum model (Keyes, 2007) is very valuable in practice and can be used to assess the effect of interventions to promote well-being and a higher prevalence of flourishing in groups (Van Schalkwyk & Wissing, 2013). Striving for WLB is not unique to any one generation; instead, it seems to be a common desire.

A positive WLB will lead to flourishing individuals, whilst a negative balance could lead to languishing individuals. The importance of WLB as an outcome of increasing workforce diversity has increased (De Cieri et al., 2002). Therefore there have been arguments for organisations to adopt WLB interventions to accommodate the needs of a diverse workforce and generations (Meister & Willyerd, 2012; Millward, 2011). Keyes (2007) operationalises flourishing as a pattern of positive feelings and positive functioning, and flourishing was therefore included in this study.

Empirical studies on positive feelings, such as happiness, self-esteem and optimism, as well as positive functioning, such as engagement (May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004), have shown to facilitate well-being (Ötken & Erben, 2013; Peterson, Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Zhang, 2011; Seligman, 2011). It was therefore decided that these psychological constructs are of relevance to this study. These constructs are illustrated in Figure 1.1.

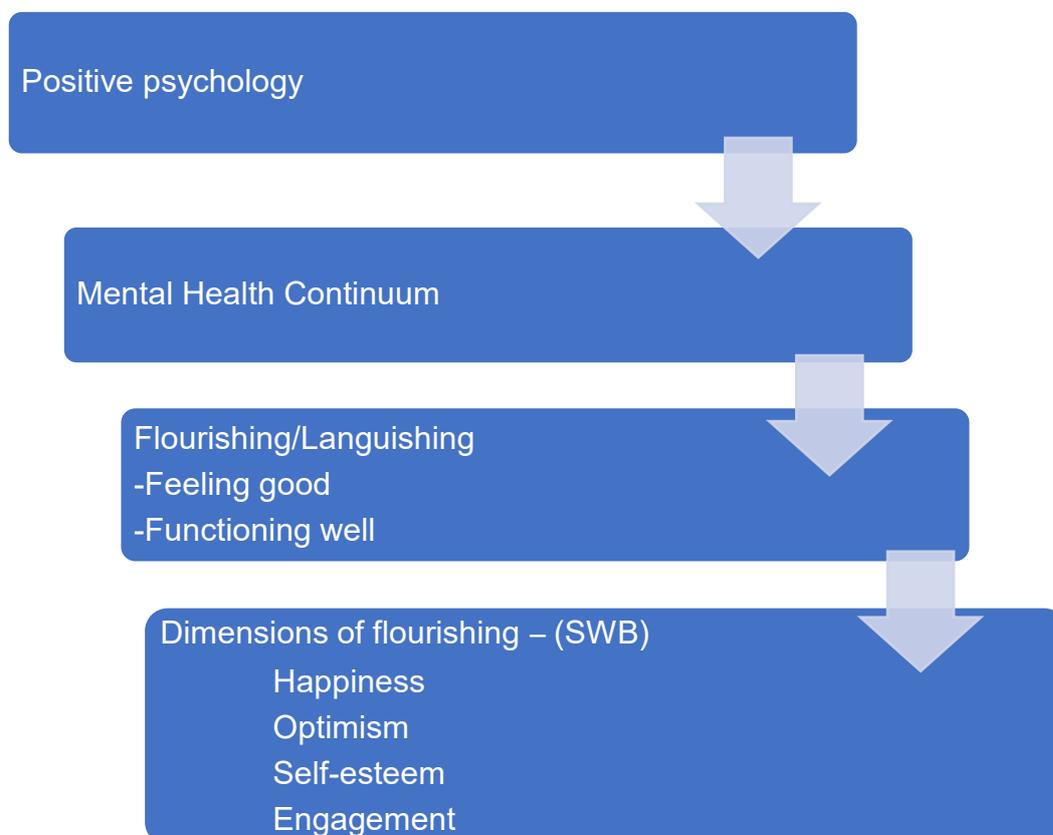


Figure 1.1: Work-related well-being (Source: Adapted from Rothmann and Cooper, 2015)

## **1.6 EMPIRICAL PARADIGM**

Thematically, the empirical study dealt with the psychological behaviour broken down into small facets, which can be measured directly through various techniques (Angen, 2000; Bryman, 2012). For the quantitative research, the positivist paradigm was used (Creswell, 2003).

The positivist paradigm is defined as an epistemology that seeks to explain and predict what will happen in the social world by searching for regularities and causal relationships between its constituent elements (Neuman, 2011). The premise of the positivistic paradigm is to offer a scientific approach to all phenomena and to elevate scientific knowledge. It allows for encouraging experimental experiences, control, objective observations, meticulous recording, precise definitions of behaviour and statistical analysis of results prevalent in psychology today (Bredell, 2005). Positivism can be viewed as the existence of a direct relationship between the objects, events and phenomena and our perception and understanding of it (Hammersley, 2012).

This paradigm was important to the current study, as part of the empirical study in this research was in the form of a quantitative study, and this paradigm attempted to draw objective conclusions by minimising errors through statistical data analysis (Bryman, 2012).

## **1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN**

In this section, details of the research design are provided, namely an overview of the research approach, the research strategy, and establishing research roles. A full description of the research method can be found in Chapter 5.

### **1.7.1 Research approach**

An exploratory, descriptive and explanatory approach was followed for this study (Brewerton & Millward, 2004; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). The richness and holism, with a strong potential for revealing complexity, were the features that made this approach particularly relevant to this study.

A multiphase design approach was used, which included convergent and sequential designs. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) report that a multiphase design emerges from multiple projects conducted over time linked together by a common purpose. The convergent design was used to merge concurrent literature and quantitative data to address the study aims. The data analysis consisted of merging, connecting, and embedding the sets of data and results.

This approach was chosen because it allowed one database building on another. It also allowed for the integration of multiple forms of data where the researcher could intentionally integrate or combine different sets of data rather than keeping them separate. The rationale was that integration of the data maximises the strengths and minimises the weaknesses of each type of data.

### **1.7.2 Research strategy**

An exploratory, descriptive and explanatory sequential strategy was followed, where the researcher had one dataset build on the results from the other (Creswell, 2014; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

#### *1.7.2.1 Exploratory research*

Exploratory research was used to explore various theoretical perspectives on generations, WLB and SWB to gain insights about an existing phenomenon (Creswell, 2014; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). The object of exploratory research is to gather information from a relatively unknown field (Creswell, 2014). The research was exploratory because it aimed to explore a phenomenon, to gain new insights, establish central concepts and constructs, and establish priorities. This research was exploratory because it compared various theoretical perspectives on generations, WLB and SWB.

#### *1.7.2.2 Descriptive research*

Descriptive research was used to collect accurate information and data on the domain phenomena, and to classify the relationships between the variables in the research domain systematically (Creswell, 2014; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). ). The purpose of descriptive research is to systematically classify the relationships between

variables in the research domain, whilst the aim is to describe issues as accurately as possible (Creswell, 2014) In the literature review, descriptive research was applicable through conceptualising the constructs of generations, WLB and SWB. In the empirical study descriptive research was applicable by describing the constructs with reference to means, standard deviations and correlations to address the aims of the study.

### *1.7.2.3 Explanatory research*

Explanatory research was used during the empirical study to go further than merely indicating the relationship that existed between the variables (Creswell, 2014; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). Explanatory research was applicable in the empirical study of the relationship between generations, WLB and SWB. The end goal of the research was to draw conclusions about the relationship between the constructs.

This research thus fulfils the requirements of the type of research as outlined above.

## **1.7.3 Establishing researcher roles**

For this study, the researcher assumed several roles, namely doctoral student, psychologist, consultant and self as an instrument of the research. Each of these is described below.

### *1.7.3.1 Doctoral student*

In the role of doctoral student in IOP, the researcher was interested in organisational behaviour and exploring how to improve organisational effectiveness through explorations of WLB and SWB across various generations. The researcher also wanted to present research toward acquiring a doctorate degree.

### *1.7.3.2 Psychologist*

In the role of industrial and organisational psychologist, the researcher was responsible for the objective study and analysis of the variables, recommendations and implementation of interventions that should improve the wellness of organisational life resulting in an increase in organisational performance (Lowman, 2002).

### 1.7.3.3 *Consultant*

In the role of consultant, the researcher in this study was a 40-year-old, Afrikaans-speaking, white female with 22 years of experience in organisational development and management consulting. She is a registered psychologist with a master's degree in IOP from Unisa and was employed as head of Psychology, Training and Human Resources (HR) in a global psychometric company. As the consultant, she was working with a team of twenty-three other consultants who all had a background in psychology and consulting. The role of this team was to provide internal and external consulting services to organisations and individuals.

### 1.7.3.4 *Self as instrument*

In the role of self as instrument, the task of the researcher was to fit the pieces together and derive a meaningful matrix or framework (Creswell, 2014), which was appropriate for exploring the generational differences between WLB and SWB in a South African sample.

## 1.7.4 **Research variables**

This research attempted to measure the differences and similarities between different generations as the independent variable, and a composite set of psychological constructs, namely WLB and SWB, as the dependent variables. In the current study, in order to measure the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, criterion data on the variables were collected by means of the measuring instruments selected for the purpose of this research.

## 1.7.5 **Research method**

In an attempt to obtain scientific and objective research results, the research method was structured in two phases, the literature review and empirical study.

### **Phase 1: Literature review**

The literature review consisted of the following steps:

**Step 1:** Background and motivation of this study, including the aims, paradigm perspectives, research design and the research methodology.

**Step 2:** The conceptualisation of generations, focusing on defining the construct, reviewing theoretical approaches, describing the generations in the world of work and integrating the relevance of the construct to this research.

**Step 3:** The conceptualisation of WLB focusing on defining the construct, reviewing theoretical approaches and models, describing WLB in the world of work, and integrating the relevance of the construct in the current research.

**Step 4:** The conceptualisation of SWB by focusing on defining the construct, reviewing theoretical approaches, describing the construct components, and integrating the relevance of the construct in the current research.

**Step 5:** On the basis on the literature review, a theoretical integration is presented.

## **Phase 2: Empirical study**

The empirical research followed a descriptive, explanatory and quantitative research approach consisting of a cycle of eight steps to answer the research questions and specific aims of the empirical study.

**Step 1:** Determination and description of the population and sample

The determination and description of the population and sample is discussed in Chapter 6 in detail.

**Step 2:** Choosing and motivating the measuring instruments

The following measuring instruments were used in this study:

- Biographical Questionnaire
- Work-life Balance Scale
- Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue)
- Work Engagement Questionnaire (WEQ28)

The measuring instruments are discussed in Chapter 6 in detail.

**Step 3:** Data collection and administration of the measuring instruments

The responses of subjects to each of the items in the four questionnaires were captured in an electronic spreadsheet format.

#### **Step 4: Reporting on data analysis**

All data were imported and analysed using the Lavaan package (Hox & Bechger, 1998; version 0.5-20) in R (version 3.3.0). Statistical analysis was used to determine the relationships of WLB and SWB and whether significant differences existed between generations in terms of WLB and SWB and as manifested in a sample of respondents across generations in the South African working population. The analysis comprised three phases, namely:

- Phase 1: Validity and reliability
- Phase 2: Descriptive statistical analysis
- Phase 3: Inferential statistical analysis

The statistical processing of the data will be discussed in Chapter 6 in detail.

#### **Step 5: Formulation of research hypotheses**

In order to address the empirical aims formulated the research hypotheses were formulated and tested by means of descriptive, inferential statistics and the SEM procedure.

#### **Step 6: Reporting on and interpretation of results**

The quantitative results were analysed and were reported on and interpreted in terms of validity, reliability, descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistical analysis.

#### **Step 7: Discussion of research results**

The results relating to the literature review and the results from the empirical research were integrated to create overall results and were discussed.

#### **Step 8: Formulation of research conclusions, limitations and recommendations**

The final step, Chapter 8, related to conclusions based on the results and the integration thereof with theory. The limitations of the research were discussed, and recommendations were made.

### **1.7.6 Ethical Considerations**

De Vos, Delpont, Fouche and Strydom (2011) defined ethics as a set of moral principles which refer to the quality of research procedures with regard to adherence to professional, legal and social obligations to the research participants.

For this study the following ethical principles were adhered to:

- Research was conducted within recognised parameters.
- Approval was obtained (refer to Appendix B).
- Permission was obtained from The Ethical Committee at the institution (Unisa) to conduct the study
- Confidentiality was assured. The participants were guaranteed confidentiality and informed that the data collected will be used only to aggregate responses
- Participation in this study was completely voluntary and participants were informed that they could withdraw from participating at any time.
- Classical and recent resources were used to analyse and describe the concepts.
- Experts in the field of research were consulted to ensure a scientific research process.
- All sources were cited.
- An informed agreement was entered into with the participants (refer to Appendix C)
- Access to appropriate information on the research was provided by reporting the research process and results in the form of a thesis.
- All ethical guidelines applicable to the treatment of human subjects in research were observed in all the steps of the study.

### **1.8 CHAPTER DIVISION**

The rest of the thesis is divided into the following chapters:

- Chapter 2: Generations

- Chapter 3: Work–life balance
- Chapter 4: Subjective well-being
- Chapter 5: Theoretical integration
- Chapter 6: Research method
- Chapter 7: Results
- Chapter 8: Conclusions, limitations, and recommendations

## **1.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter provided the background and motivation for the research presented here. The problem statement and research aims were discussed. The research model, paradigm, and design were also considered. The chapter concluded with an outline of all the chapters to follow.

## **CHAPTER 2: GENERATIONS**

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this chapter is to present a conceptualisation of the construct of generations, by defining the construct, reviewing theoretical approaches, describing the generations in the world of work, and integrating the relevance of the construct to this research.

### **2.2 DEFINING GENERATIONS**

A 'generation' is usually defined as a cohort of persons born at the same time. As early as 1952, Mannheim defined individuals by chronological age, noting that the sociological phenomenon of generations is ultimately based on the biological rhythm of birth and death (Mannheim, 1952). He defined generations as a useful construct above and beyond age, viewing it as a gestalt, a fundamental confluence of biology and history. Since then, the definition of 'generation' has evolved and spread into the workplace. Inglehart (1977) positioned generations as a cultural phenomenon as early as 1977, and continued with the development of the definition until 1981. The evolution of the definition has however continued and it still ongoing even in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Howe and Strauss (2007) define a generation as a group of individuals born and raised in the same period, and who have attitudes, values and behaviours that have been forged by shared experiences and the generational cycle in which these individuals were born. They further define a generational cycle as a four-part process of history, spanning roughly 80 years, defined by successive 20-year cohorts of idealist, reactive and adaptive characteristics. More recently, 'generations' have been defined by industrial psychologists as groups of individuals born in the same period and who experience a similar culture (Gentile, Campbell, & Twenge, 2013; Lyons & Kuron, 2014).

Although the definition of generations is generally accepted and understood, the reviewed literature indicated that there is difficulty in consensus on defining generations, as age, period and cohort are all variances that need to be taken into consideration.

Urick et al. (2017) explain that the term 'generations' appeared to be taking on the

qualities of a floating signifier, since the term can mean different things to different people. They further explain that, although organisational researchers have attempted to clarify and define this concept, they seem to lean more on examining differences between age groups. However, the authors have not ruled out the possibility that the concept of generations is more nuanced and distinct. The study by Urick et al. (2017) revealed different ways in which the concept of generations is understood in the workplace. The authors identified seven dimensions (termed categories of understanding) that show ways in which participants from their study understood the term 'generations'. These categories are collective consciousness, genealogy, life stage, age-based, identity, contribution, and the ambiguous/irrelevant concept. The differences in understanding by the participants in this study further showed the lack of agreement on the concept of generations, and the need for further research in this area. The definition of generations based solely on cohorts has been problematised, as it "disregards the predominant significance that historical events and socio-economic and cultural phenomena may have on the creation of generational groupings" (Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018, p. 135).

"Differences in assumptions about what generation means have important implications for both research and practice" (Urick et al., 2017, p. 3). For simplicity reasons and the purposes of this study, the researcher defined a generation as a group of individuals born during the same period and who experience the same culture, as suggested by Gentile et al. (2013) and Lyons and Kuron (2014).

Researchers are generally not in agreement on how many generations are active in the labour market at any specific moment. For example, Kennedy (2002) and Novkovic (2007) argue that there are five generations, whereas as Cordington and Grant-Marshall (2006) as well as Howe and Strauss (2007) argue for four generations. On the other hand, Gursoy, Maier, and Chi (2008) as well as Sayers (2007) argue for only three generations in the workplace at the time. Benson and Brown (2011) identify only two generations most prevalent in the workplace at the time of their writing, namely Baby Boomers and Generation X. Furthermore, a new Generation Z is emerging in the workplace; however, little research has been done so far on this new generation, which is about to take the place of Generation Y as the youngest generation in employment (Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018).

Despite the lack of consensus on the number of generations in the workforce, most researchers agree on the following cohorts:

- Traditionalists
- Baby Boomers
- Generation X
- Generation Y

The current study focused on three cohorts that are currently functioning in the world of work in South Africa, namely Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y. There are only few Traditionalists functional in the workplace, as many of them are retired or approaching retirement (Jonck et al., 2017); hence, this cohort was excluded from the current study. Future studies could include Generation Z, as the latest generation in the work force. Generation Z shares overlapping beginning birth years with Generation Y's ending birth years (Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018).

Furthermore, generational boundaries are one of most non-consensus points (Campbell et al., 2015). It was found that the boundaries separating the different generations are not exact, and that some generations overlap, depending on the country of origin (Gursoy et al., 2008; Kennedy, 2002; Sayers, 2007). Birth date parameters, according to Cordington and Grant-Marshall (2006) and based on the country of origin, are depicted in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Birth date parameters according to country of origin

<b>Generation</b>	<b>USA</b>	<b>Europe/UK</b>	<b>Japan</b>	<b>South Africa</b>
Traditionalists	1923–1942	1918–1945	1925–1945	1930–1949
Baby Boomers	1943–1962	1946–1965	1945–1965	1950–1969
Generation X	1963–1983	1966–1984	1966–1985	1970–1989
Generation Y	1984–2001	1985–2001	1986–2001	1990–2005

For the current study, generations were defined according to the South African birth date parameters as shown in Table 2.2. It was decided to use the South African birthdate parameters of Cordington and Grant-Marshall (2006), to add value to the body of relevant research in the South African context. Although the parameters are from research in 2006, the researcher could not find other or more recent applicable

parameter tables in the literature, and therefore accepted that the given data were still true.

Table 2.2: South African birthdate parameters

<b>Generational timeline</b>		
1950–1969	1970–1989	1990–2005
Baby Boomers	Generation X	Generation Y

### **2.3 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO GENERATIONS**

A body of theory on generations as a phenomenon exists (Alwin & McCammon, 2007; Gilleard, 2004; Joshi, Dencker, & Franz, 2011; Kelan, 2014; Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018; Urick et al., 2017). The generational theory supposes that different generations have different mind-sets, perceptions, values, attitudes and opinions that influence their choices, decisions and behaviours. Each generation consequently has a unique perspective and different ways of absorbing, organising and applying information and skills (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006). Lyons and Kuron (2014) report that generations are generally studied through two theoretical perspectives, namely cohort and social forces. Although research on generational cohort theory exists, much of it is contained in popular media, as opposed to academic literature.

Consequently, there is much debate about the academic credibility of generational theory (Campbell et al., 2015). Researchers have argued that the generation construct has not been properly operationalised (Brink, Zondag, & Crenshaw, 2015; Constanza & Finkelstein, 2015). However, Parry and Urwin (2011) offer an extensive discussion of the theoretical origin of the generation construct, which is rooted in sociology.

Karl Mannheim is seen as the founder of generational theory (Mannheim, 1952). Mannheim's generational theory of the 1950s gave rise to the concept of 'generational cohorts', which is defined as people who were born at about the same time (Mannheim, 1952). The generational cohort theory (GCT) was popularised by Strauss and Howe (1991) who, among other researchers, expanded the definition of generations to include critical developmental aspects (Costanza, Badger, Fraser, Severt, & Gade, 2012). This model has been used by researchers and organisational

psychologists in different industries, such as consumer studies (Jackson, Stoel, & Brantley, 2011) and occupational therapy (Fisher & Crabtree, 2009).

It is believed that cohorts experienced historical events at about the same point in their development, and these events led to similar values, opinions and life experiences (Costanza et al., 2012; Howe & Strauss, 2007). The foundational theory of generations (Mannheim, 1952) is based on the generational effects inherently confounded with age (life cycle) and historical periods and does not suppose that disentangling these confounding effects is necessary or advantageous to an understanding of the phenomenon. The assumption of this model is that social cycles repeat themselves every four generations (Fisher & Crabtree, 2009).

It is acknowledged that the generation construct is much broader and complex than just age (Parry & Urwin, 2011). Age is not seen as a quantitative variable, and includes variations to life stages and maturity, and therefore developmental psychology theory is also relevant to the generation construct (Brink et al., 2015). Research in the field of lifespan developmental psychology has shown that identifying with a generational group, as opposed to an age group, could have positive implications for an older adult's self-concept and well-being (Weiss, 2014; Weiss & Lang, 2009). Furthermore, evidence has been provided for the effect of age and history-graded influences (Gerstorf, Ram, Hoppmann, Willis, & Schaie, 2011; Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018; Schaie, 2013; Zacher, 2015).

According to lifespan developmental theory (Zacher, 2015), there are three categories of influences on the development of individuals, namely normative age-graded influence, history-graded influences and non-normative influences.

- Normative age-graded influences refer to biological maturations, such as physical strength and speed of processing, and common socialisation events such as school, marriage and retirement.
- History-graded influences are linked to historical periods in which individuals develop. Lifespan theory (Zacher, 2015) suggests that events and experiences within a specific historical period could potentially affect individual development. This can be related to the generational concept of categorising individuals according to their birth year and shared life experiences.

- Non-normative influences, which are unique to individuals, include illnesses, accidents, and loss of a partner or a job (Zacher, 2015).

Although age is an important factor in shaping individual differences, it should be considered with regard to the experience of the cohort and historical events that intersect with the stages of life cycles (Lyons & Kuron, 2014).

The idea of the generational theory is not to pour everybody into a mould, but rather to view age and generation as an attitude (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006). Understanding generations in the workplace can be related to social identity and social categorising theories, where stereotyping can be used as an important sense-making tool (Joshi et al., 2011). Based on the reviewed literature on generational studies, some researchers argue that there are no generational differences on certain work-related attributes and that the differences that appear may be attributed to other factors than generational membership (Costanza et al., 2012). Costanza and colleagues (2012, p. 379) also assessed generational studies, claiming, “little of the research on generational differences has a solid theoretical foundation underpinning either the concept of generations or the specific hypotheses about the impact that generations have”. Although other researchers have warned against HR decisions and perceptions based on generational stereotypes (Lyons, Urick, Kuron, & Schweitzer, 2015; Weeks et al., 2017), there is evidence that intergenerational differences do exist in the workplace (Campbell et al., 2015; Fogarty, Reinstein, & Heath, 2017; Rani & Samuel, 2016; Urick et al., 2017). According to Campbell et al. (2015), generational groupings have proved to be a useful tool in explaining differences amongst people. These generational groupings are often perceived as stereotyping. Moreover, stereotypes are key to understanding perceptions and identities in organisations (Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Weeks et al., 2017).

Fiske (2004) argues that understanding differences and being able to control individuals are driven by the need to make sense of the behaviour of others and having a sense of control over the environment. Learning to manage or interact with others who are different, is appealing because it helps satisfy those natural drivers toward understanding and controlling surroundings. Therefore, stereotyping and working with similarities and differences have been seen as advantageous (Bodenhausen & Hygenberg, 2009; Fiske, 2004; Queller & Smith, 2002). Psychologists and

management consultants have called for members of specific generations to be treated in different and unique ways in the workplace (Shapira, 2009; Stein & Sanburn, 2013; Zaslow, 2007). In order to achieve this, generational differences can be studied using theoretical models and measuring methods. The researcher found three relevant models in the literature that were developed to study generational differences (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005; Strauss & Howe, 1991; Twenge, Campbell, & Freeman, 2012). These models are described below.

### **2.3.1 The cyclical model**

The cyclical model rests on the theory of cyclic models of economic changes as established by Kondratieff (Campbell et al., 2015). These cyclical models are also known as K-waves or economic seasons. “Strauss and Howe (1991) offer the first comprehensive theory to explain generations, relying on a cyclical theory of history and generations to develop their theory” (Papenhausen, 2009, p. 7). The cyclical model is based on the approach that an economic cycle begins expansive, becomes overextended and then becomes contractive. Generations follow the same cycle, from expansive generations (the Baby Boomers) to the overextended Generation X, to civic-minded generations, such as Generation Y. However, this model is not without limitations. According to Papenhausen (2009), the generational peer personality does not apply to each member of a generation. There are therefore members of a generation who do not share the personality or traits of the generation to which they belong. Furthermore, the boundaries on generational cohorts are not clear, causing some generations to manifest the characteristics of two generations. Research on Kondratieff’s model (Campbell et al., 2015) continues in two main areas, one focusing on theoretical explanation, and the other on empirically proving the existence of generational cyclical cycles (Metz, 2011).

### **2.3.2 Modernisation model**

The theory underlying this model argues that societies develop in predictive stages with a generational progression to harmonious and civically engaged individualism (Campbell et al., 2015). The modernisation model – developed by Inglehart and Welzel (2005) – consists of a process of individualism, tolerance and civic engagement, and was based primarily on sustaining economic growth (Tang, Wang, & Zhang, 2017).

The theory contends that societies develop in relatively predictable stages with a generational progression to a harmonious and civically engaged individualism (Campbell et al., 2015). Furthermore, evolutionary modernisation theory “posits that sustained economic growth drives changes in value priorities from materialism to post-materialism through generation replacement” (Tang et al., 2017, p.8). This means that the socio-economic developments encountered by a specific generation will influence the values of that generation.

According to Inglehart and Welzel (2007), modernisation theories have been criticised for their tendency toward technological and socio-economic determinism. However, earlier research by Inglehart and Welzel (2005) showed the relationship between socio-economic development and cultural change, where the former seems to have a causal effect on the latter. Furthermore, Tang et al. (2017) argue that Inglehart’s theory (Inglehart & Welzel, 2007) relies mostly on data from Western societies although the theory was intended to be universally applicable. Therefore, more research is needed in non-Western contexts to provide insight on the generalisability of Inglehart’s theory.

### **2.3.3 Extrinsic Individualism model**

This model by Twenge et al. (2012) is based on the underlying theory that generations will evolve towards more extrinsic self-focus, less civic engagement, less trust, more self-expression, and less inward focus.

The current study assumed that the developmental cycle of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y is influenced by certain historical events, which may have an influence on the WLB and SWB of these three generations. For the purposes of this study, the researcher decided to use the cohort theory (Mannheim, 1952) as the theoretical approach and the cyclical model of Strauss and Howe (1991) as the theoretical model. The researcher’s decision was based on the literature results, the availability of previous research, the idea that being part of a specific generation becomes a part of an individual’s social identity and sense of belonging, and that generations can be identified according to specific events that have a formative influence. This approach and model provided the researcher with a scientific framework from which to work whilst investigating a phenomena simultaneously. While the modernisation model is based on sustaining economic growth (Inglehart & Welzel,

2005) and the extrinsic model focuses on individualised characteristics of members of generations (Twenge et al., 2012), they were not applicable to the current research.

## 2.4 HOW IS GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES MEASURED

The literature refers to two common methods for measuring generational differences. These are cross-sectional methods and cross-temporal methods (Campbell et al., 2015; Ng & Feldman, 2008; Zacher, 2015). The cross-sectional method compares generations on any variable. Cross-sectional data capture both age and cohort variances. It is reported by Zacher (2015) that several conditions have to be met for cross-sectional results to be theoretically consistent with aging and cohort effects.

The cross-temporal method compares generations using individuals at the same age at different periods (Campbell et al., 2015). Because the researcher decided to define generational membership in terms of the categories of individuals based on their birth year and shared life experiences (Zacher, 2015), and used the generational cohort theory and cyclical model as framework to help understand how individuals act and react to life and events (Tulgan, 1996), the cross-sectional method of measurement was chosen for this study (Ng & Feldman, 2008; Zacher, 2015). This is depicted as a theoretical funnel in Figure 2.1.

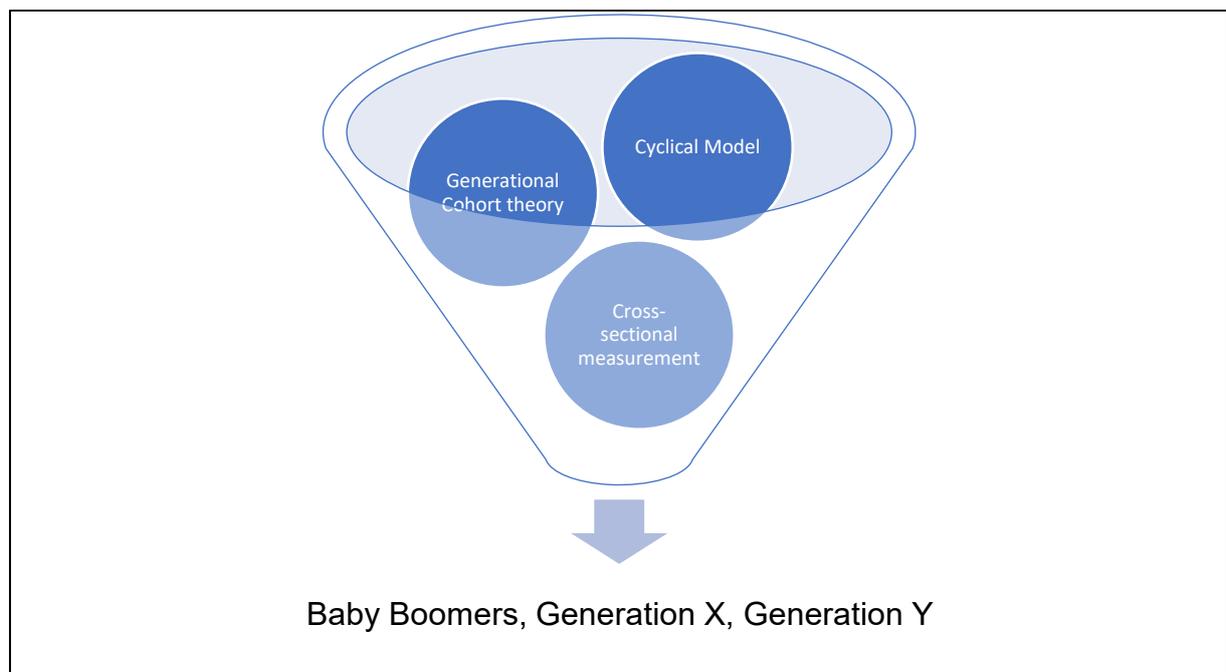


Figure 2.1: Generations theoretical funnel (Source: Author's own compilation)

## **2.5 DESCRIBING THREE GENERATIONS CURRENTLY IN THE WORLD OF WORK**

Two generations dominated the workplace in the 20th century, namely the Traditionalists and Baby Boomers (Weeks et al., 2017). Although in the minority, a few Traditionalists are still in key positions in many organisations; however, the majority has retired (Singh & Weimar, 2017). The Baby Boomers are expected to be in the workforce still for the near future. The more recent generations to join the workforce are Generation X and Generation Y, which together form the largest part of the current workforce (Fry, 2016; Van der Walt, 2010; Weeks et al., 2017). As Traditionalists and Baby Boomers are aging and retiring, Generation X and Y are making their mark in the business world and reshaping the way business is done around the world (King, Finkelstein, Thomas, & Corrington, 2019). The current study focused on three generations, namely the Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y, as only a very small number of Traditionalists are currently still active in the world of work.

Evidence of generationally based differences in work-based variables, including personality, work values, leadership styles and preferences, WLB and career experiences was found in the literature (Foster, 2013; Lester et al., 2012; Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Parry & Urwin, 2011; Twenge, 2010). Studies have been done, which also considered inter-individual differences within normative age-graded influences (Zacher, 2015). However, Cucina, Byle, Martin, Peyton, and Gast (2018) argue that the conceptual rationale for generational differences is somewhat speculative and, in some cases, more stereotypical than fact-based. There are mixed results in studies of generational differences in the workplace. For example, studies on differences in workplace attitudes revealed differences within groups and significant differences between groups (Cucina et al., 2018), while another study reported that there are differences in workplace attitudes, although not always consistent with previous studies (King et al., 2017).

Because the researcher viewed generations as a group-level cultural construct in the current study, it was appropriate to identify intergenerational similarities, which are factors shared amongst members of a generation, as well as intergenerational differences, which are factors that differ between generations. The researcher was also cognisant of intergenerational variations, which referred to the variation among

members of the same generation. Based on the literature reviewed, the three chosen generations are described below using the cross-sectional model focusing on the following variables: intrapersonal characteristics, interpersonal characteristics, team behaviour, work behaviour, authority relations, perspective on WLB and challenges faced.

### **2.5.1 Baby Boomers**

Baby Boomers are the generation born between 1950 and 1969 (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006). They make up 19% of the South African population (Statistics South Africa [Stats SA], 2017). According to Maroun (2013), the majority of corporate executives fall into the Baby Boomer generation. Freedman (2011) remarks that demographers have settled on one way of looking at the aging boomer generation – with alarm. This is because it cannot be assumed that the generation rounding the corner towards 70 will behave similarly to the previous generations. The assumption of the outdated belief that an individual's best working years fall between the ages of 15 and 59, was changed by the extended life expectancy (Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010; Weeks et al., 2017). Furthermore, dual careers where partners have full time jobs, in this generation are common (Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010).

#### *2.5.1.1 Intrapersonal characteristics of the Baby Boomers*

Baby Boomers tend to be optimistic, believing they can change the world. This generation is willing to make sacrifices to get personal gain. They also equate being successful in the workplace with having successful lives, high salaries and long working hours and do not prioritise WLB (Campbell et al., 2015; Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Freedman, 2011; Maroun, 2013). Baby Boomers value future generations and feel a responsibility toward them and view themselves as trustees for the future. Research has shown that the strengths of this generation are enhanced problem-solving skills, recognising patterns and acting appropriately, and strategic vision and thinking (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Freedman, 2011; Maroun, 2013; Weeks et al., 2017).

#### *2.5.1.2 Interpersonal characteristics of the Baby Boomers*

The Baby Boomers tend to see themselves as 'peoples-people' (Maroun, 2013). Just

as different generations tend to have different work ethics, they may also have different approaches or preferences to communication. The preferred communication method of Baby Boomers is personal. This is probably because they consider relationship building to be important. Baby Boomers are comfortable with a semi-formal style of communication but expect the information they receive to be detailed. Baby Boomers may be offended by a lack of face-to-face communication or may feel as if they are being excluded when electronic communication is being used (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Maroun, 2013; Robinson 2009; Weeks et al, 2017; Zemke et al., 2011).

According to Van der Walt and Du Plessis (2010), Baby Boomers find reward in being status symbols and achieving visible rewards. They place value on paid training courses and skills (SkillSoft, 2009a) and are considering delayed or flexible retirement (Benson & Brown, 2011; Robinson, 2009; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010).

According to Cordington and Grant-Marshall (2006), Baby Boomers have become accustomed to disposable income and do not save enough. Rewards for them could include a company car, holidays away from home and any other material items. This generation is increasingly looking for opportunities that will help them make a difference to society and leave a legacy behind when they die (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Robinson, 2009; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010; Weeks et al., 2017). In one study, Baby Boomers appeared to place importance on a job where work is important and provides a sense of accomplishment (Stark & Poppler, 2018).

#### 2.5.1.3 *Team behaviour of the Baby Boomers*

Baby Boomers tend to be very experienced and knowledgeable and work well in teams (King et al., 2019). They want to know why they must do things, and then find better ways to do it. They value teams and prefer equality and want everyone on the team to be empowered. They believe that effective teams are those with a common vision and a way forward, and enjoy team-building experiences with a shared outlook (Campbell et al., 2015; Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Freedman, 2011; Maroun, 2013; Robinson, 2009; Tulgan, 1996; Weeks et al., 2017; Zemke et al., 2011).

#### 2.5.1.4 *Work behaviour characteristics of Baby Boomers*

Baby Boomers are goal-orientated individuals who are competitive and identify with their jobs (King et al., 2019). When the Baby Boomers joined the workforce, industries were expanding, jobs were plentiful and career structures were well defined (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006). It was also the time of the rise of multinational organisations and globalisation, and when women were testing the corporate glass ceiling (Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010). Baby Boomers were raised by parents obsessed with economic security, and they were taught to build practical secure careers and envision prosperous and stable careers for themselves (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010). Baby Boomers were known for their workaholic ethic and they prefer informal office environments (Maroun, 2013). However, in a recent study, Singh and Weimar (2017) found that Baby Boomers were the least empowered employees in organisations. Singh and Weimar (2017) further argue that this finding might be because Baby Boomers grew up in times of the first economic crisis after the Second World War, which might have led to them placing higher value on having a safe job rather than on them being empowered.

On the other hand, Baby Boomers attach a higher value to increased salaries than to spending time with their families (Campbell et al., 2015; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010). When it comes to work ethic, 'driven' is the adjective that is often used (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006). The Baby Boomers believe in long hours and are willing to sacrifice their time (time balance) to achieve personal success. Baby Boomers also consider relationship building at work to be important, and they respect the established work hours, rules, and methods of their organisations, which they expect everyone to follow (Zemke et al., 2011). An interesting concept is that of 're-tyement' instead of retirement, as preferred by Baby Boomers. According to Cordington and Grant-Marshall (2006) 're-tyring' is learning new working skills and planning how to make retirement work for them. This concept is enacted by Baby Boomers in their tendency and willingness to stay longer in their jobs as seniors and as managers (Benson & Brown, 2011). Benson and Brown also found Baby Boomers to be significantly more satisfied with their jobs compared to Generation Xers.

### 2.5.1.5 *Authority relations of Baby Boomers*

The Baby Boomer generation typically expects authority and leadership to align with a position in the organisation and family hierarchy (Maroun, 2013; SkillSoft, 2011). Baby Boomers accept authority figures as leaders, and because they have expended a lot of energy and made sacrifices to get in positions of authority, they expect to lead and be treated with respect (Zemke et al., 2011). Although Baby Boomers can be perceived as self-absorbed and tend to challenge everything (Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010), they have been found to value authority (Jonck et al., 2017). They have been reported to have strong values relating to respect for authority and hierarchy (Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018).

### 2.5.1.6 *Perspective on work–life balance for Baby Boomers*

Van der Walt and Du Plessis (2010) report that Baby Boomers do not prioritise WLB, as it is traditionally known. This is because they measure success on the number of hours worked coupled with high salaries, and their willingness to compromise other life activities in order to achieve this success. However, in the other literature reviewed (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010; Zemke et al., 2011), it was found that Baby Boomers underwent a great awakening in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, leading to them wanting balance in their lives. Reasons found in the literature are that individuals in this generation are becoming grandparents and want to spend more time with their families, and Baby Boomers are comparing their lives to the Generation X individuals, who demand more balance between work and life outside of work (Weeks et al, 2017).

### 2.5.1.7 *Challenges faced by the Baby Boomers*

Societal norms pull this generation in two directions, neither young nor old (Weeks et al., 2017). Popular culture pressures the Baby Boomer generation to stay youthful at any cost while, simultaneously, the media depicts this generation as aging (Zemke et al., 2011). This challenge in contrasting expectations is generational and ongoing, but creating this new stage requires a shift in thinking and in societal perceptions (King et al., 2019). However, the Baby Boomer generation has very few role models. As individuals, they seek their identity and encounter a lack of structured, supportive institutions, and general disinterest and misunderstanding about what is happening in

their lives (Freedman, 2011, Zemke et al., 2011). These individuals are grappling with big questions regarding life, love and purpose, which are typical characteristics of this time of life (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Freedman, 2011; Weeks et al., 2017).

At the time of this study, most of the Baby Boomers are approaching retirement. However, for the Baby Boomer generation, the idea of traditional retirement is changing rapidly in line with the numerous global changes that have transformed and affected lifestyles in the modern world of work (Freedman, 2011). Locally, high inflation rates, along with legitimate expectations of longer life (Stats SA, 2017), have left the older generation with insufficient pension funds, resulting in them having to work well into their later years in order to make ends meet. Statistics suggest that only one in 16 South Africans of retirement age can afford to retire (Stats SA, 2017). The majority of Baby Boomers must keep working due to poor savings (Campbell et al., 2015; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010). The new reality is that people no longer transition from midlife to retirement. This reality calls for a rethink on mandatory retirement and the age at which one is required to retire. The Baby Boomer generation is living longer and may therefore work significantly longer hours than previous generations (Maroun, 2013).

## **2.5.2 Generation X**

Generation X is the generation born between 1970 and 1989 (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006). Although Generation X is generally the smallest of the generations, they currently make up 56% of the South African workforce (Stats SA, 2017).

### *2.5.2.1 Intrapersonal characteristics of Generation X*

Generation X is generally characterised by a cynical attitude that helps them with analytical problem solving because they are good critical thinkers (Campbell et al., 2015). They see themselves as self-motivated and independent. They need to achieve a good balance between their work and home lives and are at a comfortable level with technology. They thrive on diversity, challenges and creative input. Strengths of this generation include analytical problem solving, embracing change, taking risks, role playing and experimenting with what they are learning (Campbell et al., 2015; Cordington & Grant-Marshall 2006; Maroun, 2013; Zemke et al., 2011).

### 2.5.2.2 *Interpersonal characteristics of Generation X*

According to Cordington and Grant-Marshall (2006), Generation X prefers straightforward communications with the emphasis on clarity. Voicemail and email work best for these individuals, as long as the essential details are clear and accurate. Generation X gets right to the point and expect others to do the same. They can become frustrated when messages are not clear and direct, and may consider the more formal style of the older generation as unnecessary and a waste of time (Campbell et al., 2015; SkillSoft, 2011).

Crampton and Hodge (2009) cite that Generation X has a high desire for financial stability. Rewards, such as non-work time or vacation for family needs for this generation, were reported. Van der Walt and Du Plessis (2010) found that Generation X would also place high value on cash bonuses and appreciate opportunities to divide time appropriately between their work, family and fun in their struggle to balance their lives. Management responsibilities and independence reward this generation, and like the Baby Boomer generation, they also prefer flexible retirement and freedom. They have a need for fun, flexibility and opportunities to learn new skills (Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010). Freedom is the greatest form of reward and recognition for this generation (King et al., 2017).

### 2.5.2.3 *Team behaviour of Generation X*

Generation X individuals enjoy teamwork but prefer working alone. They have an individualistic approach, and hence they tend to operate well in self-directed teams where team members build on separate strengths (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006). Van der Walt and Du Plessis (2010) found that there is a desire for positive working relationships, preferring being a coach or mentor, wanting work flexibility, preferring fun and informal environments. King et al. (2017) published similar results.

### 2.5.2.4 *Work behaviour of Generation X*

Crampton and Hodge (2009) report that Generation X is hardworking and desire effectiveness in what they do. According to Van der Walt and Du Plessis (2010), during the lifetime of Generation X individuals, economic recessions began, and organisations started downsizing and re-engineering. Organisations started valuing

capability more than loyalty, and lifetime employment no longer became a prospect (Campbell et al., 2015). Research found that Generation Xers value job security, working to live, and WLB (Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018).

The Generation X work ethic can be described as balanced, referring to the focus of this generation on balancing work and personal life (Campbell et al., 2015; Cordington & Grant-Marshall 2006). Individuals in this generation work hard, but they tend to value WLB over dedication and self-sacrifice at work (Maroun, 2013; Zemke et al., 2011). Many members of Generation X consider personal time very important, and it was found that having enough personal time helped individuals from this generation to be more productive at work (Maroun, 2013). However, conflict may arise due to the balanced work ethic of this generation. For example, members of the Traditionalist or Baby Boomer generations might interpret the unwillingness of Generation X to sacrifice personal time for work as a lack of commitment or unwillingness to do what it takes to be successful (Campbell et al., 2015; Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Zemke, et al., 2011). In a study investigating the differences in people's attitudes towards empowerment among generations, Singh and Weimar (2017) found that Generation X belong to a group of persons who seek high levels of responsibility and challenges in their cluster of empowered employees. However, they may feel that promotional and advancement opportunities are restricted (Benson & Brown, 2011).

#### *2.5.2.5 Authority relations for Generation X*

Generation X has a casual approach to authority, questioning decisions and the status quo (Cordington & Grant-Marshall 2006). This generation is typically unimpressed with authority, believing instead that authority should reflect competence and expertise (Zemke et al., 2011). Individuals from Generation X expect competent leaders and do not equate authority with leadership (Zemke et al., 2011).

#### *2.5.2.6 Perspective on work–life balance for Generation X*

For Generation X, the definition of WLB is dictated by the life-stage pressures that come with parenting (Jonck, van der Walt & Sobayeni, 2017). This means that Generation X places much higher priority on family-related goals than on their career-related goals (Gerkovich, 2005). For Generation X individuals, balance is a right, not a privilege, which they want now, and not when they retire (Cordington & Grant-

Marshall, 2006). Generation X prioritises proximity of workplace over promotions, they have a desire for flexible work schedules or arrangements, and need economic/financial stability (Robinson, 2009). This generation does not equate work with self-worth like the Traditionalists, and do not want to put in long hours to prove themselves like the Baby Boomers do. They value family time and favour companies that allow them to set their own hours (Maroun, 2013).

#### *2.5.2.7 Challenges faced by Generation X*

Known as South Africa's 'sandwich generation', Generation X individuals are paying for their children's education and may also be supporting a young adult child who is struggling to find work (Campbell et al., 2015). They may also need to support elderly parents to survive on their life savings (Robinson, 2009). This generation is also known for their high suicidal rates (Cordington & Grant-Marshall 2006). According to Campbell et al. (2015), the older individuals from Generation X are impatient for answers, always demanding information, asking questions and pursuing multiple lines of enquiry simultaneously. Although this generation embraces change, they constantly live with stress and the strong need for organising everything to give them structure.

### **2.5.3. Generation Y**

Generation Y is the generation born between 1990 and 2005. Generation Y is the youngest generation to join the workforce, and the fastest growing workforce segment (Fry, 2016; Maroun, 2013). Meszaros (2012) projects that Generation Y will outnumber Generation X in the years to come. Studies by Luscombe, Lewis, and Biggs (2013) have estimated that Generation Y will make up one half of the American workforce by the year 2020, and 75% of the workforce by 2025. Generation Y makes up 23% of the South African population (Stats SA, 2017).

#### *2.5.3.1 Intrapersonal characteristics of Generation Y*

Armour (2005) found that Generation Y realises that life is short, and thus they value it more. As a cohort, these individuals tend to be optimistic, confident in their technical abilities, and able to multitask easily (Half, 2005; Weeks et al., 2017). Studies have furthermore shown that this generation feels they should do more to help society solve their problems (Alexander & Sysko, 2012; Armour, 2005; Campbell et al., 2015;

Crampton & Hodge, 2009; Half, 2005). They are also much more interested in environmental issues than the generations preceding them (SkillSoft, 2009a). Generation Y is described as self-confident and success-driven, and they have a mentality of instant gratification (Huggins, 2008; Zimmerman, 2008). Strengths of Generation Y include multitasking extremely well, appreciate innovation and creative thinking, as well as mastering technology and the Internet. On a personal level, they see fast recognition, success and a good salary as important (Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018).

### 2.5.3.2 *Interpersonal characteristics for Generation Y*

Generation Y tends to like positive and instant communication (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006). Because this generation grew up in the information era, they have come to expect instant communication. Instant messaging, text messaging, blogging and email communications are the norm for this technical-confident generation (Alexander & Sysko, 2012; Armour, 2005; Campbell et al., 2015; Crampton & Hodge, 2009; Fry, 2016; Half, 2005). Generation Y is accustomed to getting information that they want when they want it and waiting for responses can be frustrating for this generation. They are comfortable with direct mentoring and prefer to sit down one-on-one with older individuals to discuss topics and receive advice. They are not interested in business leaders posturing, behaving unethically, or communicating ineffectively because of office politics (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006, SkillSoft, 2011). Furthermore, Generation Y is interested in authenticity, open collaboration and constant feedback, even negative feedback (Crampton & Hodge, 2009).

According to Armour (2005), Generation Y employees have been pampered, nurtured and programmed since they were young. This led to a generation of high performers who need high maintenance. Generation Y are used to being well rewarded for little effort, and thus move from job to job, seeking immediate satisfaction (Half, 2005). They believe in their worth and are willing to ask for what they need (Armour, 2005). Generation Y employees are generally willing to put in extra work and hours if it means gaining rewards and recognition (Alexander & Sysco, 2012). This generation sees a contribution to society, money and mental stimulation as forms of reward and recognition (Crampton & Hodge, 2009). They prefer instant rewards, diversity and meaningful work. Similar to Generation X, Generation Y is also looking for fun,

flexibility and new skills (Campbell et al., 2015; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010).

### 2.5.3.3 *Team behaviour of Generation Y*

Generation Y is highly social and make excellent team players (King et al., 2019). They cherish teamwork and team spirit (Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018); however, they need team objectives and to have their role in the team clearly defined and articulated to them (Crampton & Hodge, 2009). Generation Y works well in diverse teams and have a strong sense of civic duty and moral convictions (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006).

### 2.5.3.4 *Work behaviour of Generation Y*

Raised in the era of the Internet and introduced to technology at a young age, Generation Y has developed significantly different perspectives on learning styles and career development choices, often providing challenges to managers from older generations (Campbell et al., 2015; SkillSoft, 2011). Generation Y grew up surrounded by computers and other technological advances such as the Internet, social media and mobile phones. Therefore, they expect to receive training using modern means, and prefer virtual learning as opposed to classroom study (SkillSoft, 2011). Generation Y grew up in a world of work vastly different from that of their older counterparts.

According to Meszaros (2012), Generation Y inherited an environment driven by the exponential advances in technology. They further grew up in an economy influenced by nano, bio and emotion technology (Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010). Generation Y individuals tend to distrust organisations and prefer a risk-free environment (Cordington & Grant-Marshall 2006).

Typically, the work ethic of Generation Y is described as determined (Armour, 2005). They are said to be self-motivated to progress in their careers and get much out of their employment (Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2017). Furthermore, they expect to work hard, but do not think that it is necessary to be physically present or even that they have to work set hours, as long as they produce quality work and achieve goals (Cordington & Grant-Marshall 2006; Half, 2005). They want their jobs to have meaning and feel that they are making a positive difference. Success is important and measured in terms of wealth, WLB and attention (Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010).

Crampton and Hodge (2009) found that Generation Y works to live as opposed to living to work, and that younger workers have high opinions of themselves and seem to want everything at entry level. Generation Y employees have been accused of having a sense of entitlement and unreasonable expectations about work (Half, 2005). Armour (2005) previously reported that Generation Y is motivated by the nature of the job, the outcomes of the job and the organisational structure and culture.

In a recent study on the employment expectations of Generation Y undergraduates in the United Kingdom, Maxwell and Broadbridge (2017) found that enjoyment, opportunity and progression were dominant themes. These expectations comprise both entry-level employment expectations and long-term career employment expectations even before they enter the work environment.

#### *2.5.3.5 Authority relations for Generation Y*

Meszaros (2012) cites that there is confusion about Generation Y and authority relations. Generation Y is generally respectful of authority and expects authority figures to provide guidance because they learned at a young age that doing what an authority figure tells them is likely to result in success. "Also important to them is the relationship with their supervisor and the need for communication and feedback" (Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018, p. 145). However, like Generation X, they will challenge the status quo, but do not believe the right to lead comes from time invested in the organisation (Cordington & Grant-Marshall 2006; Half, 2005). Interestingly, Jonck et al. (2017) found that, like Baby Boomers, Generation Y values authority.

This generation also expects to be listened to. As the most diverse generation, Generation Y tends to believe in equal rights for all people. Many Generation Y individuals have been raised to believe in fairness as a very important value and they practice it in their lives and work (Alexander & Sysco, 2012; Armour, 2005; Crampton & Hodge, 2009; Half, 2005). They are sensitive to decisions that may be based on greed and are likely to speak out against such decisions (Campbell et al., 2015; SkillSoft, 2011; Weeks et al., 2017).

### 2.5.3.6 *Perspective on work–life balance for Generation Y*

Meszaros (2012) and Weeks et al. (2017) found that Generation Y wants more work–life balance, but not more than the Baby Boomers and Generation X. Generation Y is likely to start having children, which will require a great need for flexibility (Crampton & Hodge, 2009). Generation Y requires flexibility to balance their work and personal lives, and generally will not sacrifice their personal life for work (SkillSoft, 2011). Loehr and Schwartz (2003) support the finding that Generation Y employees want work schedules that will give them WLB. Williams (2009) describes WLB for Generation Y as addressing the issues of both achievement and enjoyment and adds that the four quadrants of WLB must be included, namely work, family, friends and self.

### 2.5.3.7 *Challenges faced by Generation Y*

Generation Y often declares their intention to have WLB (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006). Although this generation expects flexibility, freedom and balance as a right, there is overwhelming pressure from the older generations and society to perform better and higher than anyone one of them (Crampton & Hodge, 2009). Generation Y have an underlying desire to do the right thing, to know the truth in a situation, to have a job that means more than a pay cheque, and to live a life that matters (Weeks et al., 2017). According to SkillSoft (2011), the two very distinct challenges that this generation faces are that they work very differently with technology and that they enjoy interpersonal relationships.

## **2.6 RELEVANCE OF GENERATIONS AS CONSTRUCT TO THIS RESEARCH**

In South Africa, much emphasis has been placed on diversity factors, specifically that of culture and race (Human 2005; Mabokela & Mawila, 2004) and how it sometimes negatively affects co-worker relationships and organisational effectiveness. The democratic South Africa inherited a divided nation with many social, political and economic inequalities (Department of Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation, 2015). According to Kagan (2003), Bell (2007) and Kreitz (2008), identifying other diversity factors – such as age and the understanding of generational awareness – could present advantages to organisations. Due to various factors including economic, political, social and cultural changes, work-life balance and subjective well-being have become an increasingly difficult challenge for South Africans across the various

generations (Amoateng & Richter, 2007; Bond, 2014; Sekwena, Mostert, & Wentzel, 2007). South Africans are also affected by challenges such as poverty (poverty rate of 49.8%) and unemployment (29.1% rate) as reported by Statistics South Africa (2019) social injustice, escalating divorce rates, single-parent households, failing education systems, natural disaster, increasing crime rates, a lack of security and a number of health issues such as the Covid 19 epidemic (Koen, Van Eeden, & Rothmann, 2012; Netcare, 2020; Roman, Schenck, Ryan, Brey, Henderson, Lukelelo, Saville, 2016; Sekwena et al., 2007; Theron & Theron, 2010).

Researchers in organisational psychology have found that there are certainly some distinctions between older and younger workers, and they have found evidence for gradual changes over time in work-related variables, as well as differences in personality characteristics (Ng & Feldman, 2010; Roberts, Walton, & Veichtbauer, 2006; Twenge et al., 2010). Although theories and consultant-driven interventions that rely on generational similarities and stereotypes exist (Strauss & Howe, 1991; Twenge et al., 2010), very little scientific research focusing on differences could be found (Campbell et al., 2015; Costanza et al., 2012; Parry & Urwin, 2011).

Stereotypes are pervasive and divert attention from the positive roles that different generations bring. Understanding people from different generations prepares researchers and employers for the challenges of generational diversity and is a crucial first step in creating a positive working environment. Identifying and understanding differences across generations could present many advantages to organisations. Research (Bell, 2007; Campbell et al., 2015; Kagan, 2003; Kreitz, 2008; Van der Walt, 2010, Weeks et al., 2017) has shown that when diversity factors, such as age, are managed effectively, benefits such as increased productivity, workforce cohesion, effective recruitment and volunteering programmes, and improved leadership and succession planning, can be seen.

However, studying generations should not be seen as stereotyping, but rather as focusing on obtaining an understanding of social groups (Campbell et al., 2015; Zell, Krizan, & Teeter, 2015) and of the generational differences between different age groups of employees that create unique challenges for modern corporations (Bell, 2007; Kagan, 2003; Kreitz, 2008). For example, a study in the United Kingdom alluded

to the importance of studying diverse generations, as this may help employers to tailor their job design, opportunities, training programmes and possibly employment skills development (Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2017). The rationale for the current study was found in the multi-generational character of the workforce and population in South Africa (Mattes, 2012). For this study, it was best to understand the needs and expectations of each generation functioning in the world of work at the time of the study.

As African-located scholars, South African researchers should be leaders in the production of new African-localised knowledge and understanding through inquiry, criticism and synthesis. An Afrocentric perspective would enable the researcher to explore various pertinent constructs across the sub-fields of IOP, in a South African context and add to the body of scientific literature relevant to the country.

The next chapter will conceptualise the construct of WLB and the case for taking generational differences into consideration.

## **2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter conceptualised the construct of generations, defined the construct, reviewed theoretical approaches, described the generations in the current world of work, and discussed the relevance of the construct of generations for this research.

## **CHAPTER 3: WORK–LIFE BALANCE**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the chapter is to present a conceptualisation of the construct of work–life balance (WLB), by defining the construct, reviewing theoretical approaches and models, describing WLB in the world of work, and integrating the relevance of the construct to this research.

### **3.2 DEFINING WORK–LIFE BALANCE (WLB)**

Many terms are used in the literature relating to WLB (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Guest, 2001; Millward, 2011; Veiga, 2009; Yeandle, 2005), and despite much research done on WLB, no universal definition, measures or theoretical framework has emerged yet (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; McMillan et al., 2011). Prakash (2018) also alluded to the lack of consistency in defining WLB in organisational behaviour literature. Although definitions and explanations vary, WLB is generally associated with equilibrium or maintaining an overall sense of harmony in life (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Guest, 2001; Veiga, 2009).

The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000) defines 'balance' as offsetting or comparing, equalising or neutralising, or to bring into equilibrium. Since the 1990s, the concept of WLB gained attention, and various researchers have published definitions of the concept. According to Clark (2000), positive WLB or 'balanced life' can be defined as the achievement of satisfaction in all areas of an individual's life. The attainment of this state requires the allocation and use of all the resources controlled by an individual, including energy and time, throughout the diverse areas of one's life. WLB entails satisfactory role functions coupled with minimal role conflicts between work and family (Clark, 2000).

Guest (2001) defines WLB as an equal distribution of weight or amount, not implying equal weight on both sides. Furthermore, Fisher-McAuley et al. (2003) define WLB as a competition for both time and energy between the different roles filled by an individual. This definition is consistent with Ong and Jeyaraj's (2014) argument that studies on WLB often adopt a conflict-based outlook where work and life are seen as

mutually exclusive domains that are constantly competing for an individual's attention and resources.

Greenhaus et al. (2003) define WLB as the extent to which an individual is engaged in and equally satisfied with his or her work role and family role, consisting of three components. These components are defined as **time balance** (equal time devoted to work and life), **involvement balance** (equal psychological involvement in work and life) and **satisfaction balance** (equal satisfaction gained by work and life). Yeandle (2005) and Millward (2011) expand on the concept of WLB, as the balance between work and family by referring to life outside work in addition to family and work. They reported that having work and a life outside of work is encouraged because it reinforces social values, a sense of inclusion, and effective functioning of people. Noor (2011) defines WLB as the effective management of the juggling act between paid work and all other activities that are important to people, such as family, community activities, voluntary work, personal development, leisure and recreation. This definition encompasses other areas of an individual's life that are important to a balanced life. Chandra (2012) defines WLB as the fulfilment of responsibilities and aspirations to the mutual benefit of the individual, the business and society over which individuals have control when, where and how they work (flexibility). Evans and Young (2017) define WLB as an individual's division of time between work and leisure activities.

The academic term 'work-life balance' (WLB) has been replaced with the industry term 'work-life blend' (SkillSoft, 2011). This semantic change has evolved because the concept of family has broadened to encompass extended families, shared parenting, same-sex relationships and a wide range of social and support networks and communities, and because activities such as study, sport and exercise, volunteer work, hobbies and care of the elderly, are just a few activities that need to be blended in with employment (Casper et al., 2018; Prakash, 2018; Shoptaugh et al., 2004). More recently, researchers have distinguished between WLB and work-life harmony (Ong & Jeyaraj, 2014), where WLB refers to the degree to which an individual attains equal levels of engagement and satisfaction in both work and life roles and work-life harmony takes an integrative approach to an individual's work and leisure time.

Reviewing the literature and definitions of the twentieth century, the researcher found that WLB is generally associated with equilibrium, sense of satisfaction and personal

effectiveness, and maintaining an overall sense of well-being in life (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Guest, 2001; Strümpfer, 2005; Veiga, 2009). This confirms the positive psychology paradigm that advocates the experience of happiness, enjoyment, well-being and positive aspects of human life (Rothmann & Cooper, 2015; Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The terms 'work', 'life' and 'balance' are themselves difficult to define (McMillan et al., 2011). For the purpose of this study, it was decided to use the term 'work–life balance' (WLB) throughout the research, where 'work' is defined as paid employment, source of income, vocation or career, and 'life' is defined as all other activities outside of work such as family, friends, leisure, learning and self. Based on previous literature and terms, the researcher defines WLB as the extent to which an individual has a sense of happiness, optimism, self-esteem, and engagement across work and life outside work.

### **3.3 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO WLB**

In the 1980s, women started to move into the workforce and the phenomenon of WLB appeared in many management developmental courses. WLB was increasingly focused on during the 1990s, and the debate intensified since 2001. In the autumn of 2004, the *New York Times* ran a front-page, three-part series on WLB and job stress. It is no coincidence that WLB entered the public domain about the same time that women did, and especially mothers in dual-career households started working in the workforce. Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, and Brinley (2005), Potgieter and Barnard (2010) and Van Aarde and Mostert (2008), all report that early research on work–family conflict focused particularly on married woman entering the world of work and on dual-career couples and single-parent households. The studies were however very much a one-dimensional conceptualisation of the construct.

Although work–family research has long been guided by role stress theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964), where the negative side of the work–family interaction is put under the spotlight, the emphasis has shifted towards the investigation of the positive interaction between work and family roles as well as roles outside work and family lives (Jones, Burke, & Westman, 2006). When Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) introduced the positive psychology paradigm the focus

moved to how psychological health and wellness could be obtained, instead of on fixing what is broken or bad in life. Studies of WLB shifted the focus towards positive facilitation and enrichment (Oosthuizen & Mostert, 2010). Since then, research has been conducted on the positive interaction between work and home, and the relationship between work and life, engagement and well-being (Evans & Young, 2017; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Hammer, Cullen, Neal, Sinclair, & Shafiro, 2005; Haworth & Lewis, 2005, Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010; Munn & Chaudhuri, 2016). Furthermore, research has shown that employees with perceived WLB have better health and well-being outcomes than those without (Zheng, Molineux, Mirshekary, & Scarparo, 2015).

Conventionally, WLB has been studied from five traditional models, namely the instrumental model, the segmentation model, the conflict model, the spill-over model and the compensation model. These models are described in detail below.

### **3.3.1 Instrumental model**

In this model, activities in one sphere facilitate success in another. The focus is on recognising the multidirectional interaction between the domains of work and life (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Oosthuizen & Mostert, 2010). The core principle of this model is that multiple roles provide benefits in the form of privileges, status security, psychological energy and personal growth, which expand individual resources and facilitate role performance (McMillian et al., 2011). The traditional example is the instrumental worker who will seek to maximise earnings, even at the price of undertaking a routine job and working long hours, to allow the purchase of a home or a car for a young family.

### **3.3.2 Segmentation model**

In this model, work and non-work are viewed as two distinct domains of life, lived separately, and having no influence on each other. According to Bulger, Matthews, and Hoffman (2007, p. 367), "segmentation exists when there is low flexibility to leave one domain to attend to the other and low permeability of the domain boundaries". However according to Rezvani (2010), striving for the traditional concept of WLB, i.e. that work is completely outside and separate from the rest of an individual's life as per this model, seems to be a losing proposition.

### **3.3.3 Conflict model**

This model suggests that with high levels of demand in all spheres of life, some difficult choices must be made, and conflict will occur, resulting in some sort of overload on the individual (Boyar, Maertz, Pearson, & Keough, 2003). The origin of this model can be found in Greenhaus and Beutell's (1985) earlier view that work–life conflict results when mutually incompatible pressures are experienced in work and family roles. According to this model, multiple roles with infinite demands are likely to cause role strain and conflict for individuals because the resources they have to meet these demands are finite and scarce. For example, one area of inter-role conflict is that between work and family, where pressures from an individual's role at work interface with his or her role within the family (Boyar et al., 2003).

### **3.3.4 Spill-over model**

This model proposes that the one world influences the other either in a positive or negative way. Clark (2000) describes spill-over theory as an open-system approach where events at work influence or have an effect on events at home and the reverse. Fu and Shaffer (2001), Greenhaus and Powell (2006), and Rost and Mostert (2007) all found that the early perspectives on WLB dealt with the negative influence that work has on life, and generally focused on the spill-over effects from work to life rather than on life to work. Grzywacz and Marks (2000) empirically tested the assumption that 'work' might influence 'life' negatively or positively, and vice versa. They found evidence for the co-existence of four different but interrelated types of spill-over between 'work' and 'life'. This model takes into consideration the negative spill-over from the work to the home situation as well as the positive spill-over from the work to the home situation. It also considers the negative spill-over from the home to the work situation; and positive spill-over from the home to the work situation. An example of positive spill over is that of satisfaction with life which influences satisfaction in other domains (Cain, Busser, & Kang, 2018).

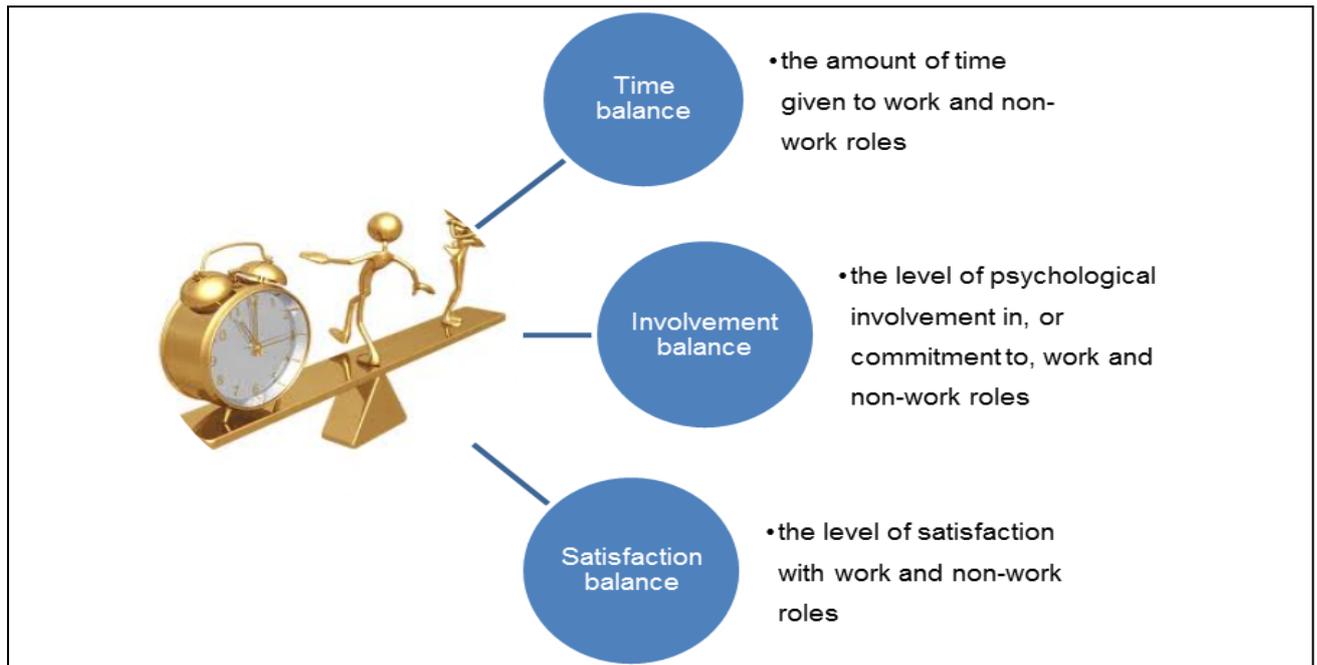
### **3.3.5 Compensation model**

This model is based on the sense that what may be lacking in one sphere in terms of demands or satisfaction, can be made up in another sphere (Clark, 2000; Zheng et al., 2015). For example, work may be routine and undemanding, but this is

compensated for by a major role in local community activities outside work. Hudson Global Resources (2005) found that, although WLB has traditionally been assumed to involve the devotion of equal amounts of time to paid work and non-work roles (life), the construct is more complex. According to Greenhaus et al. (2003), the compensation model takes into consideration three additional components that influence WLB, namely time balance, involvement balance and satisfaction balance. With the incorporation of these components, the model has since evolved (Frone, 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Hudson Global Resources, 2005; Rezvani, 2010).

The five models listed above are essentially descriptive models. Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) suggest that these models can further be enriched by the psychology of individual differences, such as psychological theory concerned with aspects of generations, which could enhance our understanding of perceptions of balance. According to Welch and Welch (2005), there are as many work–life equations as there are individuals. However, no matter which balance one chooses, some trade-offs need to be made. Working parents who want to be very involved in their children’s lives may compromise on the satisfaction balance, while people who put business success first, are more likely to compromise on the involvement balance (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007).

The researcher decided on studying WLB from the point of view of the compensation model. Striving for engagement and flow between different spheres (Hudson Global Resources, 2005; Rezvani, 2010; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000) appeared to be realistic to the researcher in today’s world of work and perceptions of WLB. Instead of seeking traditional WLB, which implies devoting equal time and energy to work and life, this model allows for work–life integration, concentrating on what is necessary or most important at any given moment (Rezvani, 2010), and creating well-being, contentment and satisfaction (Seligman, 2011; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Figure 3.1 depicts the compensation model of work–life balance. This framework of WLB, with time, involvement and satisfaction components, enables a broader and more inclusive picture to emerge.



*Figure 3.1: Compensation model of work–life balance (Source: Adapted from Grzywacz and Carlson, 2007)*

In comparison to other countries, South African socio-economic, political and societal circumstances have influenced the research and study of WLB differently as WLB is influenced by factors that are unique to the South African culture and climate (Brink & De la Rey, 2001). Although a substantial amount of research has been done worldwide on the topic of WLB, in the South African context, there are only a limited number of studies on this topic. This might be due to the several limitations that impede an accurate and in-depth understanding of this phenomenon. Furthermore, in the South African context, studies on WLB have mainly focused on the underlying mechanisms of WLB that are culture- or role-specific (De Villiers & Kotze, 2003) as well as gender differences. Very little information is available regarding WLB across different generations and occupational groups in South Africa (Brink & De la Rey, 2001; Grzywacz, Almeida, & McDonald, 2002; Theunissen, Van Vuuren, & Visser, 2003; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010; Veiga, 2009.). Hence, the current study focused on the generational differences in WLB and SWB in a South African sample.

### 3.4 HOW IS WLB MEASURED

Many individuals want to achieve a healthy WLB, but they do not know how to measure it (Hsu, Bai, Yang, Huang, Lin, & Lin, 2019). According to Grzywacz and Carlson (2007), the first thing individuals need to do, is to assess his or her current state of balance, looking at the whole range of activities that currently fill such individual's life. Individuals can start by taking a critical look at their commitments by doing either formal or informal self-care assessments and finding out what their goals and perceptions are (Wise, Herch, & Gibson, 2012).

Once the individual understands his or her current status, an action plan can be constructed to take him or her to his or her objective of a positive balanced, fulfilled work-life. To analyse personal WLB, the individual needs to be able to recognise what positive and negative WLB means for him or her. Grzywacz and Carlson (2007) found that this analysis should be done on a regular basis, taking into consideration how the individual is feeling at a specific moment, in order to identify which behaviours, need adjustment. Cultivating a habit of self-awareness is vital, according to Christensen (2016). Once an individual can identify what his or her personal WLB looks like, and what is taking place when he or she experiences negative balance, the necessary steps can be taken to return to a balanced state. According to Copp (2012), thought should be given to how the individual responds – physically, mentally and emotionally – to being out of balance. Thus, for an individual to perform optimally, he or she needs to identify his or her own area of optimum WLB.

WLB can be measured as either positive or negative balance. **Positive** WLB refers to the tendency to engage in every sphere equally with high energy, commitment, attention and care (Grant, Wallace, & Spurgeon, 2013; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Nizam & Kam, 2018; Zheng et al., 2015). This will lead to ease and enhancement of well-being, and flourishing individuals (Keyes, 2007). **Negative** WLB refers to the tendency to engage in roles with apathy, cynicism, low effort and low attentiveness (Grant, et al., 2013; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Nizam & Kam, 2018; Zheng et al., 2015). This will lead to conflict and dissatisfaction, and create an ongoing state of unfulfilled demands, anxiety, stagnation and feelings of emptiness, also known as languishing individuals (Rothmann & Cooper, 2015).

Positive is balance grounded in the principle of role expansion or enhancement, where positive gains are obtained from involvement in multiple roles providing a number of benefits (Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006). It is generally agreed that positive WLB is important for an individual's PWB, and that high self-esteem, satisfaction and an overall sense of harmony in life can be regarded as indicators of positive balance between work and life (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; McMillan et al., 2011).

According to SkillSoft (2009b), when individuals have healthy WLB, they have enough energy to do their jobs. They arrive at work on time and feel refreshed, they are prepared for the activities of the day, and they work with others collaboratively and communicate clearly. Furthermore, they are appropriately open about their schedules and responsibilities, including their needs to attend to their personal lives. These individuals are also able to set boundaries and plan accordingly so that they can have a life outside of work (Copp, 2012). Merrill and Merrill (2003) report that individuals experiencing positive WLB experience higher job satisfaction overall and are more productive and motivated workers who enjoy their work and life interests. Other studies have reported that individuals who experience positive balance, are satisfied, committed and engaged workers (Grant et al., 2013; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Mostert, 2006; Nizam & Kam, 2018).

Much research has been done on optimising positive WLB, and researchers (Copp, 2012; Greenhaus & Powell 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Nizam & Kam, 2018) have found that generally, individuals would like to enhance positive WLB. In each area of life, namely work, family, time and money, the individual needs to consider what is being done, how it is being done, and then to determine the 'optimisers' that will help him or her create the most positive balance (Merrill & Merrill, 2003).

Evidence was found in the literature that an organisation with a friendly climate and engaged culture, and where good HR practices were in place (Clark, 2000; Green, 2001; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Nizam & Kam, 2018) enhances positive WLB. Other enhancers found were scope for direct participation, autonomy, and flexibility (Copp, 2012; Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Grant et al., 2013; Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000), support, boundary management and a quieter physical environment (Copp, 2012), as

well as a climate of sharing at home and at work (Kossek, Colquitt, & Noe, 2001; Jonck, van der Walt & Sobayeni, 2017). These have all been found to have a positive influence on self-esteem, optimism, happiness, and engagement (Rothmann & Cooper, 2015).

Based on the literature reviewed, the researcher decided to divide the indicators of positive balance as either individual or organisational. These are depicted in Table 3.1.

*Table 3.1: Indicators of positive WLB*

<b>Individual</b>	<b>Organisational</b>
Greater satisfaction in the quest for quality of life (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Hsu et al., 2019; Stoddard & Madsen, 2007).	Higher job satisfaction (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Jonck et al., 2017; King et al., 2019).
Improved self-efficacy and self-acceptance (Casper & Harris, 2008; Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Lyness & Judiesch, 2014; Stoddard & Madsen, 2007).	Organisational citizenship behaviour (Bragger, Rodriguez-Srendnicki, Kutcher, Indovino & Rosner, 2005; Copp, 2012).
Overall psychological, social and EWB (Clark, 2000; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Jonck et al., 2017; & Judiesch, 2014).	Organisational commitment (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Casper & Harris, 2008; Downes & Koekemoer, 2011).
Sense of social integration (Hakanen, Peeters, & Perhoniemi, 2011; Ten Brummelhuis & Van der Lippe, 2010).	Supportive organisational culture (Clark, 2000; De Cieri et al., 2002; Dikkers, Geurts, Den Dulk, Peper, Taris, & Kompier, 2007; King et al., 2019; Sanchez-Vidal, Cegarra-Leiva, & Cegarra-Navarro, 2012; Ten Brummelhuis & Van der Lippe, 2010).
Positive emotions and resilience (Copp, 2012; Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Jonck et al., 2017; King et al., 2019).	Improved market image (Copp, 2012; Hsu, Bai, Yang, Huang, Lin, & Lin, 2019).  Sanchez-Vidal et al., 2012).

*Source: Own compilation*

More specifically for this research, it was found that certain factors could optimise positive WLB – specifically for the generations in the current world of work. For Baby Boomers, it was found that retirement orientation courses, organisations that can make clear the meaning of their work and purpose of their lives, horizontal movements at work, allowance for part-time work, cyclical work, and continuous training and growth, optimise positive WLB (Becton et al., 2014; Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Jonck et al., 2017; King et al., 2019; Twenge et al., 2010; Urick et al., 2017; Zemke et al., 2011). For Generation X, it was found that satisfying and well-paying

jobs, doing well in chosen occupations, being respected for what they bring to the world, family, quality and 'me' time, quality friendships and relationships and flexible place and time of work, optimised positive WLB (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Jonck et al., 2017; King et al., 2019; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010; Zemke et al., 2011). Flexibility in work schedules, dress code and work programmes, a view that work and life cannot be divided, access to latest technology and learning tools, focused mentoring sessions, being part of a team or a sense of belonging, and training that is customised specifically to the role, were found to be optimisers of positive balance for Generation Y, and were also found to increase productivity and engagement (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Grace & Graen, 2014; Jonck et al.; 2017; King et al., 2019; Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Urick et al., 2017; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010; Zemke et al., 2011).

WLB is measured as negative when the pressures from one role make it difficult to comply with the demands of the other, which causes conflict, anxiety, stagnation and dissatisfaction (Copp, 2012; Gonzalez-Mulé & Cockburn, 2017; Grant et al., 2013; Rost & Mostert, 2007; Zheng et al., 2015). Negative balance occurs when the amount of time in one area causes some sort of conflict or dissatisfaction in other areas of life. Most research confirms that a negative WLB has negative consequences for well-being and effective functioning (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004; Jacobs et al., 2008). Negative balance hinders well-being and personal effectiveness and performance (De Klerk & Mostert, 2010; Gonzalez-Mulé & Cockburn, 2017; McMillian et al., 2011; Nizam & Kam, 2018).

According to SkillSoft (2011), when individuals experience negative WLB, they always seem to be in a rush, they come to work frazzled and disorganised, they are easily distracted and tend to overreact or make an emergency out of things. Their schedules are packed so tightly that they are often late or unprepared (SkillSoft, 2011). In a study by Frone (2000), it was found that individuals who experienced negative WLB were nearly 30 times more likely to suffer from mood disorders, like depression, and they were 10 times more likely to have anxiety disorders and 11 times more likely to have a substance-dependence disorder, like heavy drinking. These individuals are also more likely to suffer from reduced PWB and poor physical health (Gonzalez-Mulé & Cockburn, 2017; Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001).

Evidence was found in the literature that there are various causes for negative WLB for individuals. These causes included working longer hours, being in managerial positions and having multiple jobs, and finances (Grant et al., 2013; SkillSoft, 2011; Yost, 2004), dependent children, elder care and other caregiving decisions, higher work and life demands, demands on time, interruptions, health and change (Clark, 2000; Copp, 2012; Green, 2001; Gonzalez-Mulé & Cockburn, 2017; Kossek et al., 2001; Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000; SkillSoft, 2009a). It was also found that women reported negative WLB more than men (Casale, 2004; Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014; Powell & Greenhaus, 2010).

Based on the literature reviewed, the researcher divided the indicators of negative balance as either individual or organisational, and these are depicted in Table 3.2.

*Table 3.2: Indicators of negative WLB*

<b>Individual</b>	<b>Organisational</b>
Lower self-efficacy, optimism and EWB (Allen et al., 2000; Jonck et al.; 2017; King et al.,2019; Stoddard & Madsen, 2007).	Lower employee affective commitment (Casper & Harris, 2008; Clarke et al., 2004;Hsu et al.).
Poor physical health (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003; Gonzalez-Mulé & Cockburn, 2017; Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001; Jacobs et al., 2008).	Absenteeism (Copp, 2012; De Klerk & Mostert, 2010; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Joiner & Bakalis, 2006; King et al., 2019; Lyons & Kuron, 2014; McMillan et al., 2011).
Poor psychological health (Clark, 2000; Clark et al., 2004; Geurts & Demerouti, 2003; Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001; Hsu et al., 2019; Jacobs et al., 2008; Marks and MacDermid, 1996).	Increased turnover (Casper & Harris, 2008; Geurts & Demerouti, 2003; Jacobs et al., 2008; Hsu et al., 2019).
Diminished life, marital and family satisfaction and general quality of life (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003, Gonzalez-Mulé & Cockburn, 2017; Hsu et.al., 2019; Jacobs et al., 2008; Jonck et al.; 2017).	An organisational culture that impedes social integration (Copp, 2012; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Jonck et al.; 2017; Marks & MacDermid, 1996).
Dissatisfaction with leisure activities and purpose in life (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003,(Hsu et al., 2019; Jacobs et al., 2008; King et al., 2019).	Decreased work productivity (Casper & Harris, 2008; Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Gonzalez-Mulé & Cockburn, 2017; Jonck et al.; 2017; King et al., 2019; Lyness & Judiesch, 2014; Stoddard & Madsen, 2007).

*Source: Own compilation*

More specifically relevant to this research, factors were found that cause negative WLB specific to each generation. For Baby Boomers, it was found that a lack of personal growth, acceptance of change, health issues, caring for ageing relatives and

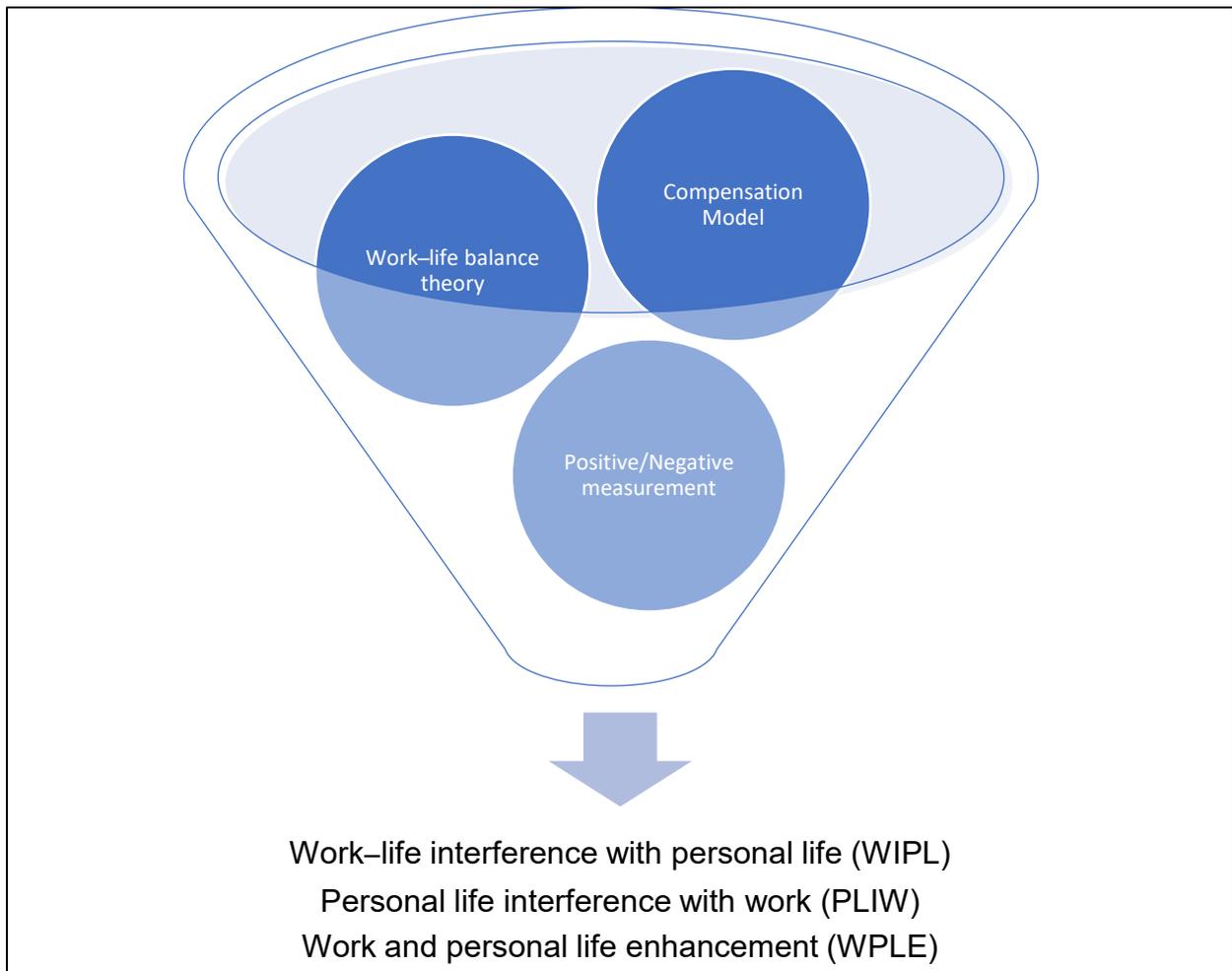
supporting children and grandchildren, and senior positions with a high degree of responsibility, were causes of negative WLB (Becton et al., 2014; Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Jonck et al., 2017; King et al., 2019; Twenge et al., 2010; Urick et al., 2017; Zemke et al., 2011).

For Generation X, money, job security, constantly running against the clock (time), a lack of independence and rigid social expectations, were causes of negative WLB. It was found that for Generation Y, constant overtime, a lack of social connections, a lack of guidance and structure, a lack of recognition and overwhelming pressure from the older generations and society to perform better and higher, were causes of negative WLB (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Crampton & Hodge, 2009; Grace & Graen, 2014; Twenge et al., 2010; Urick et al., 2016; Van der Walt & Du Plessis 2010; Zemke et al., 2011).

Fisher-McAuley et al. (2003) describe WLB as a competition for both time and energy between the different roles filled by an individual. According to them, WLB is considered unbalanced or negative for an individual when the amount of time causes some sort of conflict or stress in other areas of life. They identified three conceptually based measures of balance namely work-life interference with personal life (WIPL), which refers to the extent to which work interferes with personal life, personal life interference with work (PLIW), which reflects the extent to which one's personal life interferes with work, and work and personal life enhancement (WPLE), which is the extent to which one's personal life enhances work.

Fisher-McAuley et al. (2003), updated the Work-life Balance Scale (Hayman, 2005), to assess the three dimensions of WLB (WLB). An overall WLB measurement can be derived by interpreting lower levels of interference as higher levels of WLB, while higher levels of work/personal life enhancement is also associated with higher levels of WLB.

Taking into consideration the literature results on factors that influence positive and negative balance, and based on work-life balance theory and the compensation model, the researcher decided to use the dimensions of WIPL, PLIW (PLIW) and WPLE (WPLE), to measure levels of positive or negative balance across the generations. This is depicted as a theoretical funnel in Figure 3.1.



*Figure 3.2: WLB theoretical funnel (Source: Author's own compilation)*

### **3.5 DESCRIBING WLB IN THE WORLD OF WORK**

Working lives and the nature of careers have fundamentally changed in a very short time. Several forces have come together to make working patterns more emotionally demanding and less rewarding, taking away control and having a greater influence on human existence. Meister and Willyerd (2012) report that business has changed, and the world of work looks very different. Changes to the labour market are experienced by many countries and have resulted in an increase in people trying to combine or balance work and family life (Hayman, 2013). Many individuals have been caught up in a spiralling trend of materialism, fuelled by the media, which promotes lifestyles that cannot be afforded, and which do not make individuals happier or more satisfied. There are also other non-work aspects of life, which influence an individual's WLB, such as personal care, friends and hobbies (Prakash, 2018).

The world of work is changing and if organisations want to stay globally competitive, they need to understand the diverse needs of different individuals and implement innovative ways to foster WLB in the workplace. Factors, such as technological advancement, globalisation of markets, demographics and societal changes, have all affected the world of work and WLB (Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010; Lester et al., 2012; Rost & Mostert, 2007; Urick et al., 2017). These are discussed in detail in the sections that follow.

### **3.5.1 Technological advancement**

Technology has made routine tasks much easier; however, it has also asked individuals to be accessible virtually all the time, making it difficult to switch off from work issues when at home (Hsu et al., 2019). This in turn has affected personal effectiveness. Work matters are entering homes and private lives, changing the balance and natural working equilibrium (Meister & Willyerd, 2012, Prakash, 2018; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2009; Urick et al., 2016; Veiga, 2009). The demands of work and life have become even more complicated since the explosion of the global marketplace where technology allows employees to communicate twenty-four seven (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Grace & Graen, 2014; Lester et al., 2012; Olivier, 2013). The expectations of always being connected are widespread. The current changing work environment, fuelled by constant connectivity via smartphones, pagers and the Internet, has led to longer working hours, which demand 60-hour work weeks. Technological advancement has facilitated flexibility and freed people from daily commuting and traditional offices (Sarker, Xiao, Sarker, & Ahuja, 2012). According to Schieman, Milkie, and Glavin (2009), technological devices make it possible for jobs tasks to be performed in a variety of locations away from the centralised organisational office.

Although technology has advanced and changed job demands, individual and societal expectations are still traditional. According to Greenhaus and Kossek (2014), the increase in flexible work arrangements, the raising number of women in the workforce and generational shifts in work values have led to increased relatedness between work and non-work domains. However, society still expects women to care for their ageing parents, keep the spark alive in their marriages, and never miss a child activity (Brink & De la Rey, 2001; Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010; Rost & Mostert, 2007). Rezvani

(2010) found that this increased pressure to work around the clock is one of the reasons for women leaving the corporate world in search of a more accommodating lifestyle.

### **3.5.2 Globalisation of markets**

Globalisation has adverse effects on wages, income and generally on jobs (Ranjan, 2016), which in turn has an effect on workers' lives. The globalisation of business and increased competition have driven companies further towards profit maximisation, usually at the expense of the individual (Hsu et al., 2019).

Juggling the demands of a career and personal life seems to be no easy feat. Maintaining a healthy and balanced lifestyle became especially difficult during recessions when employees were expected to do more with less, and even as things improve, this challenge persists (Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010; Jonck et al., 2017; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Nizam & Kam, 2018; Rezvani, 2010). In addition to work, life comprises a highly diverse assortment of activities, ranging from family commitments to hobbies and pursuits. Members of today's highly mobile households must balance their schedules, interests and life demands on a daily basis (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014; SkillSoft, 2011). For international and globalised organisations to understand the implications for individuals and their well-being, the defining characteristics of generations, including their start and end years, and events they experienced, must be considered when looking at WLB in the current world of work (Constanza & Finkelstein, 2015).

### **3.5.3 Change in workforce demographics across the generations**

Better technology, wider dissemination of knowledge, lifelong learning, better nutrition and improved healthcare, as well as higher standards of living generally have all had dramatic influences on population demographics over the past few decades (Constanza & Finkelstein, 2015; King et al., 2019). Welch and Welch (2005) noted that in the 1960s and 1970s, most employees and direct reports were men. Although most of them were fathers, their wives did not have jobs with their own competing demands. In general, it was assumed that wives stayed at home to make everything run smoothly. Pleck (1993) reports all that started to change in the 1980s when women started advancing in the workforce. Research by Meister and Willyerd (2012) predicted

that by the end of 2020, there would be more businesses started up by women and a major increase in professional positions by women. Researchers have also found that there are a large number of women competing in the workplace (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Subramaniam, Overton, & Maniam, 2015).

The South African Board for People Practices Women's Report for 2011 (SABPP, 2011), reports that more women in South Africa are entering the workforce in order to aid, amongst others, gender transformation and empowerment of women. As women enter higher professional positions, it has been shown that focus on business success shifted from monetary gain to more positive psychology constructs, such as social responsibility and personal growth and effectiveness (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012). This would imply a shift away from traditional monetary incentives to bringing in a more people-driven culture and measurement. In her research, Rezvani (2010) targeted her advice on WLB specifically on Generation X and Y women, who are in the current marketplace and can benefit most from the experiences from older generations who have been in the workplace before them. In her research, Rezvani found networking, negotiating, managing office politics, and 'integrating' rather than 'balancing' work and personal life, enhanced satisfaction, and overall well-being across all the generations in the current world of work.

Furthermore, employment equity policies and the high cost of living in South Africa have led to increased working opportunities and have encouraged more women to enter the labour market rapidly (Jacobs et al., 2008; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Rost & Mostert, 2007; Van Aarde & Mostert, 2008). South African women also appear to place considerable emphasis on other domains, which, according to Grzywacz and Carlson (2007), will increasingly create stress associated with investing time (time balance), energy (involvement balance) and resources in multiple life roles (satisfaction balance). The nature of the diverse South African nation implies that we need to understand how different groups of women in the South African context assign meaning to their life roles, and how they anticipate integrating those roles (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014).

Maroun (2013) reports that feminism in the workplace has certainly changed and evolved since the sixties. The feminist energy embraced today by businesses is an emotional state and a consciousness, which was previously absent from the work

environment. Not only does it embrace the value of female energy in the workplace, but it also acknowledges the strength of the highly popularised economy, which focuses on personal effectiveness and overall well-being. Business is seeing an end of competitive feminism, patriarchal dominance, and one-dimensional identity (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014). Feminine characteristics and concepts such as reinvention and renewal, inspirations and elevation, connection and nurturance are now at the forefront (Maroun, 2013). The real challenge now is for business leaders to find a way to take advantage of this exiting female energy across the various generations (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012).

Maroun (2013) furthermore reported that the skills shortage will be acute globally, and women will be key in filling this gap. How and where they work will be a differentiating factor. If people are able to work remotely, employees could be working for international companies in the comfort of their own homes in their chosen places of residence. Knowledge workers will be of high value and they will have the ability to choose their office space, working hours and other working conditions (SkillSoft, 2011). Flexibility will become a key concept in achieving WLB (Loretto & Vickerstaff, 2015; Rezvani, 2010; Warren, 2016).

Because women are becoming more career-orientated, with higher educational aspirations and greater extrinsic ambitions, they are the individuals who will most likely face the challenge of WLB (Casale, 2004; Casale & Posel, 2002). Rezvani (2010) reports that the idea of 'having it all', is not only misleading but also demoralising. Prakash (2018) observes the way in which gender, marital status and having children have some influence on employees meeting the demands from work and their personal life. It was found that women with children felt emotionally too drained to concentrate on personal life if they had a preference for personal care. The drive towards humanistic and positive psychology in the current world of work, could seduce individuals with these idealisations of 'having it all'. However, it is worth noting that men also struggle with WLB (Hayman, 2013; Powell & Greenhaus, 2010; Prakash, 2018).

#### **3.5.4. Various generations in the workplace**

While organisations continue to face a variety of diversity issues, an element very

important and current is that of age diversity. There are four, soon to be five generations (as discussed in Chapter 2) working side by side, each bringing different sets of values, beliefs and expectations of WLB. These workforce demographics coupled with the rapid advancement in digital technology are shaping the workplace of the future. Datasets collected by researchers have shown that WLB is favoured by all generations in the current workplace (Constanza & Finkelstein, 2015; Maroun, 2013; Twenge et al., 2010; Weeks et al., 2017).

According to Freedman (2011), conventional thinking about typical lifespan no longer applies. No longer young, the Baby Boomers are considering new possibilities as they realise they are not ready to retire but still want to live a quality life. Generation X is trying to balance the personal and external demands of quality and quantity time between work and life, whilst Generation Y has never known a world without the focus on WLB (Amayah & Gedro, 2014; Sullivan, Forret, Carraher, & Mainiero, 2009; Twenge et al., 2010; Urick et al., 2016).

### **3.5.5 The traditional work–family balance changing**

The term ‘WLB’ has replaced what used to be known as ‘work–family balance’ (Veiga, 2009). Although the concept of family has broadened to encompass extended families, shared parenting, same-sex relationships and a wide range of social and support networks and communities, the semantic shift from work-family to work-life arises from a recognition that care of dependent children is by no means the only important non-work function (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Prakash, 2018). Other life activities that need to be balanced with work may include study, sport and exercise, volunteer work, hobbies, or care of the elderly.

The universal adoption of the term ‘work–life’, as distinct from ‘work–family’ has other positive consequences, such as legitimising non-standard work arrangements for a diverse range of employees (Hudson Global Resources, 2005; Prakash, 2018). For example, although a lack of WLB is often associated with either working mothers or white-collar executives working long hours, there is a growing recognition that other groups may experience less than optimal WLB (Donald & Linington, 2008; Pareek & Bagrecha, 2017; Potgieter & Barnard, 2010; Warren, 2016). Reports suggest that, in addition to large numbers of unemployed people who cannot find any paid work, many

workers are 'under-employed', preferring more paid work than is available. Blue-collar workers, the self-employed and those earning low hourly rates may also struggle to achieve positive balance (Hudson Global Resources, 2005; Van der Merwe, 2009).

According to Merrill and Merrill (2003), for many people, the primary reason for working is economic. Hence Warren's (2016) argument that financial security is a fundamental prerequisite to attaining WLB, although this aspect of WLB has not been given much attention in research. People need to pay debts and bills that cause much of the pain around the issue of balance. The fear of losing a job makes people feel trapped and compelled to work long hours. Van der Merwe (2009) reports that other people work for a sense of personal fulfilment and self-worth. Further, working to provide for those you love is one of the highest, noblest and most fulfilling motives. It is not work and family that are at odds, but the cultural notion of an individual and the focus on materialistic 'stuff' that causes much of the negative balance and dissatisfaction. Work should be considered 'our work' – work for the whole family.

Dual-worker families and single-parent families usually feel the pressure to work outside the home to meet economic expectations, and therefore can see work as a necessary evil (Brink & De la Rey, 2001; Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010; Van der Merwe, 2005; Warren, 2016). In other situations, although basic economic needs must be met, it often seems easier to spend more time outside the home, at work, than to deal with the mental, social and spiritual needs that require attention at home. In all circumstances, serious consideration should be given to whether the money is worth the sacrifice (Merrill & Merrill, 2003).

Maroun (2013) predicts that the traditional nuclear family will decrease drastically in prevalence. Being a single parent is no longer seen as a life sentence or as a disability of sorts, and women tend to opt to raise children on their own, choosing to stay single longer, or not to get married at all. A rising prevalence of single-parent homes and a Generation Y that values personal time and flexibility, coupled with the benefits of technological advancements, have already been observed (Smith, 2010; Smola & Sutton, 2002, Urick et al., 2016).

Researchers have predicted that in the future, people will structure their work lives in the way they want to (Copp, 2012; Hsu et al., 2019; King et al., 2019; Mageni &

Slabbert, 2014; Prakash, 2018; Veiga, 2009; Weeks et al., 2017). They will no longer be expected to work a traditional week, but will rather shape their work around their lives, focusing on delivery rather than hours of work completed (Amayah & Gedro, 2014; Rezvani, 2010; Warren, 2016). These researchers have also predicted that there would be a rise in services that provide flexibility to every kind of family structure.

### **3.6. RELEVANCE OF WLB AS CONSTRUCT TO THIS RESEARCH**

Researchers and industrial and organisational psychologists are often faced with the question whether WLB matters (Copp, 2012; Greenhaus & Powell 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Nizam & Kam, 2018). The study of WLB involves the examination of an individual's ability to manage the multi-faceted demands of life simultaneously (Guest, 2001). Research by Welch and Welch (2005), involving 9 000 people from around the world, revealed some more interesting results. Employees who reported having a healthy WLB stayed in their jobs twice as long as their least happy colleagues, spent double their time at work focused on what they were paid to do, took ten times less sick leave, and believed they were achieving their potential twice as much, which led to even higher overall life satisfaction (Welch & Welch, 2005).

The increased interest in international trends on employee and organisational wellness, which emphasises WLB (Constanza & Finkelstein, 2015; Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001), has caused a significant shift in the workplace towards WLB and quality of life (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Parkes & Langford, 2008; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2009). This has been due to the increased interest in both research and literature on WLB issues internationally (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003; Kalliath & Brough, 2008; Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010; Munn & Chaudhuri, 2016; Tasdelen-Karckay & Bakalim, 2017) as well as in South Africa (Hofmeyr & Mzobe, 2012; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; McLellan & Uys, 2009; Mostert & Oldfield, 2009; Van Aarde & Mostert, 2008).

In general, expectations about the availability in the workplace have changed in terms of when and where individuals are contactable, and the speed at which they must respond. It is expected that decisions will be made in a fraction of the time and that less time will be spent on the directions of career paths (Friedenberg, Steiner, & Hannigan, 2008; Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014; Meister & Willyerd, 2012). Along with

that, the individual is expected to have a lifestyle that makes him or her feel satisfied and rounded as a human being. However, work commitments now affect the entire life and all people around the individual. The result has been that individuals are losing touch with what they really want from their occupations and how they want to manage their lives (Constanza & Finkelstein, 2015; Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014; Meister & Willyerd, 2012). This leaves many individuals frustrated, unmotivated, unfulfilled and dissatisfied. Work affects the state of mind and, unless conscious action is taken to create positive WLB by bringing in change to combat the evolving nature of work and its demands, stress on the individual will increase (Cilliers & Flotman, 2016; Greenhaus et al., 2003; Luthans, 2012; Merrill & Merrill, 2003; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015; Veiga 2009). Societal expectations also mount pressure on women to succumb to the demands of society and could result in individuals choosing their work over their personal needs, wishes and plans.

When individuals begin to assess their WLB, they are actually analysing whether they have an acceptable share of time available between their needs and those of others around them. When individuals achieve a healthy WLB, they feel as if they are in control of their lives and are to organise life around what is most important to them, creating EWB, social wellness and internal locus of control (Seligman, 2011).

The next chapter will conceptualise the construct of SWB and the relationship to WLB across generations.

### **3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter conceptualised WLB as a construct of this study. Different theoretical approaches were discussed followed by a description of WLB in the world of work. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the relevance of the construct to this study.

## CHAPTER 4: SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present a conceptualisation of the construct of SWB by defining the construct, reviewing theoretical approaches, describing the construct components, and integrating the relevance of the construct to this research.

### 4.2 DEFINING SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING (SWB)

Well-being is generally divided into psychological well-being (PWB), which focuses on achieving individual full potential and subjective well-being (SWB), which focuses on positive effects and the absence of negative effects (Ryan & Deci, 2001). SWB and PWB are empirically distinct concepts. Research has documented various synchronic and diachronic benefits for both SWB and PWB (Hill & Turiano, 2014; Keyes, Dhingra, & Simoes, 2010). PWB is defined as the positive relationships with others, personal mastery, autonomy, a feeling of purpose and **meaning** in life, and personal growth and development (Ryff, 1989). It is attained by achieving a state of balance affected by both challenging and rewarding life events (Dodge, Daly, Huyton, & Sanders (2012)). SWB encompasses moods and emotions as well as evaluations of one's satisfaction with general and specific areas of one's life. Concepts encompassed by SWB include happiness (Diener & Ryan, 2008).

This study focused on SWB, which refers to how individuals assess or appraise their own lives (Diener et al., 2017). These assessments can be based on both cognitive and emotional responses (Pavot & Diener, 2004). SWB studies satisfaction generally, as well as a sense of satisfaction to the individual's standard. Petrides (2009) defines SWB as a generalised sense of well-being extending from previous achievements to future expectations, feeling positive, happy and fulfilled. Dagenais-Desmarais and Savoie (2012) define SWB in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance. Hoffmann-Burdzinska and Rutkowska (2015) define SWB as overall life satisfaction with the absence of negative moods and the presence of positive moods. Diener et al. (2017) simply define SWB as people's overall evaluation of their lives and their emotional experiences.

SWB is a function of multiple elements, each of which can be measured individually

and then applied holistically with one another to achieve overall well-being (Frey & Stutzer, 2012). There are a number of internal and external influences on SWB. These include:

- individual influences (e.g. self-esteem, optimism or other personality traits);
- sociodemographic influences (such as gender, age, education or marital status);
- economic influences (such as status, type of work, or unemployment);
- situational influences (such as health, social relationships); and
- institutional influences (such as company culture and economy)

Many researchers have studied the outcomes of SWB. It was found that individuals with high SWB are more likely to be healthier and live longer, to have better social relationships, and to be more productive at work. These individuals were more effective leaders and more creative, they had a longer life expectancy, higher self-esteem and more appreciation of others, as well as a reduction in mental illness (Diener, 2000b; Eid & Larsen, 2008). In studying SWB, researchers observe factors that lead individuals to think and experience their lives in a positive way versus negative ways (Diener et al., 2018). These factors are observed and studied from different theoretical approaches and models, which are discussed in 4.3 below.

### **4.3 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO SWB**

Research on well-being is derived from the eudemonic and hedonic theories (Keyes, 2007; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015).

The eudemonic approach considers PWB in terms of optimal functioning, meaning and self-realisation. Eudemonic well-being (seen as a type of well-being) comprises variables such as meaning and purpose in life, supportive social relationships, and feelings of mastery. (Waterman, 1993). Eudemonic well-being deals with human potential and embodies the importance of self-truth and striving toward an excellence consistent with innate potentialities (Ryff, 2017). Therefore, eudemonic theories frame well-being as synonymous with the prevalence of a certain set of fixed characteristics of individuals or higher-level units and are seen as an objective and classic approach. This approach of well-being is not associated with attributes individuals may or may not have, but rather with being able to live an autonomous, self-determined life. The

principle of this approach is that individuals make decisions based on their genuine goals, rather than trying to simply comply with external pressures.

The hedonistic approach is seen as a subjective approach and focuses on maximising pleasure and minimising pain (Peterson, 2000). Hedonistic theories study what makes events and life pleasant or unpleasant, interesting or boring, joyous or sorrowful, and engage with cognitive evaluations of individuals themselves (Diener et al., 2017). This approach views SWB as the central defining value when it comes to human welfare (Binder, 2010). The hedonic approach considers PWB in terms of happiness and life satisfaction and uses SWB as an evaluation of the human experience (Dagenais-Desmarais & Savoie, 2012; Diener, 2000a; Ryff, 2017). In this approach, an individual's well-being is the theoretical sum of all momentary feelings of good or bad effect (Kahneman, Diener, Schwarz, 1999).

Relevant, well accepted and readily applied models of well-being were found in the literature and are described in 4.3.1, 4.3.2, 4.3.3, 4.3.4 and 4.3.5.

#### 4.3.1 Ryff's model

Ryff (1989) developed a theory-based model comprising six factors or dimensions, namely autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. **Autonomy** refers to the degree of independence in one's decision-making, and the way one acts in the face of social and cultural norms. **Environmental mastery** is the extent to which one can choose one's environments and adapt them to match one's needs and desires. **Personal growth** elevates life trajectory and continual development, requiring that one constantly seeks new challenges and experiences to catalyse one's growth. **Positive relations** with others refer to the health of one's interpersonal life and the ability to love and empathise. **Purpose in life** refers to the goals and avenues through which one can effect change only in the present, but is adaptable to time and changing conditions. **Self-acceptance** is defined as the awareness of one's good qualities and acknowledgement and forgiveness of the bad.

Furthermore, this model of well-being was formulated based on elements of clinical, developmental, existential and social psychology, which became core components of the model (Ryff, 2017). Ryff's (1989) structure of well-being was later revisited and

elaborated by Ryff and Keyes (1995), who tested the dimensions of wellness and replicated prior results. Over the years, this model has been used extensively and is cited widely in academic literature (Ryff, 2017; Ryff & Singer, 2006, 2008; Springer, Pudrovska, & Hauser, 2011).

Ryff and Singer (2006) contend that the central purpose of the original study by Ryff (1989) was to generate a theory-based empirical approach to what it means to be mentally healthy. According to Ryff and Singer (2008), results from Ryff's 1989 model indicate that well-being "is profoundly influenced by the surrounding contexts of people's lives, and as such, that the opportunities for self-realisation are not equally distributed" (Ryff & Singer, 2008, p. 13).

#### **4.3.2 Diener's model**

Diener's (1984) tripartite model of SWB was developed on the principle that SWB can be empirically measured, and the hypothesis that there is a genetic basis for positive affect in human beings (Diener, 2000b). According to Diener (2009c), humans are not only capable of appraising events, life circumstances, and themselves (in terms of goodness or badness), but they make such appraisals continually, and these appraisals are universal.

A person evaluates situations as either as good and desirable or as undesirable and negative, and these evaluations are cognitive reflections or affect. Diener's (1984) model is based on the indicators of –

- positive affect (pleasurable feelings), such as feelings of confidence, interest, hope, pride and joy;
- negative affect (painful feelings), such as feelings of rage, hate, guilt and sadness; and
- life satisfaction (the individual's reflective judgement that his or her life is going well) (Diener & Ryan, 2008).

Life satisfaction is firstly composed of the imperfect assessment of balance of positive and negative effect on the individual, and secondly, the assessment of how well the individual's life measures up to aspirations and goals. Due to the principle of hedonic adaptation, individuals are able to revert quickly to their 'set level' of happiness (Diener et al., 2017).

Diener and Ryan (2008, p. 392) state, “although well-being is subjective in that it occurs within a person’s experience, manifestations of subjective well-being can be measured objectively in verbal and non-verbal behaviour, actions, biology, attention, and memory”. However, in a recent review of research on SWB, Diener et al. (2018, p. 8) concluded, “although there is no doubt that genes play a role in individual differences of SWB, more research needs to explicate the biological mechanisms underlying the genetic effects”.

### 4.3.3 Seligman’s model

This model is called the PERMA model (Seligman, 2006), and consists of the components of:

- **positive emotions and pleasure** (the ability to be optimistic, happy and joyful and to view the past, present, and future from a positive perspective);
- **engagement** (being absorbed in the moment, creating a ‘flow’ of blissful immersion in the task or activity);
- **relationships** (building positive relationships with one’s parents, siblings, peers and friends, and spreading love and joy);
- **meaning** (pursuit of meaning and purpose in life); and
- **achievement** (having goals and ambition in life and a sense of accomplishment).

A combination of these five indicators of well-being is purported to give rise to human flourishing (Goodman, Disabato, Kashdan, & Barry, 2018).

Seligman (2011) argues that his model integrates components of hedonia and eudemonia into one model, and that most prior models included either one or the other. However, results from the Goodman et al. (2018) study suggest that the PERMA model and Diener’s SWB model (1984) capture the same type of well-being when measured with self-report scales. Furthermore, there seems to be a lack of empirical rationale regarding why these particular five components of PERMA were chosen above other facets (Goodman et al., 2018).

#### 4.3.4 Keyes's mental health continuum model

Keyes's model (2002) combined Diener's SWB dimensions (1984) with Ryff's PWB dimensions (1989), and further included another type of well-being, which is social well-being (Goodman et al., 2018). The mental health continuum model (Keyes, 2002) considers the components of:

- **positive emotions** (interest in life and satisfaction with life);
- **PWB** (self-acceptance, autonomy, personal growth, positive relations, environmental mastery and purpose in life); and
- **SoWB** (social coherence, social actualisation, social integration, social acceptance, and social contribution) (Keyes, 2007; Keyes et al., 2008).

According to (Keyes, 2002) SWB includes measures of the absence and presence of positive functioning in life, which is related to mental health. The two mental health positions represented on the continuum are flourishing in life and languishing. The mental health continuum consists of complete and incomplete mental health, where individuals with 'complete mental health' are flourishing in life with high levels of well-being. On the other hand, individuals or adults with 'incomplete mental health' are regarded as languishing with low levels of well-being. Therefore, for a person to be diagnosed as flourishing in life, such person must show high levels on at least one measure of hedonic well-being and high levels on at least six measures of positive functioning (Keyes et al., 2008).

The mental health continuum model (Keyes, 2002) views mental health not as the absence of psychopathology but rather in terms of positivity and SWB (Keyes et al., 2008). Furthermore, PWB is concerned with how individuals view themselves functioning as individuals (i.e. **I** or **me**), while SWB represents how individuals view themselves functioning as collectives in social contexts (i.e. **We** and **Us**).

#### 4.3.5. Petrides's model

Petrides's model of emotional intelligence (2009) is based on a generalised sense of well-being, extending from previous achievements to future expectations, and includes facets of **happiness** (pleasant emotional states in the present), **optimism** (the extent

to which the individual views the future positively), and **self-esteem** (how confident an individual is, and his or her levels of self-respect (Petrides, 2009, 2012).

The researcher found that these five models share important underlying notions. Firstly, it was found that well-being and happiness are not synonymous. The models distinguish between these two constructs, and conceptually treat happiness as having to do with an emotional state or satisfaction with life, whereas well-being is seen as be a broader term, more along the lines of positive psychological functioning. Secondly, well-being is seen as a multifaceted construct consisting of multiple elements, each of which can be individually measured and then holistically applied with one another to achieve overall well-being. Thirdly, SWB has 'construct validity' because it measures something real in the human psyche. The reason for this is that the measures given for SWB seem to be constant over time, they are highly correlated with certain personality traits, and they have the ability to predict future outcomes. Lastly, SWB is associated with the positive psychology constructs of happiness, optimism, self-esteem and engagement.

#### **4.4 HOW IS SWB MEASURED**

According to Diener and Ryan (2008, p. 391), "although well-being is subjective in that it occurs within a person's experience, manifestations of subjective well-being can be measured objectively in verbal and non-verbal behaviour, actions, biology, attention, and memory". When psychologists measure SWB, they are measuring how people think and feel about their lives. Furthermore, research (Lucas & Dyrenforth, 2006), has shown that the measurement of SWB can be influenced by a number of factors, such as situational factors, the type of scales that are used, the order in which the items are presented, and the mood of the respondent at the time when the measurement was taken.

SWB is primarily measured by way of a self-report survey where the individual responds to numbered scales to indicate his or her levels of satisfaction, positive feelings, and lack of negative feelings (Angner, 2010). The responses refer to past experience and future expectations. According to Grzywacz et al. (2002), SWB is measured by the individual's judgement in relation to his or life satisfaction as well as objective measures of physical health. Thus, measures of SBW are an individual's

own aggregate judgement of his or her life situation and, as well-being is a subjective psychological quality, it can be subject to measurement imprecision and bias (Frey & Stutzer, 2012).

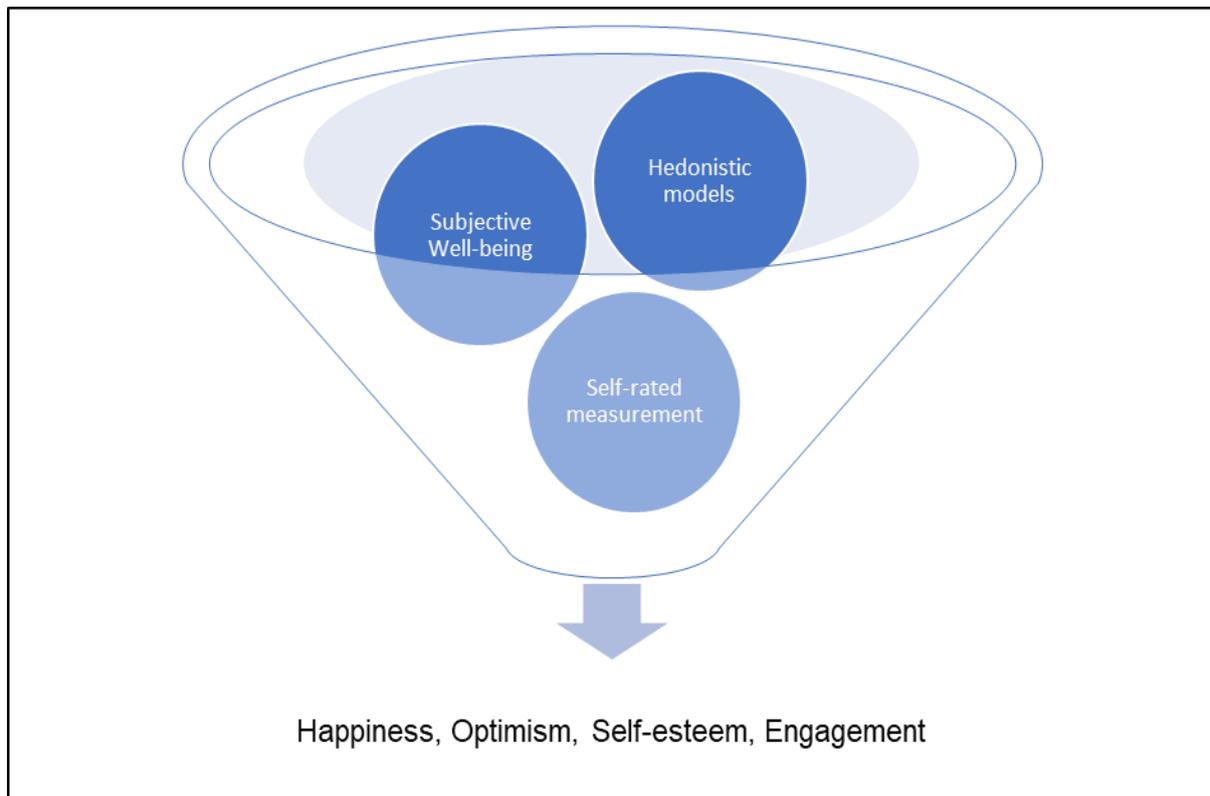
Diener, Inglehart, and Tay (2012), however, found that the self-report scales measuring life satisfaction, positive and negative feelings, and whether a person is psychologically flourishing, proved to be relatively valid. Although the hedonistic approach engages with individual feelings and represents a form of subjectivity, it effectively turns something subjective into a directly measurable concept. SWB is generally measured as high or low. An individual exhibiting high SWB will have a positive affect, which means such person experiences high levels of positive emotions (e.g. happiness, optimism and joy), low levels of negative moods, and high levels of life satisfaction. According to Petrides (2012), individuals with high SWB feel positive, happy and fulfilled. If individuals have more experiences that give pleasure than pain, they are considered to have higher SWB (Diener, 2000b). Individuals who measure high levels of happiness are cheerful and feel good about themselves, whilst individuals with high optimism levels look on the bright side of life and expect positive things to happen in their life (Petrides, 2012).

Individuals with high levels of SWB have a positive view of themselves and their achievements, and they are confident, positive and satisfied with most aspects of their lives. These all resemble the characteristics of flourishing individuals (Keyes, 2007; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015). In contrast, individuals with low SWB tend to have low self-regard and to be disappointed about their life at present (Petrides, 2012). Individuals with low happiness levels often feel downcast and can be overly negative about things. Individuals with low optimism are pessimistic, and view things from a negative perspective. They are less likely to be able to identify and pursue new opportunities and tend to be risk adverse. Individuals with low self-esteem tend to lack self-respect, and do not value themselves very highly. These all resemble the characteristics of languishing individuals (Keyes, 2007; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015). It is important to note that the presence of positive affect does not automatically imply the absence of negative affect, and vice versa.

For this study, the concept of SWB fell within the **hedonic** approach, as the approach is defined as being fundamentally about maximising pleasure and avoiding or

minimising pain. The researcher decided to measure SWB according to the hedonistic approach using a self-rated instrument, measuring the components of happiness, optimism, self-esteem and engagement as positive psychology constructs.

This is depicted as a theoretical funnel in Figure 4.1.



*Figure 4.1: SWB theoretical funnel (Source: Author's own compilation)*

This approach was specifically chosen –

- in terms of the relevance to generations and WLB;
- because it considers the here and now; and
- it takes into account past experiences and future perceptions that an individual perceives at a certain time.

#### **4.5 DESCRIBING THE RELEVANT CONSTRUCT COMPONENTS**

Positive psychology studies at individual level include individual characteristics, such as well-being (Lyubomirsky, 2001), human strengths, such as emotional intelligence, self-esteem (Lopez & Snyder, 2003) and engagement (Rothmann, 2002). It

furthermore includes emotional experiences in the present, such as happiness (Buss, 2000; Diener, 2000a); and constructive cognitions about the future, such as optimism (Peterson, 2000; Schneider, 2001).

Research also shows a relationship between SWB and physiological functioning in the workplace (Kuykendall & Tay, 2015). Kuykendall and Tay (2015) built an integrating positive psychology and occupational stress perspective to explain this relationship as a result of the direct influence of SWB on physiological functioning and of the common relationships with work stress and personal resources. Both work stress and personal resources are seen to be influenced by job conditions. Diener et al.'s (2018) review of SWB research revealed that a subjective sense of happiness and life satisfaction is beneficial for the effective functioning of the individual as well as society.

It is generally agreed that WLB is important for an individual's PWB, and that high self-esteem, happiness, optimism, and engagement as SWB components, can be regarded as indicators of a successful balance between work and other life roles (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004; Kuykendall & Tay, 2015). The researcher decided to focus on these components, as they seemed to make up an encompassing picture of the past, present and future experiences and perceptions of individuals. These components have also all been studied in isolation, but not as a composition of the well-being construct. Each of these chosen components and their relevance will be described in detail in sections 4.5.1 \_4.5.4.

#### **4.5.1 Happiness**

The increased interest in positive psychology has led to research regarding the concept of happiness (Diener, 2009a; Furnham & Petrides, 2003; Ötken & Erben, 2013; Seligman, 2011). Suh and Koo (2008) report that seeking happiness is a global desire but found that there were cultural differences in the perception of happiness. Happiness is a psychological concept with several definitions and dimensions. Although there is no universal definition of happiness, various researchers have defined the term. Happiness is often used interchangeably with SWB (Diener, 2009b). However, to psychologists and researchers, it has a more broader ranging description. In the field of positive psychology, happiness is viewed as the positive emotion that is

deeper than a good temporary mood. The hedonic view defines happiness as the maximising of pleasure and avoiding pain, dealing with the frequency and intensity of pleasant and unpleasant emotions (Baer & Lykins, 2011; Petrides, 2009; Seligman, 2011; Sheldon, Kashdan, & Steger, 2012).

The concept of happiness is an important contributor to SWB (Diener et al., 2008; Park et al., 2009) and has been used interchangeably with SWB in research (Diener, 2009b). Happiness correlates positively with extraversion and job motivation, and negatively with neuroticism and depression (Petrides, 2009). It has been found that happiness activates brain regions associated with pleasure, positive appraisals of life satisfaction and meaning, and social connectedness (Kringelbach & Berridge, 2010). Happiness is affected by both work satisfaction and family life satisfaction (Spector et al., 2004).

Researchers, such as Bandura (1993), have found that gender, income, marital status, education level, job satisfaction, health-promoting education and increased knowledge are the main effective factors on individual happiness. Diener (2000a) also found that the effective factor of individual happiness is dissimilar in various cultures. Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, and Schkade (2005) found that happiness is influenced by three types of variables, namely happiness-relevant life circumstances, such as marriage and employment status, a genetically determined set point for happiness, and the extent to which an individual engages in activities that would increase happiness. Roysamb, Tambs, Reichborn-Kjennerud, Neale, and Harris (2003) found that age groups were an important factor influencing happiness in individuals. It was also found that increasing age was associated with increasing levels of happiness, and other studies confirmed the relationship between age and happiness (Veenhoven, 2010). Another study by Furnham and Petrides (2003, p. 820) showed that a number of variance is determined by emotion-related dispositions and self-perceptions like, for example, emotion regulation, relationship skills, and social competence. From the above review, one can conclude that there are different influencers on people experiencing a happy life.

Furthermore, specific to this research, positive relationships between WLB and happiness of Generations X & Y (Ötken & Erben, 2013) were found. While studying the relationship between WLB and happiness, it should be taken into consideration

that generation difference is an important variable to take into consideration, as generations differ based on their characteristics, life and work values and attitudes.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defined happiness as pleasant states primarily directed towards the present, and the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) developed by Petrides (2009), was used to measure happiness. The current study proposed that happiness should be studied in relation to the likelihood that individuals would experience WLB and its contribution to SWB.

#### **4.5.2 Optimism**

Optimism has been seen as another dimension of SWB, which often correlates with positive affect, but also includes positive expectations about the future (Diener et al., 2017). The term 'optimism' refers to an emotional and psychological perspective on life (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). It is a positive frame of mind and means that a person takes the view of expecting the best outcome from any given situation (Schutte & Malouff, 2011).

Various definitions of optimism were found in the literature (Carver, Scheier, & Segerstrom, 2010; Petrides, 2009; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015; Seligman, 2011). From these definitions, it was derived that optimism is a learned reaction and the generalised expectancy of positive outcomes across situations and domains. It is the tendency to expect, hope, view and believe that the future will turn out well (Schutte & Malouff, 2011, Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009).

Diener et al. (2017) found that optimism was one of the personality traits that correlated significantly with SWB. They also found that optimism related to positive psychological and physical outcomes and led to sustained efforts to achieve goals. Higher levels of optimism related to lower levels of psychological distress, while lower levels of optimism related to reports of more distress in some difficult situations (Carver et al., 2010). Carver et al.'s (2010) review of optimism studies showed the many ways in which optimism promotes health and EWB. The subsequent review by Carver and Scheier (2015) also reported a relationship between health and optimism, and noted that much of the optimism research has been conducted in the health-related context as people transition from health-related crises.

If available knowledge is used effectively, optimism can improve undesirable situations by viewing setbacks as temporary in nature, and positive results as permanent (Seligman, 2006). Optimism has been related positively to good mood, perseverance and achievements, and it is seen to have a direct influence on burnout and ill health (Rothmann & Essenko, 2007). Optimistic employees will try to achieve results and improve personal effectiveness and productivity, and they show trust in their own abilities (Sweetman & Luthans, 2010). A positive relationship between optimism and employee engagement and performance has been found (Medlin & Faulk, 2011). Optimism correlates positively with extraversion, job satisfaction and life satisfaction, and negatively with neuroticism and depression (Petrides, 2012).

Optimism has some relationships to heredity but is heavily influenced by health and environmental factors (Carver et al., 2010). Twin studies have suggested that optimism is influenced by a combination of genetic influences, environmental influences, and their interplay (Plomin, Defries, & Knopik, 2013). Seligman (1991) found that optimism can be influenced and learned by experience, and it can be improved by changing behaviour through –

- disputing (refuting pessimistic notions);
- reframing (finding the original, beneficial intent behind an action, then using it to change a behaviour); and
- active-constructive responding (listening to others' good news that encourages them to savour the positive emotion).

Previous research by Carver and Scheier (2015) suggests that optimism accounts for individual differences in adjustment.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defined optimism as looking at the bright side and expecting positive things to happen in life, as the TEIQue, developed by Petrides (2009), was used to measure optimism. The current study proposed that optimism should be studied in relation to the likelihood that individuals would experience WLB and its contribution to SWB.

#### **4.5.3 Self-esteem**

Self-esteem is the understanding an individual creates of his or her worth, based on emotions and beliefs about how he or she fits into or performs in any given situation

in life (Seligman, 2006). It is a fluid idea and can change frequently (Adler & Stewart, 2004). Self-esteem is attractive as a social psychological construct because researchers have conceptualised it as an influential predictor of certain outcomes, such as SWB (Baumeister et al., 2003). From the definitions found in the literature (see Baumeister et al., 2003; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Petrides, 2012; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015), self-esteem refers to individuals' overall evaluations of and confidence in their self-worth, capabilities and competencies in a variety of achievement situations.

Research by Hsieh, 2004 found that self-esteem is a personal resource that is correlated to SWB, buffering against negative emotions, and enhancing personal adjustment. It was also found that the higher the self-esteem, the higher the perceptions of successfully managing WLB (Frone, 2003). Di Paula and Campbell (2002), and Greenhaus and Powell (2006) report that self-esteem could improve quality of life and enhance performance and productivity. Self-esteem can contribute to the effective performance of an individual and also promote personal SWB, by encouraging goal setting and commitment, persistent effort, perseverance, resilience and reduction in stress (Bandura, 2007). Other studies (for instance, Harris & Cameron, 2005) have revealed a positive relationship between organisational commitment and self-esteem. Self-esteem correlates positively with extraversion and life satisfaction, and negatively with neuroticism, anger, and apprehension (Petrides, 2009). There is a relationship between WLB and self-esteem. Rashida et al. (2012) found that the higher the self-esteem of an individual, the better the ability of the person to cope with the conflicting demands of work and family roles.

There are different factors and experiences that influence individuals' self-esteem at different stages in their lives. Baumeister et al. (2003) found that experiences in an individual's life and academic achievement are major influences on self-esteem. Raboteg-Saric and Sakic (2014) report that in the early years of an individual's life, parents have a significant influence on self-esteem, and can be considered a main source of positive and negative experiences a child will have. Orth and Robbins (2014) report that multiple cohort studies showed that there is no difference in the lifespan trajectory of self-esteem between generations due to societal changes, such as grade inflation in education or the presence, while Bleidorn, Arslan, Rentfrow, Potter, and

Gosling (2015) found age and gender differences in self-esteem. These latter researchers found age-related increases in self-esteem from late adolescence to middle adulthood, and they further found that male participants consistently reported higher self-esteem than females. Overall, it was found that childhood, society, media, beliefs, friends and family, romantic involvements, work environment, and health all have an influence on self-esteem.

For the purpose of this study, the researcher defined self-esteem as how confident individuals are in themselves, their self-worth, and their capabilities, as the TEIQue developed by Petrides (2009) was used to measure self-esteem. This study proposed that self-esteem should be studied in relation to the likelihood that individuals would experience WLB and its contribution to SWB.

#### **4.5.4 Engagement**

For individuals to flourish, it is necessary for them to be fully engaged (Keyes, 2007; May et al., 2004). It is stated that flourishing will increase contextual performance and engagement at work (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011). Individuals who are highly engaged in their work, are satisfied with their careers and feel a great sense of SWB in their lives (Baek-Kyoo & In Suk, 2017).

The interest in engagement comes as a result of mounting popularity of the positive psychology movement in organisational behaviour, which emphasises positive aspects as opposed to negative psychological states (Luthans, Youssef, & Avolio, 2007, 2015). According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2010), the concept of engagement resonates with the emphasis on positive organisational behaviour (POB), which aims to enhance well-being at work. According to Rothmann (2014), engagement may contribute to the PWB of an individual at work.

As with other concepts defined in this chapter, researchers have developed numerous definitions of the concept of engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010; Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002; Schullery, 2013; Slaski & Cartwright, 2003). Engagement is seen as a fulfilling state of mind characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption when the individual feels energised and absorbed in what he or she does and is dedicated to a role, based on relationships, roles and rewards received (Schaufeli, 2013). Whilst researchers (such as Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010)

define engagement as a state of mind characterised by energy, vigour and absorption in a particular task, for the current study, the researcher viewed engagement as dynamic and interactive, taking into account a holistic, emotional and social process.

There is a direct and much-overlooked link between WLB and employee engagement (Schaufeli, 2013). Individuals who feel they have some flexibility in the way they perform their tasks and take care of their personal responsibilities in life respond in a proactive way that mirrors the engagement outcome every organisation wants (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011). According to Maslach, Schaufeli, and Leiter (2001), six areas of work-life influences engagement, namely workload, control, rewards and recognition, community and social support, perceived fairness and values. They argue that job engagement is associated with a sustainable workload, feelings of choice and control, appropriate recognition and reward, a supportive work community, fairness and justice, and meaningful and valued work. Engagement is expected to mediate the link between these six work-life factors and various work outcomes. May et al. (2004) later supported these results in their study.

Engagement encompasses emotions and behaviours and, despite the existence of common drivers of engagement, different groups and individuals are influenced by different factors. Ferguson (2007) and Robinson (2006) found that individual differences and perceptions of social and physical environments shaped and directed how engaged an individual would be. Emotions and well-being were found to influence engagement. For example, May et al. (2004) found that emotions are a natural feature of an individual's psychological make-up and affect not only individuals' personal lives but also their behaviour at work. More recent work by Slaski (2014) identified seven key factors that influence engagement, namely challenge, freedom and clarity (all related to role), voice and togetherness (related to relationships), recognition and growth (related to reward).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used the definition of Slaski and Cartwright (2003), as the Thomas Engage Survey, developed by Slaski (2014) was used to measure engagement. This study proposed that engagement should be studied in relation to the likelihood that individuals would experience WLB and its contribution to SWB.

#### **4.6. RELEVANCE OF SWB AS CONSTRUCT TO THIS RESEARCH**

SWB has been researched based on demographic factors such as age, education, gender and socio-economic status and significant relationships were reported between SWB and age (Butkovic, Brkovic, & Bratko, 2012; Eryilmaz, 2012; Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska, 2015). SWB was also found to be related to psychological factors, such as internal locus of control and self-esteem (Diener, 2000b; Frone, 2003; Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska, 2015, Hsieh, 2004), and personal resources, such as happiness (Diener et al., 2008; Park et al., 2009; Petrides, 2009) and optimism (Medlin & Faulk, 2011; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Seligman, 2011).

Hoffmann-Burdzinska and Rutkowska (2015) report that the WLB of an individual is one of the factors that affects satisfaction with or happiness in life as a whole, and it can be measured through the construct of SWB. Results have shown that WLB and SWB are strongly connected and have many common areas that can be researched (Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska, 2015). Although both the topics of WLB and SWB have been well researched, more research could be done on the linkage between the two. Researchers generally agree that WLB is related to individual well-being and an overall sense of harmony in life (Clark, 2000). Furthermore, much of the SWB research has been conducted in North America and Europe (Diener et al., 2018); therefore, there is a need for more SWB research in, for instance, Africa. Diener et al. (2018) also note the importance of exploring whether the well-replicated results of research conducted in Europe could be replicated elsewhere. However, the aim of the current study was not to replicate previous results, but rather to build on these results and study the linkage between WLB and SWB in a South African sample from different generations.

#### **4.7. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter conceptualised the construct of SWB, defined the construct, reviewed theoretical approaches, described the relevant components of SWB, and discussed the relevance of the construct to this research.

In the following chapter, the theoretical integration of the literature on the research constructs will be presented.

## CHAPTER 5: THEORETICAL INTEGRATION

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

To conclude the literature study for the previous three chapters (2, 3 & 4), the integration of the constructs of generations, WLB and SWB, is presented in order to conceptualise a theoretical model on the relationships between generations, WLB and SWB as well as the differences in the WLB levels and SWB levels across generations in the current world of work.

By understanding generations and their characteristics, personal effectiveness can be improved, and strategies can be adapted or applied to get the most out of individuals, to make them more productive and help them grow as human beings, which is a principle of the positive psychology paradigm (Antonovsky, 1987; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Strümpfer, 2005). Descriptive studies of generations, even if they are seen as atheoretical, could be used for legitimate organisational improvements in the context of organisational psychology.

Generational labels (or stereotyping) are known by managers and employees, and they affect behaviours and interactions in the workplace (Urlick & Hollensbe, 2014). Managers could gain a deeper understanding of the identified patterns of their employees by listening and looking for evidence of generational characteristics. These stereotypes resonate with managers because they fit as explanations of the workplace dynamics and help satisfy the need for social identity and sense-making (Joshi et al., 2011). The use of generations as a sense-making tool could help individuals push for deeper connections (Lyons et al., 2015; Urlick & Hollensbe, 2014).

However, besides the benefits, generational awareness could also present certain challenges to organisations. It is thus important to understand the role generational differences play in the interaction and relationships between individuals. Kennedy (2002), Bogaert and Vloeberghs (2005) and Bell (2007) warn that, although it is imperative to develop diverse policies and practices for organisations, focusing on diversity will make the concept futile. Instead, generational relationships and differences should be acknowledged and understood, implying knowing employee age profiles, understanding the different cohorts and how they interact, what their shared values and differences are, and what the effect of these will be on work. Biographical

variables could have a significant effect on organisational performance. Organisations and industrial psychologists could benefit from identifying and understanding potential generational relationships and differences (Brink et al., 2015). Thus, as Weiss (2014) suggests, understanding generational identities could be useful for managers and employees in building relationships, increasing efficiency and becoming flourishing individuals.

The study of generations holds the potential to contribute valuable information about the changing nature of work, and even the mere description of intergenerational relationships and differences could help to understand how such relationships and differences could affect change (Lyons & Kuron, 2014). Understanding generations is important for sociological theory because it gives an understanding of how knowledge is transferred from one historical period to another, and thus explains the stability of a social system.

It is much easier, and more pleasant, for researchers and employers to enhance positive WLB, than to spend time dealing with the implications of negative WLB. This requires conceptualising how to enable positive WLB and provides the support needed by different individuals and organisations. Invariably, employers respond negatively to the concept of developing WLB policies within their organisations, because the business case for doing so is unclear, and the strategies with which to achieve success are not readily accessible. Research by the Corporate Executive Board (2012) across the Fortune 500 companies, found that nearly 60% of human resource (HR) executives polled felt satisfied with the work-life services of their organisation, while just 16% of employees felt the same.

This illustrates a fundamental disconnect between individual employee perceptions and HR industry knowledge and perceptions when it comes to WLB benefits. Organisations that most effectively address and close those gaps regarding WLB, stand the best chance of achieving high levels of employee happiness, optimism, satisfaction and engagement (which relate to SWB and flourishing individuals), ensuring the attraction and retention they seek.

## **5.2 THE INTERRELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENERATIONS, WLB AND SWB**

The constructs of generations, WLB and SWB are discussed in this section.

### 5.2.1 Generations and WLB

Understanding the WLB levels for different generations, could promote a positive working environment and at the same time retain happy, fulfilled individuals (Potgieter & Barnard, 2010). If employers do not take the needs of both the organisation and its individuals into consideration, they will open themselves up to having to deal with dissatisfied, unproductive employees, reducing the future commercial sustainability of the company. According to previous research (Frye & Breugh, 2004; Heathfield, 2013; Hudson Global Resources, 2005), low levels of WLB cause:

- perception of decreased control over work and non-work demands;
- less productive people;
- less committed people;
- people who are less satisfied with life;
- people who suffer reduced PWB and poor physical health; and
- people who suffer from mood disorders, anxiety disorders or substance dependency.

However, previous research has also shown there are significant business benefits associated with high levels of WLB (Friedenberg et al., 2008; Guest, 2001; Meister & Willyerd, 2012). It has been reported that employers were experiencing benefits, such as improved recruitment and retention rates, with associated cost savings, reduced absenteeism and sick leave usage, reduction in employee stress and improvements in satisfaction and loyalty. This led to greater flexibility for business operating hours, improved productivity, improved corporate image, and becoming an 'employer of choice' (Friedenberg et al., 2008; Guest, 2001; Meister & Willyerd, 2012).

Whilst business reap the benefits of high WLB levels, employees in such organisations also reported significant benefits, such as being able to manage multiple responsibilities at home, work and in the community effectively without guilt or regret (Brink et al., 2015; Weiss, 2014). They were able to work in flexible ways so that earning an income and managing family commitments became easier, and they felt that they were being part of a supportive workplace that values and trusts staff (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003).

To be the most productive individual, and a happy and fulfilled person means having

a diverse set of interests and high WLB levels (Friedenberg et al., 2008). Satisfactory involvement in multiple roles provides a number of benefits, rather than strain on the individual. Positive balance means that resources, learning, opportunities and support in one domain can be used to enhance optimal functioning in another domain (Carlson et al., 2006; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003).

From the above arguments, it seems that researchers and WLB coaches need to understand what the indicators of positive and negative WLB are. When individuals understand the indicators of each state of balance, they can find strategies and interventions that allow them to keep their centre of control. Knowing what the positive or negative triggers are will help the individual to anticipate stress and to implement solutions proactively in advance. Understanding how the way of work has changed and that all spheres of life are always connected, could help navigate a healthy balance of work and personal lives, and help promote SWB. Researchers need to understand the need to measure, control and optimise positive WLB, and ways to make the necessary changes in individual lives to improve well-being, satisfaction and personal effectiveness to create flourishing individuals.

### **5.2.2 WLB and SWB**

WLB has been found to influence SWB and vice versa (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004; De Klerk & Mostert, 2010; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Gonzalez-Mulé & Cockburn, 2017; Keyes, 2007; McMillan et al., 2011; Nizam & Kam, 2018). Researchers generally agree that WLB is related to individual well-being and an overall sense of harmony in life (Clark, 2000).

Researchers and managers generally recognise that a lack of SWB could potentially affect employees and organisations in negative ways. Studies show that having high WLB levels, or working for companies that promote WLB tend to have a positive influence on improving SWB (Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011; Clark, 2000; Diener et al., 2008; Diener et al., 2017; Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska, 2015; Park et al., 2009).

It is generally agreed that WLB is important for an individual's SWB, and that high self-esteem, satisfaction, and an overall sense of harmony in life could be regarded as indicators of good work-life balance (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004). According to

Kuykendall and Tay (2015), impaired employee SWB, through its influence on physiological processes and subsequently on individual and societal health, could cause a considerable physical and financial burden for individuals and societies.

It has been found that high levels of WLB can improve SWB and personal effectiveness (Barker Caza & Wrzesniewski, 2014; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Warr, 2012; Welch & Welch, 2005). WLB enables individual to feel as if they are paying attention to all the important aspects of their lives, and they consequently feel more optimistic (Heathfield, 2013). If individuals spend the majority of their time on work-related activities and feel as if they are neglecting the other important components of their lives, stress and unhappiness will result.

Merrill and Merrill (2003) report that individuals participating in their research who confirmed experiencing balanced lives, had higher job satisfaction overall, and were productive and motivated workers who enjoyed their work and life interests, making them happier individuals who were more optimistic about the future. According to Millward (2011) and Yeandle (2005), having balance between work and life outside work is encouraged, because it reinforces social values and inclusion, and effective functioning of people and overall well-being (Wayne et al., 2015). WLB plays a role in the satisfaction of individuals and their happiness with life. Hoffmann-Burdzinska and Rutkowska (2015) found that WLB of an individual is one of the factors that affect satisfaction or happiness with life as a whole and can be measured through the construct of SWB. Positive emotions, such as happiness, optimism, self-esteem, and engagement, which are all constructs related to SWB, enhance organisational performance (Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska, 2015; Luthans, 2012).

Industrial and organisational psychologists and organisations need to understand and conceptualise the importance of SWB and the impact of WLB levels and the effects these have on the productivity of the organisation. High WLB levels and high levels of SWB are achieved when people are satisfied with their work and life roles.

### **5.2.3 SWB and generations**

Previous studies have shown that there are also relationships between SWB and generations, and significant relationships were reported between SWB and age (Butkovic et al., 2012; Eryilmaz, 2012; Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska, 2015).

SWB was also found to be related to psychological factors such as:

- internal locus of control and self-esteem (Diener, 2000b; Frone, 2003; Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska, 2015; Hsieh, 2004);
- personal resources, such as happiness (Diener et al., 2008; Park et al., 2009; Petrides, 2009); and
- optimism (Medlin & Faulk, 2011; Rothmann & Essenko, 2007; Seligman, 2011).

### **5.3 DIFFERENCES IN WLB LEVELS AND SWB LEVELS ACROSS THE GENERATIONS IN THE CURRENT WORLD OF WORK**

Researchers in organisational psychology have found that there are certainly some distinctions between older and younger workers, and have found evidence for gradual changes over time in work-related variables, as well as differences in personality characteristics (Ng & Feldman, 2010; Roberts et al., 2006; Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Although theories and consultant-driven interventions that rely on generational similarities and stereotypes exist (Strauss & Howe, 1991; Twenge et al., 2010), very little scientific research focusing on differences could be found (see for instance, Campbell, Campbell, Siedor, & Twenge, 2015; Costanza et al., 2012; Parry & Urwin, 2011).

Whilst the Baby Boomers (born between 1950 and 1969) are faced with children at University and caring for the elderly, this generation has not traditionally prioritised WLB (Lester, Standifer, Schultz, & Windsor, 2012; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010; Zemke, Raines, & Fitzpatrick, 2011). More recently, however, they have been trying to find WLB and seeking more time with their families and personal interests (Campbell et al., 2015; Weeks, Weeks, & Long, 2017).

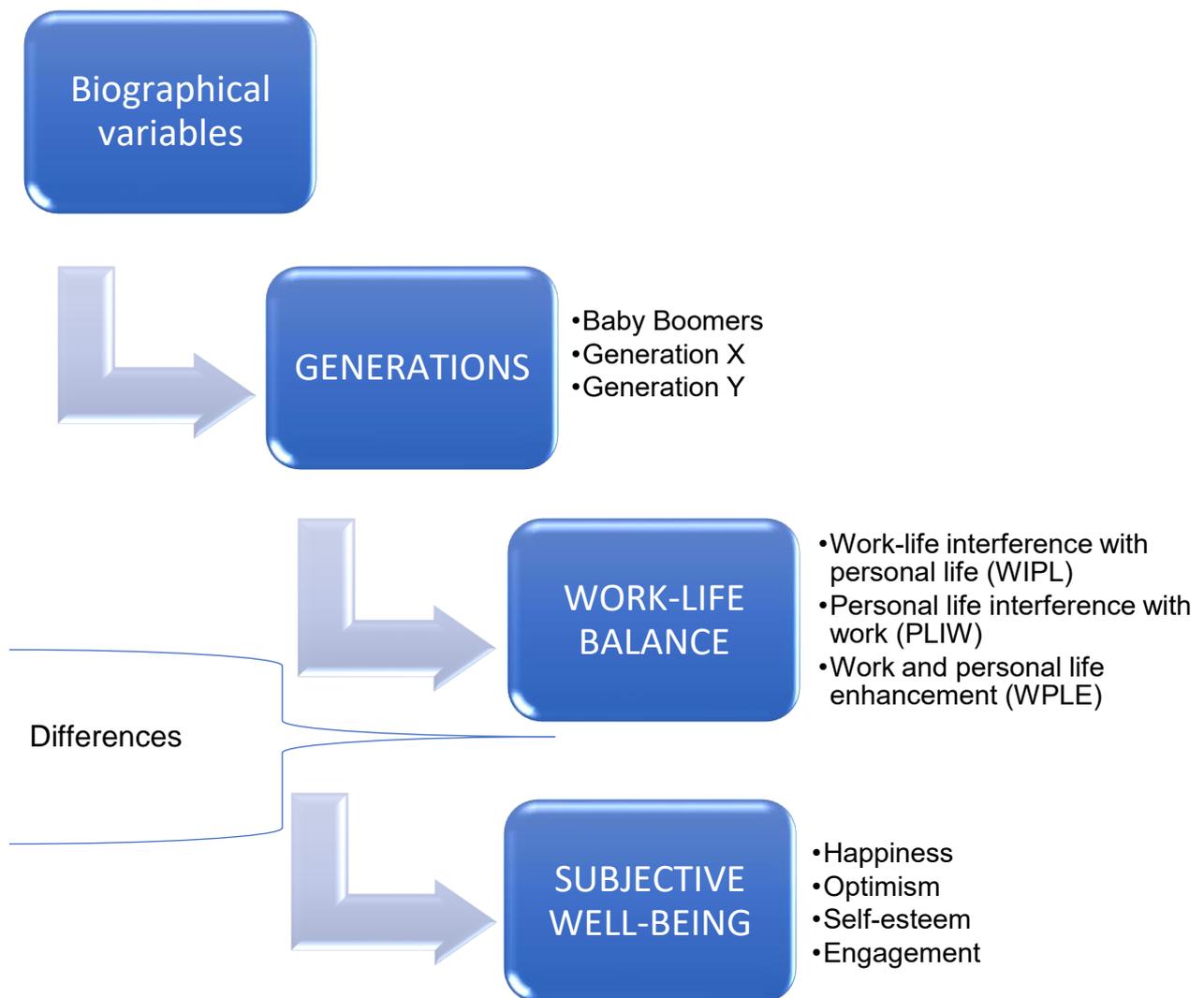
The Generation Xers (born between 1970 and 1989) have always been regarded as believing that one should work to live, and not live to work, and they view WLB as a right and not a privilege. They do not equate work with self-worth and personal effectiveness (King, Murillo, & Lee, 2017; Maroun, 2013; Robinson, 2009; Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018; Twenge et al, 2010; Urick, Hollensbe, Masterson, & Lyons, 2016).

Generation Y has never known a world without WLB (Becton, Waker, & Jones-Farmer, 2014; Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge et al, 2010; Urick, Hollensbe, & Fairhurst, 2017; Van der Merwe, 2005) and view WLB as both achievement and enjoyment, with reference to work, family, friends, and self (Lester et al., 2012; Williams, 2009).

#### **5.4 THEORETICAL MODEL**

One of the literature aims of this study was to conceptualise a theoretical model on the relationships between generations and WLB and SWB as well as the differences in the WLB levels and SWB levels across generations in the current world of work. The proposed model is based on the literature results and previous research presented in Chapter 2, 3 and 4 of this study, and illustrates in the simplest way how generations, WLB and SWB integrate as constructs in this study.

It can be inferred from the previous discussions that the majority of individuals have the need and are able to optimise their WLB. The researcher would like to argue that, to manage WLB and SWB effectively in a multi-generational workforce, consideration should be given to the relationships and differences brought about by gradual developmental and demographic changes that have occurred over time. Against this background, the proposed model for the relationship between generations, WLB and SWB is illustrated in Figure 5.1.



*Figure 5.1: An integration of the literature and the research constructs (Source: Author's own compilation)*

As shown in Figure 5.1, generations are determined and influenced through various biographical variables. Managed correctly, a diverse workforce, including members from different generations, could enhance performance and productivity in individuals and organisations (Frye & Breaugh, 2004; Heathfield, 2013; Hudson Global Resources, 2005). South African legislation defines a working week as 45 hours (Basic Conditions of Employment Act, no 11 of 2002), and research by Sparks, Cooper, Fried, and Shirom (1997) on work and health indicates that people working more than these hours start showing deterioration in both health and performance. Bannai and Tamakoshi (2014) support this notion in their systematic review outlining studies that conclude that longer working hours – working hours greater than 40 hours a week –

leads to conditions such as heart disease, sleeping disorders and a depressive state, all affecting WLB levels and ultimately SWB levels.

The literature review results in Chapters 2 and 3 emphasise that there is an **importance** and **need** for each generation to have high WLB levels. By understanding and conceptualising the relationships and the differences amongst the generations and understanding what creates positive WLB for these generations, researchers can explore the best from each generation, and help create flourishing individuals (Cilliers & Flotman, 2016; Luthans, 2012; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015).

The model proposes that there is a positive relationship between WLB and SWB. This resonates with the literature results of Clark (2000), Clarke, Koch, and Hill (2004), De Klerk and Mostert (2010), Greenhaus and Powell (2006), Gonzalez-Mulé and Cockburn (2017), Keyes (2007), McMillan, Morris, and Atchley (2011), and Nizam and Kam (2018).

In the proposed model, WLB comprises three dimensions namely WIPL, PLIW and WPLE. The pressures of work, such as the advances in IT, the need for speed and response, and the importance attached to the quality of customer service, together with the implications thereof in respect of constant availability, and the pace of change with its resultant upheavals and adjustments, all demand time and energy (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014). Longer working hours and increased intensity of work are common expectations from employers. Longer hours lead to an increase in evening and weekend work and leave little scope for 'quality' *other* time (Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). This has an impact on the individual's SWB in organisations (Barnett, 2008; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015).

In the proposed model, SWB comprises happiness, optimism, self-esteem and engagement. Previous academic research suggests that SWB at work is comprised of well-being-related psychological constructs (e.g. happiness, optimism, and self-esteem) and engagement (Diener, 2000c; Eid & Larsen, 2008; Frey & Stutzer, 2012; Seligman, 2011; Rothmann, 2015). The researcher proposes a model where these four constructs could be used to measure SWB and help determine whether significant relationships and differences exist between WLB and SWB as manifested in a sample of respondents across generations in the South African working population.

As life and work are interchangeable elements of an individual's life (Clark, 2000), and satisfaction with these two domains affects WLB and SWB (Diener, 2009b), this study examined the constructs of generations, and relationships between WLB, and SWB. The perceived relationships, differences and perspectives found in the literature led to significant academic and practitioner interest for the researcher when investigating the generational relationships and differences in WLB and SWB in a South African sample. The researcher does not contend that all members of a generation are the same, but rather that relationships and differences can be observed between the constructs and can be seen as valuable information adding to the body of research.

## **5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This integration concludes the literature review of the study. Chapter 6 addresses the research design and methodology.

## CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH METHOD

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research methodology for this research by describing the research procedure, determination and description of the population and sample, choice of measuring instruments, as well as a motivation for the choice of measuring instruments. Data collection and administration, data analysis and formulation of the research hypothesis are discussed.

### 6.2 EMPIRICAL AIMS

In terms of the empirical study, the following specific empirical aims were formulated in Chapter 1:

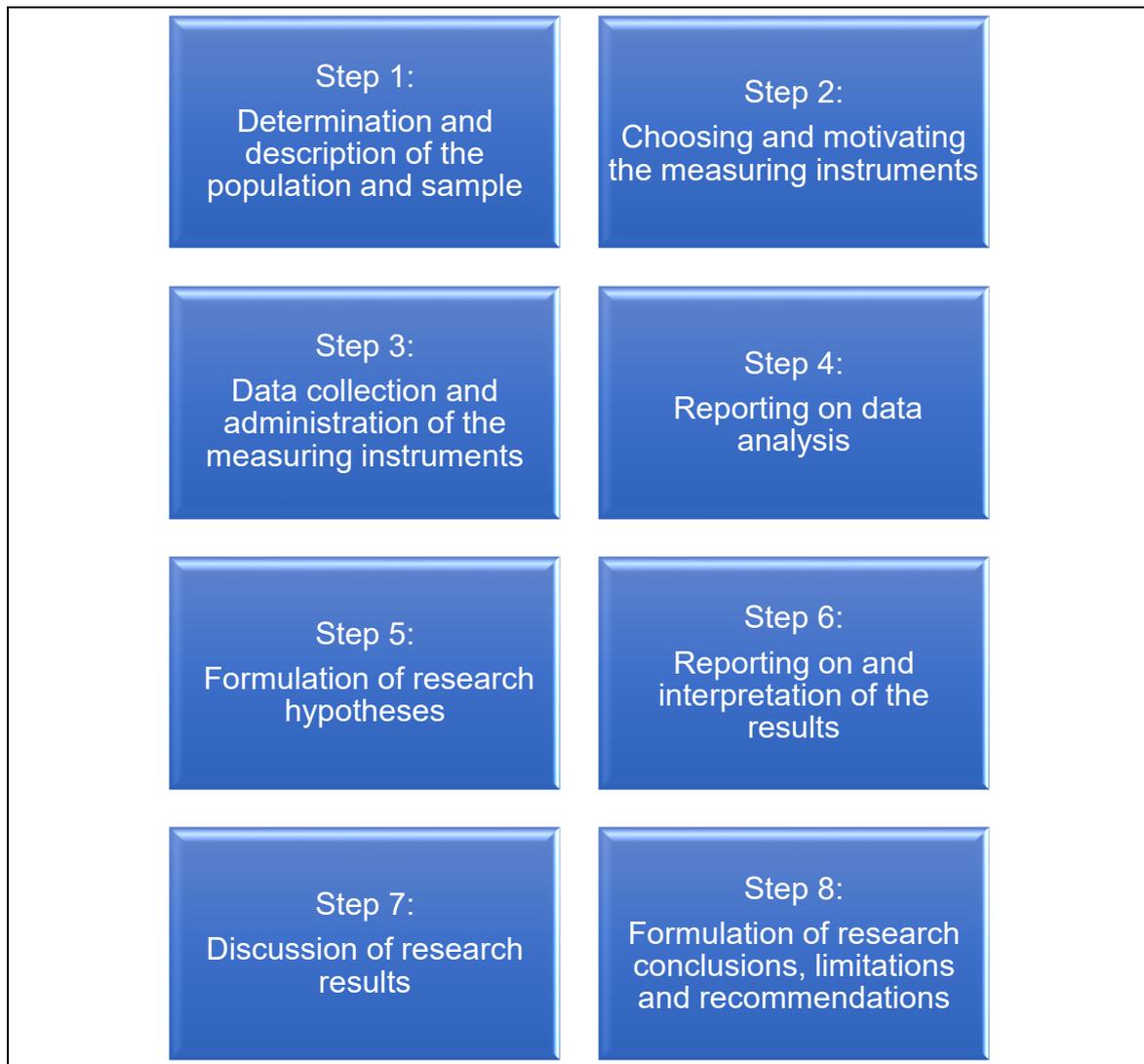
**Research aim 1:** to investigate the relationships between WLB and SWB across generations in the South African working population.

**Research aim 2:** to investigate whether significant differences existed in the levels of WLB and SWB across the generations in the South African working population.

**Research aim 3:** to formulate recommendations for organisations, IOP, as well as future research, based on the results of the research project (addressed in Chapter 7)

### 6.3 RESEARCH PROCEDURE

The empirical research followed a descriptive, explanatory and quantitative research approach (Creswell, 2014; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) consisting of a cycle of eight steps to answer the research questions and specific aims for the empirical study. Figure 6.1 depicts these steps. Steps 1 to 5 are addressed in this chapter. Steps 6, 7, and 8 are addressed in Chapters 7 and 8.



*Figure 6.1: Steps followed for the quantitative research*

#### **6.4 DETERMINATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE POPULATION AND SAMPLE**

According to Babbie (2014), nonprobability sampling does not use any scientific method but relies on judgemental and/or convenience for sample selection. Neuman (2011) states nonprobability sampling is less accurate but is preferred in the absence of a probability sample. The nonprobability sampling methods are convenience sampling, judgement sampling, quota sampling, and snowball sampling (Blumberg, Cooper, & Schindler, 2005). In nonprobability sampling, techniques such as convenience sampling and the selection of elements are not determined by the statistical principle of randomness (Terre Blanche, Durrheim, & Painter, 2006). Various aspects have to be taken into consideration when deciding on the suitability of sampling techniques, such as the purpose and type of information required to achieve

the research objectives. Convenience sampling was used in this study (Terre Blanche et al., 2006) based on knowledge of a population and the purpose of the study. Furthermore, convenience sampling was chosen because it targets individuals who can help to build and expand on the substantive theory (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The procedure started with a letter that was sent to the potential organisations containing information regarding the purpose and objectives of the study (see Appendix B), as well as asking consent to conduct the research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The letter requested permission for conducting questionnaires on the Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y employees of the organisation. The letter further indicated suggested times and dates for the assessments. In order to ensure that the sample group was correct, the demographics required of the employees were specified in the letter. As soon as the organisation agreed to the request, the researcher gathered all the necessary information regarding the subjects of the study from the HR departments of the selected organisations, and carefully selected the target population for the study, based on the date of birth and gender.

The unit of analysis was a group of South African employees, employed within the current world of work, and born between 1950 and 2005 (Baby Boomers, Generation Xers, and Generation Ys). The unit of analysis was chosen, because at the time of this study, the majority of the workforce consisted of these generations, as discussed in the literature review (section 2.2).

Leedy and Ormrod (2013) describe the target population as a group of individuals who possess specific characteristics from which a sample is drawn to determine the parameters or characteristics of a fairly large population. In the context of this study, the target population was selected for inclusion based on a number of criteria.

The **first** criterion was the year of birth, which determined the generation. The researcher selected employees who were included under the South African definition of Baby Boomers, Generation X and Y in terms of age group (see section 2.5). Individuals born between –

- 1950 and 1969 were categorised as the Baby Boomer generation;
- 1970 and 1989 were categorised as Generation X; and
- 1990 and 2005 were categorised as Generation Y (Cordington & Grand-Marshall, 2006).

The **second** criterion was geographical spread. The researcher attempted to get a geographical spread across the whole of South Africa to ensure that the results could be generalised across the country and not be limited to a specific geographical area (Neuman, 2011).

The **third** criterion for participation was that participants in the study had to be full-time employees, and this therefore excluded part-time, contract and intern assistants or workers.

Based on the criterion applied the researcher chose a target population sample of 178 individuals. The sample consisted of three cohorts, namely 40 Baby Boomers, 106 Generations Xers and 32 participants from Generation Y. This research was conducted within South African organisations selected from a wide range of industries, including health and education (15%), professional services (15%), and business and management consultancy services (6%). The employees of these organisations were full-time employees working under normal conditions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No. 11 of 2002. Most employees were from non-management (33%) or middle management (29%). The sample included males and females, race representation, as well as geographical spread across South Africa.

The sample was selected with the aim of representing many different types of individuals from the different chosen generations and the demographic structure of the workforce in South Africa at the time of this research. This made provision for a representation of different generations across industries and organisations (Neuman, 2011).

A concern for generalisation dominates quantitative research. For generalisability and repeatability, identification of sample size is essential. According to Henn, Weinstein, and Foard (2006) the quantitative research paradigm emphasises the importance of generalisability and reliability. The aim is to apply the relationship obtained among variables across the population and that is why the selection of a sample representative of the population is essential (Wilcox, 2005).

The identification of the minimum or most appropriate sample size depends on a careful and detailed planning of all stages of the research from its paradigm, to data

collection materials and to data analysis techniques. (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

It is possible to get more reliable results with better planning and smaller sample size. Sample sizes between 30 and 500 at 5% confidence level is generally sufficient (Altunisik, Coskun, Bayraktaroglu, & Yildirim, 2004; Ross, 2004; Wilcox 2010). These numbers are valid for the selection of a sample using random sampling techniques.

Decision on design in accordance with the research aims would have an impact on the size of the sample. Cohen et al. (2011) present the following criteria in determining sample size in relation to the research method:

- If the research has a relational survey design, the sample size should not be less than 30.
- Causal-comparative and experimental studies require more than 50 samples.
- In survey research, 100 samples should be identified for each major sub-group in the population and between 20 to 50 samples for each minor sub-group.

## **6.5 CHOOSING AND MOTIVATING THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS**

After an evaluation of the measuring instruments available in the literature, the instruments were chosen based on their relevance to the study as well as their psychometric properties (Coetzee & De Villiers, 2010; De Waal & Pienaar, 2013; Mostert, Jackson, & Montgomery, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003).

The measuring instruments chosen for this study were the following:

- Biographical Questionnaire
- Work-life Balance Scale
- Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue)
- Work Engagement Questionnaire (WEQ28)

### **6.5.1 Biographical Questionnaire**

The measuring instrument chosen to collect data to gain biographical information for the selected sample was the Biographical Questionnaire.

#### 6.5.1.1 *Description and aim of the Biographical Questionnaire*

The Biographical Questionnaire (Appendix A) is a self-rated questionnaire used to gather information on the biographical characteristics of age, race and geographical location and type of employment. The aim of the Biographical Questionnaire is to indicate the individual's biographical details and status, in order to generate a biographical profile of each participant.

#### 6.5.1.2 *Dimensions and items of the Biographical Questionnaire*

The Biographical Questionnaire was designed specifically for the study in question. The Biographical Questionnaire comprises the following dimensions:

- age
- gender
- race
- geographical location
- level of education
- tenure
- hours worked and paid
- level of employment

#### 6.5.1.3 *Administration of the Biographical Questionnaire*

The Biographical Questionnaire is a form, given to a respondent, who completes the form and returns it. No time limit is applicable to the instrument. The respondent selects the appropriate item by marking a block with the most appropriate description. Demographic data are only requested at the end of the survey to reduce the potential effect of stereotype bias.

#### 6.5.1.4 *Scoring and interpretation of the Biographical Questionnaire*

The item for each biographical item would be an indication of the respondent's biographical information. In the current study, data were processed using Excel. This information was recorded for statistical processing purposes.

#### 6.5.1.5 *Reliability and validity of the Biographical Questionnaire*

Not applicable for this instrument.

#### 6.5.1.6 *Motivation for the inclusion of the Biographical Questionnaire*

The reasons for including biographical information in this study was based on the theoretical review of variables that might have moderated the relationships between the psychological constructs of the study (see Section 3.5). Data collected for this purpose were used purely to describe the nature and compilation of the sample group and ensure a representative distribution of the generations. In the current study the rationale for using the Biographical Questionnaire was to estimate the parameters (population facts) for certain characteristics of a given population (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013).

### **6.5.2 Work-life Balance Scale**

The measuring instrument chosen to assess the WLB of the selected sample was the Work-life Balance Scale (Hayman, 2005).

#### 6.5.2.1 *Description and aim of the Work-life Balance Scale*

The Work-life Balance Scale is a self-rated instrument measuring positive as well as negative aspects of the work–personal life interface. The aim of the instrument is to assess whether an individual perceives that he or she has a balance between work and personal life (Fisher-McAuley et al., 2003; Hayman, 2005).

#### 6.5.2.2 *Dimensions and items of the Work-life Balance Scale*

The Work-life Balance Scale measures three dimensions, namely –

- WIPL, i.e. the extent to which work interferes with personal life;
- PLIW, i.e. the extent to which personal life interferes with work; and
- WPLE, i.e. the extent to which personal life enhances work (Fisher-McAuley et al., 2003).

The scale consists of 15 items. The 15 items are divided into five items for each dimension.

The first five items measure WIPL, which refers to personal life suffering because of work, job making personal life difficult, neglecting personal needs because of work, putting personal life on hold for work, and missing personal activities because of work.

The second five items measure PLIW, referring to the struggle to juggle work and non-work, being happy with the amount of time for non-work activities, personal life draining energy for work, being too tired to be effective at work, and work suffering because of personal life.

The third five items measure WPLE, referring to hard to work because of personal matters, personal life giving one energy for one's job, the job giving one energy to pursue personal activities, being in a better mood at work because of one's personal life, and being in a better mood because of one's job.

#### *6.5.2.3 Administration of the Work-life Balance Scale*

The Work-life Balance Scale is a self-administered questionnaire. Participants receive clear instructions regarding how to complete it, and the questionnaire takes about 15–20 minutes to complete. Participants are asked to indicate the frequency with which they have felt in a particular way over the previous three months using a seven-point time-based related scale (Fisher-McAuley et al., 2003; Hayman, 2005).

#### *6.5.2.4 Scoring and interpretation of the Work-life Balance Scale*

A time-based related scale is used so that respondents have the same time frame for responding to each item (Hayman, 2005). A 7-point scale, where 1–3 is not at all, 4–6 is sometimes and 7 is all the time is used. Reverse scoring is done for item 11 (It is hard to work because of personal matters), where higher scores signify less balance. Higher means indicate that participants report having experienced that situation more frequently. Items with higher means are purported to indicate lower levels of WLB. The WPLE subscale is worded positively, and higher means indicate higher levels of perceived WLB (Hayman, 2005).

#### *6.5.2.5 Reliability and validity of the Work-life Balance Scale*

The reliability of the Work-life Balance Scale is estimated using the Cronbach alpha coefficient (Cronbach, 1951). The scale delivered Cronbach alpha values of 0.93 for

WIPL, 0.85 for PLIW and 0.69 for WPLE, and therefore the scale has acceptable reliability estimates and factor loading patterns for WLB (Fisher-McAuley et al., 2003; Hayman, 2005). Prior research using this scale found that a three-dimensional model fits the data better than a four-dimensional model in a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and results of a higher-order factor analysis, and that the three dimensions were indicators of a single latent construct (Fisher, 2001; Rubio, Berg-Weger, & Tebb, 2001). The instrument has acceptable validity, indicating that it has the potential to be used as a useful tool determining WLB among employees (Hayman, 2005).

#### *6.5.2.6 Motivation for the inclusion of the Work-life Balance Scale*

This instrument was chosen because of the usefulness of the scale in assessing perceptions of WLB amongst different generations. The more inclusive wording of personal life compared to family, provides the opportunity to measure the interface between work and non-work regardless of individual marital or family status (Fisher-McAuley et al., 2003; Hayman, 2005). This approach is useful to organisations to assess the non-work domain, as family may not be relevant to all individuals across the various generations. The researcher decided on the chosen scale over other scales because of its relevance for participants who do not have family responsibilities, but who may still experience work impinging on their personal life. The rationale was to help the individual consider each area of their life in turn and assess how they are experiencing WLB. The Work-life Balance Scale has considerable potential in providing organisations with individual perceptions of work and personal life, which can be incorporated into progressive HR practices.

#### **6.5.3 Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue)**

The measuring instrument chosen to assess the happiness, optimism and self-esteem (constructs of SWB) of the selected sample was the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) developed by Petrides (2009, 2012).

##### *6.5.3.1 Description and aim of the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire*

The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) is a multiscale, self-assessment questionnaire that measures psychological constructs (Petrides, 2009). The main areas of use of the instrument is educational, work and occupational,

counselling, advice, guidance, and career choice, general health, life and well-being (Petrides, 2012). Intended applications include work and life coaching, talent development, appraisals, leadership training, measuring organisational commitment, organisational change and behaviour, recruitment and selection, employee morale and team building (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). The aim of the TEIQue is to provide vital and consistent cross-situational information about an individual's personality and behaviour (Petrides, 2009).

#### 6.5.3.2 *Dimensions and items of the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire*

The TEIQue measures four dimensions, namely:

- well-being, which refers to how happy, positive and fulfilled a person is;
- self-control, which refers to how well a person regulates external pressure and stress and controls impulses;
- emotionality, which refers to the capacity to perceive and express emotions and use insight into emotions to develop and sustain close relationships with others; and
- sociability, which refers to how socially skilled a person is and how clearly and confidently he or she can communicate with others.

The TEIQue consists of 153 items. The items are all linked to the four dimensions, broken down into three or four facets:

- the **well-being** dimension measures the facets of happiness, optimism and self-esteem;
- the **self-control** dimension measures the facets of emotion regulation, stress management and impulse control;
- the **emotionality** dimension measures the facets of emotion perception (self and others), emotion expression, relationships and empathy; and
- the **sociability** dimension measures the facets of social awareness, emotion management (others) and assertiveness.

There are also two independent facets – adaptability and self-motivation – making 15 facets altogether (Petrides, 2012).

### 6.5.3.3 *Administration of the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire*

The TEIQue can be completed online via a standard Internet connection or in paper-and-pencil format. It is administered in quiet conditions either individually or in groups. Participants are asked to respond to general statements, comprising 153 items, which are rated on a 7-point Likert-type rating scale anchored at the ends with 1=disagree completely and 7=agree completely. The assessment takes about 20 minutes to complete. Participants should be instructed to work quickly, and not think too long about the exact meaning of the statements (Petrides, 2009, 2012).

### 6.5.3.4 *Scoring and interpretation of the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire*

The electronic form of the TEIQue is electronically scored online. For the pen-and-paper-version, scoring always requires entry of responses into the online system. Results are provided as a computer-generated report, which is designed to be shared with participants or a third person (e.g. a consultant). Scores are normed against a sample of the South African population. A global score of emotional functioning is derived from 15 facets. Four-dimension scores are derived from 13 of the facets. The two independent facets are 'adaptability' and 'self-motivation', and these are derived from overall responses on the items (Petrides, 2009, 2012).

In addition, there are a number of response-style measures, including a single-item honesty self-report, and measures of central tendency, random responding and a veracity index, which produces warning flags for certain (Petrides, 2012).

### 6.5.3.5 *Reliability and validity of the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire*

To gauge test–retest reliability, the test is administered twice at two different intervals (Petrides, 2009, 2012). This type of reliability is used to assess the consistency of a test across time. This type of reliability assumes that there will be no change in the quality or construct being measured. Test–retest reliability is best used for things that are stable over time, such as intelligence. Generally, reliability will be higher when little time has passed between tests (Petrides, 2012).

Test–retest data from various studies carried out in the last few years showed that trait emotional intelligence (EI) self-perceptions are likely to remain relatively stable (especially when considered in relation to one’s age group – ‘rank-order consistency’) across the lifespan. Test–retest reliability coefficients range from  $r=.55$  for the Impulsiveness and  $r=.82$  for Self-esteem scales. The test–retest reliability of the Global Trait Emotional intelligence score is  $r=.78$ . The retest was conducted 12 months after the first test (Freudenthaler, Neubauer, Gabler, & Scherl, 2008; Mikolajczak, Luminet, Leroy, & Roy, 2007, Petrides, 2009, 2012).

Internal consistency is a form of reliability that is used to judge the consistency of results across items on the same test (Petrides, 2009, 2012). Essentially, test items that measure the same construct are compared to determine the test internal consistency. When one sees a question that seems very similar to another test question, it may indicate that the two questions are being used to gauge reliability. Because the two questions are similar and designed to measure the same thing, the test taker should answer both questions in the same way, which would indicate that the test has internal consistency (Petrides, 2009, 2012). A very popular indicator of internal consistency is Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ). An alpha value of 1 signifies perfect reliability. However, such a coefficient value rarely exists in the real world; so, it has been established that a test is highly consistent and accurate if its reliability is over 0.7 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 2010).

The internal consistencies of the TEIQue variables are satisfactory for both males and females (Petrides, 2009, 2012). Of particular interest to many users is the robustness of the alphas, which remain strong (especially at the factor level and, without exception, at the global level) even in very small sample research ( $n < 50$ ). For example, Global Trait EI score in a female sample of 907 participants has a reliability of  $\alpha=.89$ , while the reliability of the Global Trait EI score in a male sample of 759 participants is  $\alpha=.92$ . The alpha level for all facets in both samples is above .67, only the Relationship and Self-motivation facets have a reliability coefficient below .70 (both alphas at .69) for females and males (Freudenthaler et al., 2008; Mikolajczak et al., 2007, Petrides, 2009, 2012).

Factor analysis was conducted in order to locate the TEIQue in the Five-Factor space (Petrides, 2009, 2012). The analysis demonstrates that Trait EI is distinct (because it

can be isolated in the personality space), compound (because it is partially determined by several personality dimensions), and the construct that lies in the foundation of personality hierarchies. 'Emotion expression', 'emotion management' and 'emotion perception' are shown to tap a construct that is clearly distinct from the major personality dimensions (Freudenthaler et al., 2008; Mikolajczak et al., 2007, Petrides, 2009, 2012).

Investigating criterion-related validity means to compare the questionnaire with another external variable or independent measure, which is known or believed to be a measure of the same attribute. There are two different types of criterion validity: predictive and concurrent validity. Predictive validity occurs when the criterion measures are obtained at a time after the test. Concurrent validity, on the other hand, occurs when the criterion measures are obtained at the same time as the test scores (Petrides, 2009, 2012).

Among other criteria, the TEIQue has been found to predict –

- teacher and peer ratings of pro-social and antisocial behaviour (for example Global Trait EI correlated positively with cooperation [ $r=.29$ ,  $p < .01$ ]);
- coping styles (Trait EI predicts Rational Coping, [ $r=.50$ ] and correlates significantly with Rational [ $r=.67$ ], Detached [ $r=.47$ ], Emotional [ $r=-.62$ ] and Avoidance [ $r=-.40$ ] coping styles); and
- depressive affect (Trait EI predicts Dysfunctional attitudes [ $r=-.38$ ,  $p<.01$ ] and Depression, [ $r=-.56$ ,  $p<.01$ ], Happiness, Emotion regulation, and Affective decision-making.

Specifically, in relation to work-related criteria, the TEIQue correlates with Achievement ( $r=.49$ ,  $p < .01$ ), higher levels of Perceived job control (Global EI score correlates with Perceived job control [ $r=.28$ ,  $p < .05$ ]) and Job commitment (Global EI score correlates with Commitment [ $r=.24$ ,  $p < .05$ ]) (Freudenthaler et al., 2008; Mikolajczak et al., 2007, Petrides, 2009, 2012).

#### *6.5.3.6 Motivation for the inclusion of the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire*

According to Petrides (2012), trait and ability emotional intelligence (EI) can be differentiated on the basis of the type of instrument used to measure them – trait EI uses a self-report questionnaire, such as the TEIQue, ability EI uses IQ-style

maximum performance tests, such as the MSCEIT<sup>1</sup> (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2002). Ability EI can be problematic because the subjectivity of emotional experience undermines the development of a maximum-performance test (Petrides, 2009). The heart of the problem is the inability to create items or tasks that can be scored according to truly objective criteria and that can cover the domain of ability EI comprehensively (Petrides, 2012). It has been argued that Emotional experience cannot be made objective artificially in order to be made amenable to IQ-style testing. The avalanche of scientific criticism and negative results on the MSCEIT has prompted the development of alternative measures of ability EI (Amelang & Steinmayr, 2006; MacCann & Roberts, 2008; Warwick, Nettelbeck, & Ward, 2010).

The TEIQue should be preferred over other EI-related questionnaires for three main reasons:

- TEIQue offers a direct route to the underlying theory of trait emotional intelligence;
- it provides comprehensive coverage of the trait EI sampling domain; and,
- it has greater predictive validity (Petrides, 2012).

Studies that have compared the TEIQue to other EI questionnaires have concluded that TEIQue generally has superior predictive validity and superior psychometric properties (Freudenthaler et al., 2008; Gardner & Qualter, 2010; Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010).

Data from children, adolescent and adult samples show that trait EI scores predict adaptive coping styles and depressive affect (Mavroveli, Petrides, Rieffe, & Bakker, 2007), and happiness (Chamorro-Premuzic, Bennett, & Furnham, 2007). Studies have revealed incremental trait EI effects over and above other emotion-related variables, such as alexithymia, optimism and mood (Mikolajczak, Luminet, & Menil, 2006; Petrides, Pérez-González, & Furnham, 2007).

Therefore, this instrument was chosen for the current research to determine the levels of well-being across the various generations in the sample group. Furthermore, the TEIQue was chosen for its conceptual congruence with the definition of SWB that was used in the literature study (see Section 4.2), as well as for its acceptable psychometric

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<sup>1</sup> Mayer–Salovey–Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test

properties as provided (see Section 6.5.3.5). For the purpose of this study, only the 'well-being dimension' of the instrument was used, comprising the psychological constructs of 'happiness', 'optimism' and 'self-esteem', as these were the relevant psychological constructs.

#### 6.5.4 Work Engagement Questionnaire (WEQ28)

The measuring instrument chosen to assess the engagement (as a concept of SWB) of the selected sample was the Work Engagement Questionnaire (WEQ28) developed by Slaski (2014).

##### 6.5.4.1 *Description and aim of the Work Engagement Questionnaire*

The WEQ28 is a self-rated instrument, grounded in research and development in the psychosocial theory of workplace engagement (Slaski, 2014). The aim of the WEQ28 is to capture an individual's feelings, beliefs and experiences surrounding the work being done and the people being involved (Slaski, 2014).

##### 6.5.4.2 *Dimensions of the Work Engagement Questionnaire*

The WEQ28 measures three dimensions, namely –

- Relationships – refers to good relationships founded on trust and sense of involvement;
- Role – refers to clear expectations and having choices; and
- Reward – refers to praise for a job well done.

The questionnaire consists of 28 items, which are rated on a 7-point Likert-type rating using a time-related scale (1=not at all, 4=sometimes, and 7=all the time). These items are linked to each dimension through seven psychosocial constructs that are drivers of engagement (Slaski, 2014; Slaski & Cartwright, 2003).

The Relationships dimension measures voice (ideas and opinions respected) and togetherness (co-operation, support and trust). The Role dimension measures challenge (enjoyable and relevant work), clarity (clear goals and purpose), and freedom (flexibility to choose and make decisions). The Reward dimension measures recognition (praise and appreciation) and growth (opportunities to develop).

#### 6.5.4.3 *Administration of the Work Engagement Questionnaire*

The WEQ28 is completed online via a standard Internet connection. The questionnaire takes approximately 10 minutes to complete; however, there is no time limitation. Participants are asked to indicate their frequency of experience on 28 questions using a 7-point Likert-type scale anchored at the ends with 'never' (1) and 'always' (7). The 28 questions are followed by two pre-set questions with free-text responses. At the end of the questionnaire, respondents are asked to confirm several demographic factors (Slaski, 2014).

#### 6.5.4.4 *Scoring and interpretation of the Work Engagement Questionnaire*

The WEQ28 is scored automatically online and delivers a report against the three dimensions and seven drivers. The questionnaire also captures and reports on certain demographic information (gender, age, department, location, and role type).

#### 6.5.4.5 *Reliability and validity of the Work Engagement Questionnaire*

The WEQ28 was tested for reliability and validated across diverse populations, including different gender and age groups (Slaski, 2014). Psychometric analysis of all these data revealed very high internal consistency of the WEQ28 (Cronbach's alpha =.96).

Due to the multi-dimensional nature of Engagement, internal validity has to be measured using the hierarchical omega ( $\omega$ ) coefficient (e.g. Zinbarg, Leea, & Yoona, 2007). The WEQ28 demonstrated sufficient internal reliability ( $\omega$ =.84).

Other studies have compared scores of the WEQ28 with Schaufeli, Bakker, and Salanova's (2006) Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), the predominant metric used in academic research for measuring state engagement at work. Correlations were always above  $r=0.70$  and therefore strong (Slaski, 2014). This further established the construct validity of the workplace engagement model and metric.

#### 6.5.4.6 *Motivation for the inclusion of the Work Engagement Questionnaire*

The instrument was chosen for the current study to measure 'engagement' as a

construct of SWB (Baek-Kyoo & Insuk, 2017; Rothmann, 2014; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). WEQ28 was chosen because the seven-factor model of engagement is of great practical value to industrial and organisational psychologists and organisations wishing to maximise positive organisational outcomes. It identifies strengths and vulnerabilities within the organisation and enables the user to recognise any differences in engagement levels between different demographic groups, examine why these might be prevalent, and implement targeted interventions based on this (Slaski, 2014). From an individual employee's perspective, a high level of engagement has the tendency to enhance organisational commitment and increase job satisfaction and lower turnover rates, and engaged employees often experience positive emotions (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2010). The researcher furthermore believed that, because of acceptable reliability and validity results reported, the WEQ28 could be used successfully in the South African context to measure the levels of engagement across the generations in the sample group.

## **6.6 DATA COLLECTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS**

The data collection procedure and administration of the measuring instruments is presented in steps as they occurred in different phases. The steps are presented as follows:

### **Step 1:**

The actual assessment of the sample group was planned, and a team was selected to conduct the assessments. The team comprised a supervising psychologist to guide the process, and a psychometrist and research and data analyst.

### **Step 2:**

The next step was to gather the biographical details of the employees via the biographical questionnaire. The role of the researcher was to determine the outline of the biographical details required and draft the Biographical Questionnaire for the participants to complete. A communication e-mail with a link was mailed to all the members of the sample group via electronic network requesting them to participate in the research. The letter of invitation gave a short account of the nature and background

of the study and its objectives, explaining that participation was voluntary, requesting informed consent (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013) and assuring potential participants of anonymity and confidentiality (Appendix C).

### **Step 3:**

All the information from the Biographical Questionnaire was captured in an Excel spreadsheet to ensure that the researcher had identified a sample representative of the different generations in the organisations. Thereafter unique identifying numbers were given to participants to ensure confidentiality and autonomy (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). These unique numbers were used during the recording and processing of all data. All copies of the Biographical Questionnaire were filed and archived in a place of safety for keeping an audit trail (Creswell, 2003).

### **Step 4:**

The next step was to administer the TEIQue. As the target population in this research all had easy access to email facilities and Internet, it was considered an appropriate means of distributing the measuring instrument (Evans & Mathur, 2005). Online links were created for the participants of the sample group to complete. The TEIQue link was sent to all participants with a username and password to complete the assessment. The process was monitored against completion rates and deadlines (Neuman, 2011). In the absence of formal informed consent, participants were informed that acceptance and responding affirmatively to an email invitation by clicking on the link to commence the assessment confirmed their agreement to participate in the survey.

### **Step 5:**

All the data received for the TEIQue were stored in the online bank until all the rounds of questionnaires had been completed. The measuring instrument was hosted electronically on the web server, and this assured the participants of confidentiality and anonymity in the data collection process. The measuring instrument was presented in such a way that computer scoring was allowed, which excluded the possibility of human error in scoring the results (Miller, McIntyre, & Lovler, 2011). After all the questionnaires had been completed, the researcher reviewed the results for

completeness, followed by editing the data. In cases where some answers were unclear or left unanswered, the researcher sent follow-up e-mails to clarify certain points and to ask further questions.

### **Step 6:**

The Work-life Balance Scale and the WEQ28 were then integrated into an electronic online document and distributed through SurveyMonkey® via the Internet. This web-based functionality is a measurement instrument, which both delivers and collects data through the Internet (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). This research technique does not require the presence of a researcher to assist in completing the questionnaire and therefore lower response rates were expected (Bryman, 2010). However, clear and concise instructions were provided, which aided the participants to complete the questionnaire (Blumberg et al., 2005). Only once the TEIQue results for a participant had been received, was the link to SurveyMonkey® sent to the participant to complete. This method was chosen because it is relatively fast, inexpensive and flexible, enabling a high control of the sample and, most importantly, it is available to load data directly into the analysis software (Blumberg et al., 2005).

Participants were requested to answer the questionnaires, and additional instructions for returning the completed questionnaires to the research group were also given. Follow-up e-mails were sent to the participants, reminding them of the closing date, whilst monitoring completion rates (Neuman, 2011). The disadvantage in terms of potential limited access (Blumberg et al., 2005) to the Internet was eliminated, as all participants had convenient access to the Internet (Babbie, 2014).

### **Step 7:**

The data for the Work-life Balance Scale and WEQ28 were exported into Excel using the unique identifying numbers allocated to participants. This ensured autonomy (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). To ensure that no errors occurred during the data capturing, peer examination and cross-checking were done as the input data were reviewed by a third party for correctness.

All copies of the Work-life Balance Scale and WEQ28 were filed and archived in place of safety, keeping an audit trail (Creswell, 2003).

### **Step 8:**

All the collected data from the test administration were retrieved and data analysis, formulation of the hypotheses, reporting and interpretation started. The data collected were used to report systematically on the results of the research.

This procedure was deemed suitable for the current study because of its compelling advantages, as it –

- allowed for flexibility, convenience, low cost administration, access to a large sample, and ease of follow-up and data capturing and recording (Evans & Mathur, 2005);
- had the ability to target a large sample of the population, thereby increasing the generalisability of the research results (Blumberg et al., 2005); and
- given the need for social science studies to be reliable and replicable, the chosen procedure served as a promising means for conducting future research because it allowed both replicability and, to certain extent, cross-study comparability (Babbie, 2014).

## **6.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

All data were imported and analysed using the Lavaan package (Hox & Bechger, 1998; version 0.5-20) in R (version 3.3.0). Statistical analysis was used to determine the relationships of WLB and SWB and whether significant differences existed between generations in terms of WLB and SWB and as manifested in a sample of respondents across generations in the South African working population. The analysis comprised three phases, namely:

- Phase 1: Validity and reliability
- Phase 2: Descriptive statistical analysis
- Phase 3: Inferential statistical analysis

### **6.7.1 Phase 1: Validity and reliability**

Phase 1 consisted of the calculation of exploratory factor analysis (EFA), CFA and Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

#### *6.7.1.1 Validity*

According to Babbie (2014), Leedy and Ormrod (2013) and Neuman (2011), validity is concerned with the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure in a consistent and accurate manner. The current study calculated both EFAs and CFAs to examine the psychometric structure of a proposed SWB construct (Chapter 4) and to test the hypothesis that SWB is a latent variable comprising Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem, and Engagement.

##### (a) Exploratory factor analysis

One of the aims of this study was to conceptualise the psychological construct of SWB. Previous academic research suggests that SWB at work is comprised of well-being-related psychological constructs (e.g. Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem) and Engagement (Diener, 2000b; Eid & Larsen, 2008; Frey & Stutzer, 2012; Rothmann, 2014; Seligman, 2011). The researcher proposed a model that these four constructs could be used to measure SWB (see Section 5.4).

According to Cooper and Schindler (2014), factor analysis is used to reduce the number of variances, to detect structure in the relationship between variables, as well as to discover the underlying construct that explains the variance. EFAs were conducted on the four proposed psychological constructs of SWB, namely Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem measured by the TEIQue, and Engagement measured by the WEQ28. The first proposed a single-factor solution, and the second a two-factor solution.

Shapiro–Wilk tests of normality were used for this research. Shapiro–Wilk tests are used to assess whether a variable can be considered normally distributed (Kaplan, 2000). This is important as understanding the distribution of the data has an influence on the appropriate statistical tests to use in the inferential statistics section. The null hypothesis for this test was that the data are normally distributed. If the  $p$ -value is

greater than 0.05, then the null hypothesis is not rejected (Kaplan, 2000; Oztuna, Elhan, & Tuccar, 2006).

To minimise error, principal axis factoring (PAF) was deemed the appropriate method of factor estimation because several of the variables were found to be non-normally distributed (Costello & Osborne, 2005; Williams, Onsman, & Brown, 2010). The principal axis factor analysis was used for the purpose of understanding the covariation among variables (Costello & Osborne, 2005). Oblimin rotation was used (Williams et al., 2010) as factor interdependence was assumed. Direct oblimin rotation is an oblique rotation that is used to maximise the variance of the loadings of a factor on all the variables in a factor matrix. It minimises the variables that have high loadings on any one specific factor (Costello & Osborne, 2005).

Factor loadings greater than  $\pm .30$  are considered to meet the minimal level. Loadings of  $\pm .40$  are considered more important, and if the loadings are  $\pm .50$  or greater, they are considered practically significant (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2010; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Factor loadings of  $.30$  or less magnitudes should be discarded, as they do not meet the minimum level of practical significance (Costello & Osborne, 2005).

#### (b) Confirmatory factor analysis

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) is used for psychometric evaluation of measures, construct validation and relationships between constructs (Hurley et al., 1997).

CFA was used for this study to test the proposed psychometric structure of SWB further. SWB was entered as a latent variable made up of four observed variables: Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem measured by the TEIQue, and Engagement measured by the WEQ28. A second CFA was calculated to assess whether SWB was better represented as a second-order latent variable.

The Satorra–Bentler scaling correction factor was used for this research (Satorra & Bentler, 2001). As the data was non-normally distributed, a robust ML estimator was used to assess the fit of the model to the data to measure the goodness-of-fit. As there is no consensus within the literature as to which measure of goodness-of-fit is best,

researchers advise using multiple tests (Kline, 2012). For this study, the main indices used were:

- the  $\chi^2/df$  ratio, where an excellent fit is indicated when  $\chi^2/df < 3.00$  (Bryant & Satorra, 2012);
- comparative fit index (CFI), where a value of 0 reflects no fit, while a value of 1 is a perfect fit (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008) and values close to 0.90 reflect an acceptable fit (Byrne, 2010);
- the Tucker–Lewis Index (TLI), where values over .90 are considered an excellent fit of the data (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010); and
- the standardised root mean residual (SRMR), where values  $> .08$  are considered a good fit (Kline, 2005).

#### 6.7.1.2 *Reliability*

‘Reliability’ refers to how consistently a measuring instrument derives the same results when measured between different groups of the same population, and the consistency with which it measures what it is supposed to measure (Bryman, 2010; Foxcroft & Roodt 2005; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Neuman, 2011). It is the most important psychometric indicator used to determine the usefulness and the accuracy of instruments (Von der Ohe, 2014) and whether the results are repeatable (Bryman, 2010). Tests of this nature are conducted to ascertain whether the instrument can be relied upon to provide reliable information if the survey is administered repeatedly to different groups under similar conditions (test–retest).

For this study, the reliability of the measuring instruments, the TEIQue, the Work-life Balance Scale and the WEQ28 was determined by calculating the internal consistency reliability, where each item on a scale correlates with another item, ensuring that a test measuring the same thing more than once will produce the same outcomes or results (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). The Cronbach alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) is a widely used estimate of internal consistency and was used in the current research to assess the scales and subscales and to confirm the reliability of the measuring instruments. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient is the estimate of consistency of responses to different items of the measuring instruments, and ranges from 0 (no internal consistency) to 1 (the maximum internal consistency score) (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

Furthermore, according to Tredoux and Durrheim (2013), a reliability coefficient of .70 is adequate for research instruments. This means that, in this research, a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .70 was used in the data analysis to determine the acceptable reliability coefficient of the TEIQue, the Work-life Balance Scale and the WEQ28.

### **6.7.2 Phase 2: Descriptive statistical analysis**

Descriptive statistics were calculated to describe the sample characteristics in numerical data in terms of the chosen constructs as well as the relevant biographical variables. The term 'descriptive statistics' entails ordering and summarising the data by means of tabulation and graphic presentations (Durrheim, 2006; Steyn, Smit, Du Toit, & Strasheim, 2003). Descriptive statistics organise and summarise the univariate and bivariate analysis of quantitative data. In the current study, the analysis consisted of several interrelated processes that were intended to summarise, merge, connect and embed the data. The researcher transformed raw results into information that enabled her to paint a clear picture of the construct being studied. Data were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The results of this analysis will be described in tabular or graphic layout (see Chapter 7). The descriptive statistics used in this study were percentages, means, standard deviations (SDs), skewness, kurtosis and frequency tables (Bryman, 2010; De Vos, Delport, Fouché, & Strydom, 2011; Salkind, 2009).

#### *6.7.2.1 Biographical variables*

The profile of the sample was described according to the following biographical variables: age, gender, race, geographical spread, level of education, tenure, hours worked and paid, and level of employment, and was used in the research to investigate whether significant differences exist between respondents as defined by the biographical variables. The decision to include these categories of biographical variables was based on the exploration of the variables that were found in the literature review to influence the constructs of generations, WLB and SWB. Frequency and percentage distributions were used in this research to present and describe the distribution of data of the sample population (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

### 6.7.2.2 *Descriptive statistics*

According to Tredoux and Durrheim (2013), a frequency and percentage distribution is a graphical or tabular illustration of a data set indicating the set of scores on a variable together with their frequencies and percentages. For this study, frequency and percentage distribution was used to organise and summarise the data in order to render it more comprehensible and to summarise the information on the number of times the given score appeared within the dataset (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013). Babbie (2014) explains that construct validity is based on the logical relationships between variables. Descriptive statistics were calculated to describe the sample characteristics in numerical data in terms of the chosen constructs as well as the relevant biographical variables. The results of this analysis will be described in tables.

Construct descriptive statistics were used for this study to understand the inferential statistics and the research results, means, SDs, kurtosis and skewness of the data. Data for this research were reported for items and dimensions of the, the Work-life Balance Scale and the WEQ28 and the dimensions of the TEIQue. The items for the TEIQue scale were not indicated because of copyright restrictions. This was however not seen as a limitation to the study.

#### (a) *Frequency tables*

Frequency tables were used in this research to describe the distribution scores for the demographic variables as the biographical questions were categorical in nature, and responses are therefore presented by means of frequency distribution (Cohen et al., 2011).

#### (b) *Means and standard deviations*

The mean is the mostly widely used measure of central tendency and is defined as the summary of values divided by their number (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2006; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013; Neuman, 2011). The mean was calculated to provide an arithmetic average on a set of values, and the intended mean was used to compute the score averages that were obtained in the different dimensions of the instruments.

The SD is the measure of the extent to which a group of scores vary about their mean (Christensen, 2016). According to Tredoux and Durrheim (2013) and Cooper and Schindler (2014), the SD is perceived as the square root of the variance that measures the average of the deviations of each score from the mean and it measures the average distance of all the scores in the distribution from the mean or central point of the distribution. The SD gives an approximate picture of the average distance of each number in a set from the centre value and aims to determine whether the values on a parametric test are evenly distributed and clustered closely around the means (Welman, Kruger, & Mitchell, 2009).

The means and SDs for the dimensions of the measuring instruments were calculated, as the main advantage of the mean was that the sample mean was used as a measure of central tendency to estimate the population mean (Cohen et al., 2011).

(c) *Skewness and kurtosis*

'Skewness' refers to a measure of symmetry or a lack thereof, or the numerical measure of the shape of the distribution of the data (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013; Treiman, 2014). A symmetry distribution classifies data if the mean, median and mode are in the same location. The opposite of the symmetric distribution could be either a negatively or a positively skewed distribution, which occurs depending on which side has the majority of scores. The data in this research were therefore categorised as symmetrical as it looked the same on each side of a central point. However, variables and some data sets do not always resemble a normal distribution. Kurtosis is a measure of the peakedness or flatness of a distribution in relation to a normal distribution (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). Skewness and kurtosis values ranging between the -1 and +1 normality range are recommended for conducting parametric tests (Cohen et al., 2011), and thus were calculated in the research study.

### **6.7.3 Phase 3: Inferential statistical analysis**

Phase 3 consisted of correlations, structural equation modelling (SEM), regression analysis, and tests for significant mean differences. The organisation, analysis and SEM of data were conducted with the Lavaan package (Hox & Bechger, 1998; version 0.5-20) in R (version 3.3.0).

### 6.7.3.1 *Correlation analysis*

According to Bryman (2010) and Tredoux and Durrheim (2013), correlation statistics test the direction of the strength of the relationship between two or more variables, while the strength of this relationship is represented by a correlation coefficient. For this study, correlation analysis tested the strength of the relationship between the psychological constructs of 'generations' as the independent variable, and a composite set of psychological constructs of WLB and SWB as the dependent variables. The independent variable is the element considered, manipulated or chosen by the researcher to establish the relationship with the practical phenomenon, which is the dependent variable (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

In this study, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to calculate the strength between variables (Steyn, 2002). The Pearson product-moment correlation is represented by a small letter ( $r$ ) and is typically used to calculate the magnitude (direction) and strength of the relationship between variables (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The magnitude of the relationship entails the level of significance in the relationship between two variables. This significance level is used either to accept or to reject the null hypothesis. The  $p$ -value provides an indication of the significance of the relationship and represents the population correlation. The general convention is that the significance level  $p \leq 0.05$  is used to conduct a hypothesis test (Cooper & Schindler, 2014; Welman et al., 2009).

For this study, 5% levels of significance were used to test for statistical significance. Values were set at a 95% confidence interval level and cut-off points of  $r > 50$  (high effect) at  $p < 0.05$ ,  $r > 30$  (medium effect) at  $p < .01$  and  $r > .10$  (low effect) at  $p < .001$  (Cohen, 1988). These were chosen to filter out small effect sizes and type II error (increasing the chance of false alarms or reporting a relationship when there is not one). This way the researcher could guarantee that significant small effect sizes were genuine and were not statistical artefacts ( $p$ -values usually get smaller when the sample size increases).

### 6.7.3.2 *Structural equation modelling (SEM)*

SEM is a multivariate technique that is used to describe and evaluate the validity of substantive theories with the empirical data (Hair et al., 2010). It is used to assess the

relationship among the latent variables that are indicated by multiple measures and consists of a measurement model and a structural model (Kline, 2012).

SEM relies heavily on goodness-of-fit chi-square statistics to assess the adequacy of hypothesised models as representations of observed relationships; however, multivariate non-normality is known to inflate overall goodness-of-fit test statistics (Kaplan, 2000). Satorra and Bentler (2001) developed a set of corrected normal-theory test statistics that adjust the goodness-of-fit chi-square for bias due to multivariate non-normality. Correcting the regular chi-square value for non-normality requires the estimation of a scaling correction factor ( $c$ ), which reflects the amount of average multivariate kurtosis distorting the test statistic in the data being analysed (Satorra & Bentler (2001). The goodness-of-fit chi-square value for the model is divided by the scaling correction factor to obtain the so-called Satorra–Bentler scaled chi-square.

Robust maximum likelihood (ML) estimates were used for this research as it is among the most versatile and commonly used strategies for hypothesis testing in SEM. It was found that of the major software programs use ML as the default estimator. This method leads to estimates for the parameters  $\theta$ , which maximise the likelihood  $L$  that the empirical covariance matrix  $S$  is drawn from a population for which the model-implied covariance matrix  $\Sigma(\theta)$  is valid (Bollen, 1989). ML seems to be quite robust against the violation of the normality assumption (Boomsma, 2000). The researchers (Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Müller, 2003) contrasted the goodness-of-fit chi-square value of a less restrictive, baseline model (M1) with the goodness-of-fit chi-square value of a more restrictive, nested comparison model (M0).

SEM utilises a confirmatory approach to analyse the structural pathways between variables, using theory to shape models that attempt to explain variance in the data (Hair et al., 2010). In this research, the SEM procedure allowed the researcher to distinguish between direct and indirect relationships among variables and to analyse relationships between latent variables without random error (Garson, 2008). In this study, chi-square was used as it is the most commonly used goodness-of-fit test when comparing models (Strasheim, 2008). Chi-square is a non-parametric technique that is used to assess the magnitude of discrepancy between sample and fitted covariance matrices (Garson, 2008). Chi-square was used to test the difference between the observed data and the hypothesised model. Where chi-squared statistics are reported,

these represent the minimum function statistic corrected for non-normality scaled by Satorra-Bentler factors.

SEM is illustrated with a path diagram to show how the variables are inter-linked (Hair et al., 2010). A path diagram consists of squares or rectangles and circles, which are connected through arrows. Theoretically, the squares or rectangles represent the observed variables while the unobserved variables (latent) are shown graphically with circles or ovals (Hair et al., 2010; Schreiber, Nora, Stage, Barlow, & King, 2006). In addition, the inter-link between variables is shown by lines and a lack of lines between variables, suggesting that a relationship either does exist or that no relationship exists between the variables respectively. A single-headed arrow is indicative of regression coefficient while double-headed arrows depict covariance between variables (Hair et al., 2010; Schreiber et al., 2006).

SEM was used to explore the relationships between WLB and SWB and biographical variables. SEM methodology was used to account for measurement error by inputting SWB as a latent variable comprising four observed variables: Happiness (TEIQue), Optimism (TEIQue), Self-esteem (TEIQue) and Engagement (WEQ). Biographical variables factors were also entered as independent factors, namely Gender, Education, Hours worked, and Hours paid (entered as observed variables). The dependent variable of WLB was represented by three observed variables: WIPL, PLIW and WPLE. As mentioned previously, due to the non-normality of the data, a robust ML estimation was used.

### 6.7.3.3 *Regression analysis*

Multiple regression analysis involves several sets of variables on each side of the continuum, according to which the variables are combined into a predictive value that produces the highest level of correlation between the predicted values and the single variable (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). Regression analysis is a very widely used statistical technique to establish a relationship model between variables (Hair et al., 2010; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010; Tredoux, Pretorius, & Steele, 2006). Regression analysis was done on the overall sample, and for each generation, to identify differences in WLB and SWB across the generations. Ordinary least squares (OLS) was calculated as an equation because it minimises the distance between the fitted

line and all of the data points, and because technically, regression minimises the sum of the squared residuals (Wood, 2006). In linear regression, these variables are related through an equation, where exponent (power) of these variables is 1 (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2013).

#### 6.7.3.4 *Tests for significant mean differences*

ANOVA is a collection of statistical models and their associated estimation procedures, such as the variation among and between groups used to analyse the differences among group means in a sample (Cox, 2006). The observed variance in a particular variable is partitioned into components attributable to different sources of variation. ANOVA provides a statistical test of whether the population means of several groups are equal, and therefore generalises the *t*-test to more than two groups (Bailey, 2008). ANOVA is useful for comparing three or more group means for statistical significance. It is conceptually similar to multiple two-sample *t*-tests, but is more conservative, resulting in fewer type I errors, and is therefore suited to a wide range of practical problems (Howell, 2002).

ANOVAs were used in this research to determine significant differences between the generations statistically in terms of their levels of WLB and SWB. According to Tredoux and Durrheim (2013), this analysis is only significant and valid if the probability associated with it is less than  $p \leq .05$ .

## 6.8 FORMULATION OF THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The definition of a research hypothesis by Cohen et al. (2011) as a clear statement in which something is predicted, was used for the purposes of this research.

**Research aim 1:** to investigate empirically the nature of statistical relationships of WLB and SWB as manifested in a sample of respondents across generations in the South African working population.

**Ho1A:** SWB is proposed as a latent variable comprising Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem, and Engagement.

**Ha1A:** SWB is proposed as a second-order latent variable comprising Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem as one observable variable, and Engagement as another observed variable.

**Ho2A:** There is no statistical relationship between WLB (represented by WIPL, PLIW and WPLE) and SWB (represented by Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement).

**Ha2A:** SWB (represented by Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement) will significantly relate to WLB (represented by WIPL, PLIW and WPLE).

**Research aim 2:** to investigate empirically whether significant differences exist between generations between WLB and SWB.

**Ho3A:** Significant differences in WLB and SWB will occur across the generations.

**Ha3A:** There are no statistically significant differences between generations (represented by Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y) in their levels of WLB (represented by WIPL, PLIW and WPLE) and SWB (represented by Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement).

## **6.9 STRATEGIES TO ENSURE ETHICALITY, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY**

The researcher ensured that more traditional criteria of soundness, namely applicability, consistency, and neutrality (Silverman, 2000) was adhered to. All results were reported on and were tested against the following criteria:

- Creditability of the results of the study, and defined criteria it could be judged by.
- Transferability and applicability of the results to another setting or group of people.
- Replicability of the study if it was conducted with the same participants in the same context, by another researcher.

The researcher also tried to increase the objectivity of this study through the following methods:

- (1) Triangulation, used to ensure that the data gathered is accurate and ensure confidence in the results by collecting data using several different assessments from different sources.

- (2) Peer examination was done when reviewing and analysing the data. This increased the comprehensiveness of the data and made data collection and analysis more efficient.
- (3) Cross-checking the meaning and understanding within the research group.
- (4) Keeping an audit trail – by following a proper audit process (Creswell, 2003).

To increase the reliability and validity of the study, this research adhered to the three ethical principles namely autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence.

(1) Autonomy - Confidentiality was ensured by giving all participants unique identifying numbers instead of using any identifying bio graphics. At the start of the research, the aim of the research, methods of data collection, recordings, the manner of interpretation, and confidential treatment of data was explained (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006). All participants were requested to give informed consent to the research. The researcher assured the participants that the information they give would only be used for the study. The researcher made every effort to be polite and impartial in obtaining the information. The autonomy of all individuals participating in the research work was respected at all times, i.e. the researcher addressed issues such as the voluntary and informed consent of research participants, the freedom of participants to withdraw from the research at any time, and participants' rights to autonomy in any publication that may arise from the research (Silverman, 2000; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

(2) Non-maleficence - the research did no harm to the research participants, or to any other person or groups of persons (Babbie, 2014; Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

(3) Beneficence - the researcher designed the research in such a way that it would be of benefit to the research participants, then more broadly to other research participants and society at large (Terre Blanche & Durrheim, 2006).

Validity and Reliability of data gathering instruments were reported on in full.

## **6.10 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter explained the first five steps in the empirical investigation, which comprised the determination and description of the population and sample, the description of the rationale for choosing the measuring instruments, a description of the data collection procedure and administration of the measuring instruments and a report on the analysis of the data. The chapter concluded with the formulation of the research hypotheses.

Chapter 7 focuses on steps 6 and 7 in the research design, namely the reporting, interpretation and integration of the research results.

## CHAPTER 7: RESULTS

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the results of the empirical study. The quantitative results were analysed and are reported, interpreted, discussed and integrated in terms of validity, reliability, descriptive statistical analysis and inferential statistical analysis. The chapter ends with a summary.

### 7.2 VALIDITY

Results of the EFA and CFA on the psychometric structure of a proposed SWB construct consisting of Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement are reported here.

#### 7.2.1 Results of exploratory factor analysis

The Shapiro–Wilk tests of normality indicated that Happiness ( $w=0.85$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Optimism ( $w=0.94$ ,  $p < .001$ ), Self-esteem ( $w=0.93$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and Engagement ( $w=0.92$ ,  $p < .001$ ) were non-normally distributed, therefore PAF was deemed the appropriate method of factor estimation (Costello & Osborne, 2005).

##### 7.2.1.1 *Results for the single-factor EFA*

The single-factor EFA solution can be found in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 indicates that the proposed structure explains 46.5% of the variance; however, the factor loading for Engagement is below the standard cut-off point of .30 (Hair et al., 2010; Schumacker & Lomax, 2010). As the factor loading for the Engagement is below the standard cut-off point of 0.30, a second EFA was computed to assess whether the factor structure of SWB was best represented by a two-factor model (Costello & Osborne, 2005).

*Table 7.1: Single-factor principal axis factoring EFA for proposed SWB construct*

	Factor 1
Happiness	0.859
Optimism	0.787
Self-esteem	0.659
Engagement	<b>0.232</b>
SS loadings	1.86
% Variance explained	0.465

Note: Factor loadings in bold represent being below the cut-off value of 0.30; SS=Sum of Squares

### 7.2.1.2 Results for the two-factor EFA

The two-factor EFA solution can be found in Table 7.2.

*Table 7.2. Two-factor principal axis factoring EFA for proposed SBW construct*

	Factor 1	Factor 2
Happiness	0.961	-0.058
Optimism	0.720	0.094
Self-esteem	0.446	0.380
Engagement	-0.061	0.506
SS loadings	1.713	0.482
% Variance explained	0.428	0.120
Cumulative % variance explained	0.428	0.549

Note: Factor loadings in bold represent being above cut-off value of 0.30.

Table 7.2 indicates that the two-factor solution explained 54.9% of the variance, with the factors of Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem as one, and Engagement as a separate factor. As the SS loading of the second factor was below 1, the two-factor solution was not found to be a significantly good fit of the SWB construct (Costello & Osborne, 2005).

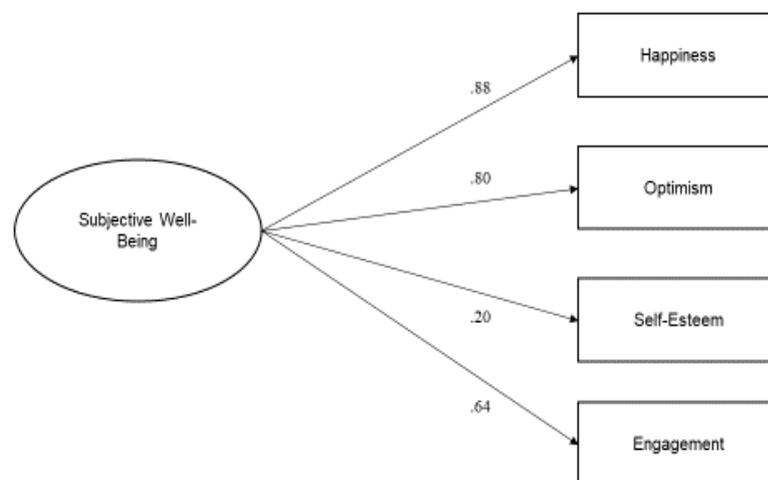
## 7.2.2 Results of confirmatory factor analysis

CFA was used to test the proposed psychometric structure of SWB further.

### 7.2.2.1 Results of the first CFA

SWB was entered as a latent variable made up of four observed variables: Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem, and Engagement. See Figure 7.1.

Figure 7.1. Confirmatory factor analysis of SWB comprising Happiness, Optimism, Self-Esteem, and Engagement.



Fitness indices indicated that the proposed SWB structure was a good fit of the data:  $\chi^2(2)=4.90$ ,  $p=0.09$  (Satorra–Bentler scaling correction factor=1.137);  $\chi^2/df =2.45$ , CFI=0.98 (Byrne, 2010; Hooper et al., 2008), TLI=0.94 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2010), SRMR=0.037 (Kline, 2005).

#### 7.2.2.1 Results of the second CFA

A second CFA was computed to assess whether SWB was better represented as a second-order latent variable. In this model, SWB was entered as a latent variable comprising one latent variable (Well-being, comprising the three TEIQue variables entered as observed variables) and Engagement entered as an observed variable.

However, due to the low degrees of freedom, robust estimates could not be generated for this model (Hair et al., 2010). ML estimates revealed that this model was below the cut-off points for goodness of fit indices:  $\chi^2(1)=5.57$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ;  $\chi^2/df =5.57$ , CFI=0.97 (Byrne, 2010; Hooper et al., 2008), TLI=0.82 (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004), SRMR=0.037 (Kline, 2005).

## Interpretation

This study calculated both EFAs and CFAs to examine the psychometric structure of a proposed SWB construct (Chapter 4) and to test the hypothesis that SWB is a latent variable comprising Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem, and Engagement.

Fitness indices indicated that the proposed SWB structure was a good fit of the data. Based on the results of the two EFA and CFA models, there is enough statistical evidence to accept this hypothesis. This evidence also supports the decision that the TEIQue (measuring Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem) and WEQ28 (measuring Engagement) are considered valid measuring instruments, which can be used to determine the levels of SWB across the different generations.

### 7.3 RELIABILITY

Estimates of the internal consistency of the three measurement instruments were obtained using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and are reported.

#### 7.3.1 Reliability analysis: Work-life Balance Scale

Table 7.3 indicates the Cronbach's alpha coefficient values for the dimensions of the Work-life Balance Scale.

*Table 7.3: Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the Work-life Balance Scale (n=178)*

Construct		
WLB		
Dimensions	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
WIPL	0.96	5
PLIW	0.74	5
WPLE	0.80	5

The WIPL dimension scored an alpha coefficient of 0.96, the PLIW dimension an alpha coefficient of 0.74, and the WPLE dimension an alpha coefficient of 0.80, which can be considered adequate for the purposes of this study (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

### 7.3.2 Reliability analysis: TEIQue

Table 7.4 indicates the Cronbach's alpha coefficient values for the facets of Well-being of the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue).

*Table 7.4: Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the TEIQue (n=178).*

Dimension		
Well-being		
Facets	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Happiness	0.86	8
Optimism	0.79	8
Self-esteem	0.82	11

The internal consistency coefficients for the three facets ranged from 0.86 (Happiness) to 0.79 (Optimism) and 0.82 (Self-esteem) which can be considered adequate for the purposes of this study (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

### 7.3.3 Reliability analysis: WEQ28

Table 7.5 indicates the Cronbach's alpha coefficient values for the Work Engagement Questionnaire (WEQ28).

*Table 7.5: Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the WEQ28 (n=178).*

Construct		
Engagement		
Dimension	Cronbach's alpha	Number of items
Relationship	0.91	8
Role	0.96	12
Reward	0.93	8

The internal consistency coefficients for the three dimensions were 0.91 (Relationships), 0.96 (Role) and 0.93 (Reward) for the total sample (n=178), which can be considered adequate for the purposes of this study (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

### Interpretation

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is the estimate of consistency of responses to different items of the measuring instruments, and ranges from 0 (no internal

consistency) to 1 (the maximum internal consistency score) (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013). Furthermore, according to Tredoux and Durrheim (2013), a reliability coefficient of 0.70 is adequate for research instruments and a reliability coefficient of 0.80 or more is very good (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

In terms of the manifestation of WLB in the sample group, the Cronbach Alphas for the dimensions were 0.96 (WIPL), 0.74 (PLIW) and 0.80 (WPLE). These scores imply a high score on total WLB as well as on the dimensions of WIPL and WPLE. Hayman (2005) reported scores of 0.93 for WIPL, 0.85 for PLIW and 0.69 for WPLE as manifested in samples of 61 administrative and professional employees from the human management and financial services department of a large university in Western Australia. Similarly, Smeltzer et al. (2016) reported coefficients of a sample of 554 nursing employees from 71 nursing schools in the United States of 0.88 for the total scale, 0.92 for the WIPL subscale, 0.81 for the PLIW subscale, and 0.66 for the WPLE subscale. The scores in this research compared equally well with those obtained in previous research.

In terms of the manifestation of Well-being in the sample group, the Cronbach Alphas for the facets were 0.86 (Happiness), 0.79 (Optimism), and 0.82 (Self-esteem). These values imply a high score on total Well-being as well as on the facets of Happiness and Optimism, and adequate scores for Optimism. The scores in this research compared fairly well with those obtained in previous research. Mikolajczak et al. (2007) reported results in this regard for a sample of 740 participants in a French study with high values of 0.91 for Well-being, 0.91 for Happiness, 0.82 for Optimism and a lower value of 0.75 for Self-esteem. In comparison with the scores of a sample of 227 employees across diverse occupations in an Italian study (Andrei, Smith, Surcinelli, Baldaro, & Saklofske, 2015), overall Well-being (0.84), Happiness (0.88), and Self-esteem (0.84), were similar, with Optimism (0.85) being slightly higher.

In terms of the manifestation of Engagement in the sample group, the Cronbach Alphas were 0.91 for Relationship, 0.96 for Role and 0.93 for Reward. These scores imply a high score on total Engagement as well as on all three the dimensions. Slaski (2014) reported internal coefficients on a sample of 2 500 employees over 150 different organisational groups in a UK study. The total sample consisted of 65% males and 34% females, between 17 and 67 years of age. Psychometric analysis of all these

data revealed very high internal consistency of the WEQ28 (Cronbach's alpha=0.96). The scores in this research compared equally well with those obtained in previous research.

#### 7.4. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Descriptive statistics in this research are included to understand the inferential statistical analysis as reported in section 6.5 better. Data on the biographical variables as well as the item descriptives are reported.

##### 7.4.1 Biographical variables

This section presents the descriptive information on the biographical variables of the sample of 178 ( $n=178$ ) participants who completed the measuring instruments. The profile of the sample is described according to the following biographical variables: age, gender, race, geographical spread, level of education, tenure, hours worked and paid, and level of employment.

###### (a) *Composition of respondents in terms of age*

Table 7.6 indicates the age distribution of respondents within the sample.

*Table 7.6: Age distribution of sample ( $n=178$ )*

<b>Generation</b>	<b>Age group</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Baby Boomers	Born 1950–1969	40	22
Generation X	Born 1970–1989	106	60
Generation Y	Born 1990–2005	32	18
		<b>178</b>	<b>100</b>

Baby Boomers comprised 22% of the sample, Generation X comprised 60%, and Generation Y comprised 18%. Overall, the sample consisted predominantly of respondents from Generation X.

###### (b) *Composition of respondents in terms of gender*

Table 7.7 indicates the gender distribution of respondents within the sample.

*Table 7.7: Gender distribution of sample (n=178)*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	91	51
Female	87	49
	<b>178</b>	<b>100</b>

The sample comprised 51% males and 49% females. Overall, the sample was equally distributed across gender.

*(c) Composition of respondents in terms of race*

Table 7.8 indicates the race distribution of respondents within the sample.

*Table 7.8: Race distribution of sample (n=178)*

<b>Race</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
African	35	24
Coloured	25	11
Indian	15	8
White	59	56
	<b>178</b>	<b>100</b>

Africans comprised 24% of the sample, coloureds comprised 11%, Indians comprised 8%, and whites comprised 56% of the sample.

*(d) Composition of respondents in terms of geographical spread*

Table 7.9 indicates the geographical distribution of the respondents in the sample (n=178).

*Table 7.9: Geographical distribution of sample (n=178)*

<b>Area</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gauteng	93	52
Free State	28	16
Western Cape	22	12
North West	12	7
KwaZulu-Natal	12	7
Limpopo	3	2

Eastern Cape	2	1
Mpumalanga	2	1
Rather not say	2	1
Other	2	1
	<b>178</b>	<b>100</b>

The majority of respondents resided in Gauteng (52%), followed by the Free State (16%) and Western Cape (12%). Another 7% of respondents resided in North West and KwaZulu-Natal, 2% in Limpopo, and 1% in Eastern Cape and Mpumalanga. Of the participants, 2% preferred not to say where they resided or they resided in other areas.

(e) *Composition of respondents in terms of levels of education*

Table 7.10 indicates the distribution of the respondents in the sample by levels of education.

*Table 7.10: Levels of education distribution of sample (n=178)*

Type	Frequency	Percentage
Less than matric	6	3
Matric	8	5
Diploma/certificate	36	20
Degree	36	20
Honours degree	51	29
Master's degree	31	17
Doctorate	8	5
Rather not say	2	1
	<b>178</b>	<b>100</b>

The distribution of the sample ( $n=178$ ) shows that 5% of the respondents held a doctorate, 17% a master's degree, 29% an honours degree and 20% had a bachelor's degree. This means that over 50% of the sample held a tertiary level of education degree.

(f) *Composition of respondents in terms of tenure*

Table 7.11 indicates the distribution of the respondents in the sample by years of service (tenure)

Table 7.11: Tenure distribution of sample (n=178)

Type	Frequency	Percentage
< 1 year	20	11
1–2 years	65	37
3–5 years	49	28
6–10 years	22	12
11–15 years	12	7
16–20 years	6	3
21+ years	4	2
	<b>178</b>	<b>100</b>

The distribution of the sample (n=178) shows that 48% of the respondents had less than 2 years of service, 40% have 3–10 years of service, and 12% of the respondents have more than 11 years of service.

(g) *Composition of respondents in terms of hours worked vs. hours paid*

Table 7.12 indicates the number of hours worked vs. hours paid per week for the sample.

Table 7.12: Hours worked, and hours paid distribution of sample (n=178)

Generation	Hours worked	Hours paid
Baby Boomers	47	42
Generation X	43	43
Generation Y	45	43
Average	<b>45</b>	<b>42.6</b>

The distribution of the sample (n=178) shows that, at the time of this study:

- participating Baby Boomers worked an average of 47 hours a week, and were paid for 42 hours;
- participants from Generation X worked 43 hours a week, and were paid for 43 hours a week; and
- participants from Generation Y worked 45 hours a week and were paid for 43 hours.

(h) *Composition of respondents in terms of employment level*

Table 7.13 indicates the employment level distribution of the sample.

*Table 7.13: Level of employment distribution of sample (n=178)*

<b>Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Non-managerial	62	35
First-line management	17	10
Middle management	55	31
Executive & senior management	32	18
Other managerial level	7	4
I'd rather not say	5	3
	<b>178</b>	<b>100</b>

The distribution of the sample implied that of the respondents ( $n=178$ ) 35% were employed as non-managerial, 31% were employed as middle management, 18% were employed at executive and senior management level, 10% at first-line management, and 4% as other managerial levels. Five of the respondents indicated that they would rather not say on which level they were. The biggest component of the sample was represented by respondents at non-managerial and middle management level.

### **Interpretation**

The data collected describe the nature and compilation of the sample group. Based on the criterion applied to the initial sample, the researcher chose a target population sample of 178 individuals. The sample consisted of three cohorts, namely 40 Baby Boomers, 106 Generations Xers and 32 participants from Generation Y. This research was conducted within South African organisations selected from a wide range of industries, including health and education (15%), professional services (15%), and business and management consultancy services (6%). The employees of these organisations were full-time employees working under normal conditions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No. 11 of 2002. Most employees were from non-management (33%) or middle management (29%).

## 7.4.2 Descriptive statistics of the instruments

This section reports on the descriptive statistics on each of the three measuring instruments namely the Work-life Balance Scale, the TEIQue and the WEQ28.

### 7.4.2.1 Work-life Balance Scale

The descriptive information of the WLB scale dimensions is shown in Table 7.14. The descriptive information consists of means, SDs, skewness and kurtosis for each item.

Table 7.14: Overall item descriptive statistics for the Work-life Balance Scale (n=178)

Dimension	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Overall WLB	3.46	0.63	0.096	0.737
Work interfering with personal life (WIPL)	3.00	1.62	0.739	-0.246
Personal life interfering with work (PLIW)	2.43	0.75	1.394	4.556
Work and personal life enhancement (WPLE)	4.96	1.29	-0.472	-0.165

The mean scores ranged from 2.43 to 4.96. The SDs of the items ranged from 0.75 to 1.62. The skewness values for the items of the WLB Scale ranged from -0.472 to 1.394, thereby indicating positively skewed distribution (Cohen et al., 2011). The kurtosis values ranged from -0.246 to 4.556, thereby falling outside the -1 and above 1, indicating a non-normal distribution range for these coefficients (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

Tables 7.15, 7.16 and 7.17 provide the descriptive information for the three WLB dimensions across the generations. The descriptive information consists of the mean, the SD, skewness and kurtosis of each dimension.

Table 7.15: Descriptive statistics for the Work-life Balance Scale dimensions for Baby Boomers (n=40)

Dimension	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Overall WLB	3.57	0.66	-0.735	2.190
Work interfering with personal life (WIPL)	3.19	1.66	-0.512	0.599
Personal life interfering with work (PLIW)	2.46	0.83	1.936	7.084
Work and personal life enhancement (WPLE)	5.05	1.31	-1.350	2.020

The table indicates a mean score ranging from 2.46 to 5.05. Overall mean score ( $M=3.57$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD=0.66$ ) was obtainable for the total WLB. The highest mean score ( $M=5.05$ ;  $S=1.31$ ) was observed for WPLE and the lowest mean score ( $M=2.46$ ;  $SD=0.83$ ) was achieved for PLIW. The table further shows that the SDs indicate that the variability for the overall WLB construct was actually small ( $SD=0.66$ ) relative to its sub-dimensions, with higher variability in WIPL ( $SD=1.66$ ) among the Baby Boomers with regard to WLB. The skewness values ranged from  $-0.512$  to  $1.936$ , thereby falling outside the  $-1$  and  $+1$  normality range recommended for these coefficients (Cohen et al., 2011).

The kurtosis values ranged from  $0.599$  to  $7.084$ , indicating a non-normal distribution range recommended for these coefficients (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

*Table 7.16: Descriptive statistics for the Work-life Balance Scale dimensions for Generation X (n=106)*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Overall WLB	3.42	0.58	0.231	0.531
Work interfering with personal life (WIPL)	2.92	1.59	0.888	0.118
Personal life interfering with work (PLIW)	2.40	0.75	1.273	3.596
Work and personal life enhancement (WPLE)	4.95	1.27	-0.244	-0.414

The table indicates a mean score ranging from 2.40 to 4.95. Overall mean score ( $M=3.42$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD=0.58$ ) was obtainable for the total WLB. The highest mean score ( $M=4.95$ ;  $SD=1.27$ ) was observed for WPLE and the lowest mean score ( $M=2.40$ ;  $SD=0.75$ ) was achieved for PLIW.

The table further shows that the SDs indicate that the variability for the overall WLB construct was actually small ( $SD=0.58$ ) relative to its sub-dimensions, with higher variability in WIPL ( $SD=1.59$ ) amongst Generation X Boomers with regard to WLB. The skewness values ranged from  $-0.244$  to  $1.273$ , thereby falling outside the  $-1$  and  $+1$  normality range recommended for these coefficients (Cohen et al., 2011). The kurtosis values ranged from  $-0.414$  to  $3.596$ , indicating a non-normal distribution range for these coefficients (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

Table 7.17: Descriptive statistics for the Work-life Balance Scale dimensions for Generation Y (n=32)

Dimension	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Overall WLB	3.45	0.76	0.622	0.565
Work interfering with personal life (WIPL)	3.03	1.74	0.667	-0.325
Personal life interfering with work (PLIW)	2.46	0.61	0.214	2.112
Work and personal life enhancement (WPLE)	4.85	1.41	-0.048	-1.339

The table indicates a mean score ranging from 2.46 to 4.85. Overall mean score ( $M=3.45$ ) and standard deviation ( $SD=0.76$ ) was obtainable for the total WLB. For Generation Y, the highest mean score ( $M= 4.85$ ;  $SD=1.41$ ) was observed for WPLE and the lowest mean score ( $M=2.46$ ;  $SD=0.61$ ) was achieved for PLIW. The skewness values ranged from -0.048 to 0.667, thereby falling within the -1 and +1 normality range recommended for these coefficients (Cohen et al., 2011). The kurtosis values ranged from -1.339 to 2.112, indicating a non-normal distribution range for these coefficients (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

### Interpretation

The mean was calculated to provide an arithmetic average on a set of values, and the intended mean was used to compute the score averages that were obtained in the different dimensions of the instruments. Reverse scoring was done for item 11 (It is hard to work because of personal matters), where higher scores signify less balance. Higher means indicate that participants report having experienced that situation more frequently. Items with higher means are purported to indicate lower levels of WLB. The WPLE subscale is worded positively, and higher means indicate higher levels of perceived WLB (Hayman, 2005).

Across the generations, the highest mean scores were observed for WPLE and the lowest mean scores for PLIW, indicating an overall sense of balance. The mean scores on the dimensions in this research correlate with the previous results of researchers (Campbell et al., 2015; Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Loehr & Schwartz, 2003; Maroun, 2013; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010; Weeks et al., 2017; Williams, 2009; Zemke et al., 2011), namely that although individuals experience WLB in different ways, there is an inherent need to maintain and enhance WLB across all

the generations. The overall score on the WPLE dimension indicates the importance of WLB for all generations. Much research has been done on optimising positive WLB and researchers (Copp, 2012; Greenhaus & Powell 2003; Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Nizam & Kam, 2018) have found that generally, individuals would like to enhance positive WLB.

#### 7.4.2.2 Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue)

The descriptive information of the TEIQue dimension of Well-being is shown in Tables 7.18, 7.19, 7.20 and 7.21. The descriptive information consists of means, SDs, skewness and kurtosis for each construct in the dimension. The items for the TEIQue scale are not indicated because of copyright restrictions.

*Table 7.18: Descriptive statistics for the TEIQue Well-being dimension (n=178)*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Overall Well-being	5.82	0.67	-1.481	3.125
Happiness	6.12	0.79	-1.588	2.923
Optimism	5.75	0.81	-0.896	0.982
Self-esteem	5.61	0.76	-1.117	1.786

A seven-point Likert-type scale was used to capture the participants' responses regarding the measure of the personality traits on a continuum scale ranging from '1' indicative of negative and '7' denoting positive. The mean score ranged from 5.61 to 6.21. An overall mean score ( $M=5.82$ ) and standard deviation of ( $SD=0.67$ ) was obtainable for the overall Well-being dimension of the TEIQue. The table further depicts that the highest mean score was obtained for Happiness ( $M=6.12$ ;  $SD=0.79$ ), followed by Optimism ( $M=5.75$ ;  $SD=0.81$ ). The lowest mean score was observed for Self-esteem ( $M=5.61$ ;  $SD=0.76$ ).

The table also show the SDs indicating that the variability for the overall personality traits was actually smaller ( $SD=0.67$ ), relative to its dimensions with a larger variability indicated in Optimism ( $SD=0.81$ ) across the generations.

The table further shows that all the facets are negatively skewed with values ranging between  $-0.896$  and  $-1.588$ . The negative skewness of the values reflects that the distribution of the scores is clustered to the right-hand side. The kurtosis values ranged

between 0.982 and 2.923, indicating a non-normal distribution range for these coefficients (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

*Table 7.19: Descriptive statistics for the TEIQue Well-being dimension for Baby Boomers (n=40)*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Overall Well-being	5.99	0.51	-0.659	-0.469
Happiness	6.24	0.59	-0.697	-0.177
Optimism	5.95	0.74	-0.397	-0.638
Self-esteem	5.78	0.48	0.078	-0.950

For the Baby Boomers, the mean score ranged from 5.78 to 6.24. An overall mean score ( $M=5.99$ ) and standard deviation of ( $SD=0.51$ ) was obtainable for the Overall Well-being dimension of the TEIQue. The table further depicts that the highest mean score was obtained for Happiness ( $M=6.24$ ;  $SD=0.59$ ), followed by Optimism ( $M=5.95$ ;  $SD=0.74$ ). The lowest mean score was observed for Self-esteem ( $M=5.78$ ;  $SD=0.48$ ). The skewness values ranged from 0.078 to -0.697 thereby falling within the -1 and +1 normality range for these coefficients (Cohen et al., 2011). The kurtosis values ranged between -0.177 and -0.950 indicating a normal distribution range for these coefficients (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

*Table 7.20: Descriptive statistics for the TEIQue Well-being dimension for Generation X (n=106)*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Overall Well-being	5.81	0.68	-1.443	2.997
Happiness	6.13	0.78	-1.505	2.782
Optimism	5.72	0.83	-1.011	1.406
Self-esteem	5.58	0.78	-1.129	1.747

For Generation X, the mean scores ranged from 5.58 to 6.13. An overall mean score ( $M=5.81$ ) and standard deviation of ( $SD=0.68$ ) was obtainable for the Overall Well-being dimension of the TEIQue. The table further depicts that the highest mean score was obtained for Happiness ( $M=6.13$ ;  $SD=0.78$ ), followed by Optimism ( $M=5.72$ ;  $SD=0.83$ ). The lowest mean score was observed for Self-esteem ( $M=5.58$ ;  $SD=0.78$ ). The skewness values ranged from -1.011 to -1.505 thereby falling outside the -1 and +1 normality range for these coefficients (Cohen et al., 2011).

The kurtosis values ranged between 1.406 and 2.782 indicating a non-normal distribution range for these coefficients (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

*Table 7.21: Descriptive statistics for the TEIQue Well-being dimension for Generation Y (n=32)*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Overall Well-being	5.62	.081	-1.627	2.819
Happiness	5.89	1.08	-1.532	1.413
Optimism	5.55	0.81	-1.127	0.481
Self-esteem	5.42	1.00	-0.744	0.098

For Generation Y, the mean scores ranged from 5.42 to 5.89. An overall mean score ( $M=5.62$ ) and standard deviation of ( $SD=0.81$ ) was obtainable for the overall Well-being dimension of the TEIQue. The table further depicts that the highest mean score was obtained for Happiness ( $M=5.89$ ;  $SD=1.08$ ), followed by Optimism ( $M=5.55$ ;  $SD=0.81$ ). The lowest mean score was observed for Self-esteem ( $M=5.42$ ;  $SD=1.00$ ). The skewness values ranged from -0.744 to -1.532 thereby falling outside the -1 and +1 normality range for these coefficients (Cohen et al., 2011). The kurtosis values ranged between 0.098 and 1.413 indicating a non-normal distribution range for these coefficients (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

### **Interpretation**

The total score ( $M=5.82$ ) for the Well-being dimension was high (where 1–2.9=low, 3–4.9=moderate and 5–7=high), indicating that across the generations, the participants had an overall sense of Well-being. Baby Boomers scored the highest on the Well-being dimension overall, followed by Generation X and then Generation Y.

#### **7.4.2.3 Work Engagement Questionnaire (WEQ28)**

The descriptive information of the WEQ28 is shown in Table 7.22. The descriptive information comprises means, SDs, skewness and kurtosis.

*Table 7.22: Descriptive statistics for the WEQ28 (n=178)*

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Skewness</b>	<b>Kurtosis</b>
Overall Engagement	4.94	1.58	-0.797	-0.379
Baby Boomers (n=40)	5.07	1.49	-0.892	0.315
Generation X (n=106)	4.89	1.54	-0.716	-0.730
Generation Y (n=32)	4.94	1.43	-0.845	-0.072

The mean scores ranged from 4.94 to 5.07. The SDs ranged from 1.43 to 1.54. The skewness values ranged from -0.716 to -0.892, thereby falling outside the -1 and +1 normality range these coefficients (Cohen et al., 2011). The kurtosis values ranged from -0.072 to 0.315, thereby falling outside the -1 and above 1, indicating a non-normal distribution range for these coefficients (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013).

### **Interpretation**

The overall score for Engagement seems to be moderate (where 1–2.9=low, 3–4.9=moderate and 5–7=high) across the generations. Previous research has shown that individuals who are engaged in their work, are satisfied with their careers and feel a great sense of SWB in their lives (Baek-Kyoo & Insuk, 2017; Bakker & Oerlemans, 2011; May et al., 2004; Rothmann, 2013).

## **7.6 INFERENCE STATISTICS**

Empirical research aim 1 of this study was to investigate empirically the nature of statistical relationships between WLB and SWB as manifested in a sample of respondents across the generations. Correlational analysis and SEM were used to explore the relationships between WLB and SWB taking into consideration the biographical variables across the generations and is reported on.

### **7.6.1 Correlational analysis**

Correlational analysis is reported on, and Tables 7.23 and 7.24 show the correlation matrices between WLB and SWB and biographical variables.

Table 7.23: Correlations of SWB and WLB factors

	SWB	Happiness	Optimism	Self-esteem	Engagement	WILP	PLIW	PLIW
SWB	1							
Happiness	0.72***	1						
Optimism	0.73***	0.71***	1					
Self-esteem	0.72***	0.56***	0.5***	1				
Engagement	0.7***	0.13	0.17*	0.26**	1			
WIPL	-0.11	0.02	-0.05	-0.02	<b>-0.18*</b>	1		
PLIW	<b>-0.31***</b>	-0.22*	-0.2*	-0.17	-0.26**	0.38***	1	
WPLE	<b>0.54***</b>	0.4***	0.32***	0.29***	0.41***	-0.36***	-0.37***	1

Note: \*= $p < .05$ ; \*\*= $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*= $p < .001$ ; *WILP*=work interference with personal life; *PLIW*=personal life interfering with work; *WPLE*=work and personal life enhancement

The table indicates that SWB significantly correlated with two of the three WLB factors: PLIW ( $r=-0.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and WPLE ( $r=0.54$ ,  $p < .001$ ). SWB as whole did not significant correlate with WIPL, but Engagement as construct ( $r=-0.18$ ,  $p < .05$ ) did.

Table 7.24: Correlations of biographical variables, WLB factors and SWB

	Gender	Generation	Level of education	Tenure	Hours worked	Hours paid	Hours worked/paid	Level of employment
SWB	0.03	0.13	-0.16	-0.03	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.03
<i>Happiness</i>	0.13	0.14	<b>-0.19*</b>	-0.01	0.08	0.02	0.03	0.05
<i>Optimism</i>	0.08	0.13	<b>-0.18*</b>	0.02	0.06	0.11	0.12	0.02
<i>Self-esteem</i>	0.1	0.13	-0.14	0.05	0.01	0.07	0.04	0.03
<i>Engagement</i>	-0.1	0.04	-0.03	-0.08	-0.04	-0.04	-0.05	0.01
WIPL	0.1	0.07	-0.06	-0.06	0.1	<b>0.43***</b>	0.01	0.13
PLIW	0.12	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.01	0.2*	0.03	0.1
WPLE	0	0.04	-0.07	0.09	0.03	-0.1	0.01	0.07

Note: \*= $p < .05$ ; \*\*= $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* = $p < .001$ ; *WIPL*=work interference with personal life; *PLIW*=personal life interfering with work; *WPLE*=work and personal life enhancement.

The table indicates that the generation category was significantly related to two of the SWB factors, Happiness ( $r = -0.19, p < .05$ ) and Optimism ( $r=-0.18, p < .05$ ). Number of hours worked ( $r=0.43, p <.001$ ) significantly correlated with WIPL.

## 7.6.2 Structural equation modelling (SEM)

Figure 7.2 shows the results of the SEM, highlighting the pathways that were significant.

Figure 7.2. SEM testing the relationship between WLB and SWB and biographical variables

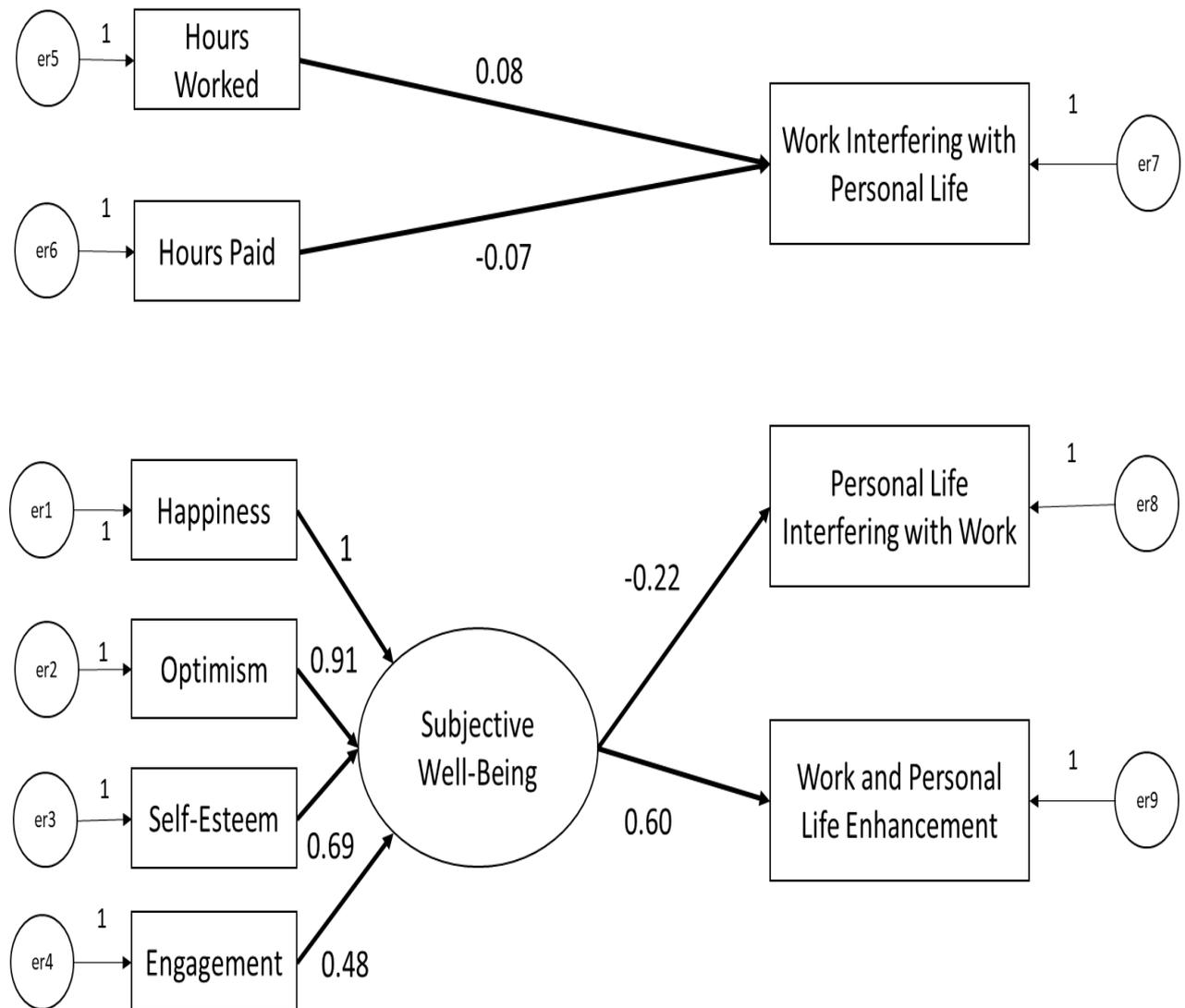


Figure 7.2 indicates that a relationship exists between hours worked (0.08), hours paid (-0.07) and WIPL. It also indicates that there was a relationship between SWB and PLIW (-0.22) and WPLE (0.60). Whilst the chi-squared statistic indicated that the model was not a good fit of the data ( $\chi^2(31)=46.7$ ,  $p=.04$ , Satorra–Bentler scaling correction factor=1.02) and other indices that were utilised indicated the model represented a good fit of the data:  $\chi^2/df=1.51$ , CFI=.94, TLI=.90, SRMR=.063.

## **Interpretation of relationships**

The above results indicated that, in this sample, older men were more likely to be in more senior positions within their organisation, and that for the sample group, younger generations have been in their role and the organisation for shorter periods and, at the time of this research, were less likely to be in a position of management. The results also showed that higher-educated employees work more hours.

The results showed that there are relationships between generations, WLB and SWB in that SWB significantly correlates with the two dimensions of PLIW and WPLE, Engagement as a construct of SWB correlates with WIPL, and generations are significantly related to two of the SWB constructs, namely Happiness and Optimism.

### **7.6.3 Regression analysis**

Regression analysis was done on the overall sample, and for each generation to identify differences in WLB and SWB across the generations. A series of hierarchical regressions was conducted on the WLB factor and is reported on.

#### **7.6.3.1**      *Work interfering with personal Life (WIPL)*

Table 7.25 shows the results of a series of hierarchical regression conducted on the WLB factor WIPL. These were run on the overall sample and for each generation to identify differences. Step 1 referred to gender, levels of education, hours worked, and hours paid. Step 2 referred to the three factors of Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem (from the TEIQue) and Engagement (from WEQ28) as constructs of SWB.

Table 7.25: Regressions of biographical variables, Happiness, Optimism, and Self-esteem, and Engagement on WIPL, overall and by generation

		WIPL							
		Total (n=178)		Baby Boomers (n=40)		Generation X (n=106)		Generation Y (n=32)	
		$\beta$	t	$\beta$	t	$\beta$	T	$\beta$	t
Step 1	Gender	0.08	1.04	0.18	1.11	-0.05	-0.58	0.11	0.57
	Level of education	0.06	0.76	0.20	1.21	0.03	0.35	-0.087	-0.45
	Hours worked	0.62	6.79***	0.35	2.18*	0.89	6.93***	0.50	2.34*
	Hours paid	-0.37	-4.07***	-0.18	-1.11	-0.52	-4.07***	-0.57	-2.51*
<i>F-score</i>		<i>F</i> (133)=13.1***		<i>F</i> (30)=2.91		<i>F</i> (77)=12.9***		<i>F</i> (29)=1.84	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>		0.282		0.287		0.400		0.200	
Step 2	Happiness	0.15	1.38	-0.22	-0.91	0.25	1.89	0.39	1.15
	Optimism	-0.16	-1.53	-0.10	-0.46	-0.7	-0.60	-0.42	-1.33
	Self-Esteem	-0.01	-0.15	0.46	2.18*	-0.25	-2.02*	0.07	0.30
	Engagement	-0.15	-1.99*	-0.15	-0.87	-0.24	-2.62*	0.10	0.50
<i>F-score</i>		<i>F</i> (129)=7.69***		<i>F</i> (25)=2.21		<i>F</i> (66)=8.8***		<i>F</i> (21)=1.10	
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup> ( $\Delta R$ <sup>2</sup> )		0.323 (.041)		0.414 (.127)		0.516 (.116)		0.295 (.095)	

Note: \*= $p < .05$ ; \*\*= $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*= $p < .001$ .

The table indicates that for Step 1, hours worked (positive) and hours paid (negative) were the only significant predictors of WIPL, explaining 28% of the variance. These results were also seen for Generation X employees (40% of variance explained) and Generation Y employees (20% of variance explained) but were not significant for Baby Boomers.

For Step 2, Engagement was the only significant predictor ( $\beta=-0.15$ ), explaining an additional 4% of the variance. For Baby Boomers, Self-esteem (positive) as psychological construct became the only significant predictor of WIPL, with hours worked and hours paid no longer being significant negative predictors on WIPL (hours worked and hours paid remained significant). Only hours worked and hours paid were significant predictors for Generation Y employees.

#### 7.6.3.2 *Personal life interfering with work (PLIW)*

Table 7.26 shows the results of a series of hierarchical regressions on the WLB factor PLIW. These regressions were run on the overall sample and for each generation to identify differences. Step 1 referred to gender, level of education, hours worked, and hours paid. Step 2 referred to the three factors of Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem (from the TEIQue) and Engagement (from WEQ28) as constructs of SWB.

Table 7.26: Regressions of biographical variables, Happiness, Optimism, and Self-esteem, and Engagement on PLIW, overall and by generation

		PLIW									
		Total (n=178)		Baby Boomers (n=40)		Generation X (n=106)		Generation Y (n=32)			
		$\beta$	t	B	T	B	t	B	t		
Step 1	Gender	0.11		1.29	0.21	1.18		0.04	0.36	0.18	0.98
	Level of education	0.14		1.62	0.19	0.09		0.08	0.75	0.09	0.46
	Hours worked				-0.01	-0.03		0.34	2.17*	0.30	1.36
	Hours paid	0.23		2.24*							
		-0.13		-1.23	-0.19	-1.10		-0.11	-0.71	-0.48	-2.05*
<i>F-score</i>		$F(133)=2.87^*$		$F(30)=1.00$		$F(77)=2.08$		$F(29)=1.17$			
$R^2$		0.080		0.118		0.097		0.139			
Step 2	Happiness	-0.13		-1.07	0.13	0.49		-0.35	-2.15*	-0.16	-0.46
	Optimism	-0.10		-0.89	-0.18	-0.79		-0.09	-0.63	0.00	0.01
	Self-Esteem				-0.03	-0.12		0.07	0.47	-0.25	-1.08
	Engagement	-0.01		-0.10							
		-0.20		-2.40*	-0.47	-2.52*		-0.19	-1.70	0.26	1.23
<i>F-score</i>		$F(129)=3.64^{***}$		$F(25)=1.64^{**}$		$F(66)=3.14^{**}$		$F(21)=0.89$			
$R^2 (\Delta R^2)$		0.184 (.104)		0.345 (.227)		0.276 (.179)		0.254 (.115)			

Note: \*= $p < .05$ ; \*\*= $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*= $p < .001$ . Standardised betas are reported.

The table indicates that for Step 1, hours worked significantly positively predicted PLIW, but only explained 6% of the variance. However, these results differed across generations. No significant predictors were noted for Baby Boomers, hours worked significantly positively predicted PLIW for Generation X employees, and hours paid significantly negatively predicted PLIW for Generation Y employees.

For Step 2, hours worked (positive) and Engagement (negative) were significant predictors of PLIW, explaining 18% of the variance. Education also bordered on significance ( $\beta=0.15$ ,  $p=.06$ ). For Baby Boomers, only Engagement (negative) was a significant predictor. For Generation X employees, hours worked (positive) and Happiness (negative) were significant predictors of PLIW. For Generation Y, none of the entered variables was significant in the second step.

#### 7.6.3.3 *Work and personal life enhancement (WPLE)*

Table 7.27 shows the results of a series of hierarchical regressions on the WLB factor WPLE. These regressions were run on the overall sample and for each generation to identify differences. Step 1 included gender, level of education, hours worked, and hours paid. Step 2 included the three factors of Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem (from the TEIQue) and Engagement (from WEQ28) as constructs of SWB.

Table 7.27: Regressions of biographical variables, Happiness, Optimism, and Self-esteem, and Engagement on WPLE, overall and by generation category

		WPLE							
		Total (n=188)		Baby Boomers (n=40)		Generation X (n=108)		Generation Y (n=40)	
		$\beta$	t	$\beta$	T	B	t	$\beta$	t
Step 1	Gender	0.01	0.06	-0.16	-0.86	0.03	0.25	0.34	1.78
	Level of education	-0.10	-1.19	-0.14	-0.77	-0.12	-1.11	0.33	1.76
	Hours worked			0.18	1.03	-0.40	-2.51*	-0.11	-0.54
	Hours paid	-0.14	-1.36	0.11	1.04	0.10	0.54	0.19	1.12
<i>F-score</i>		F(133)=1.01		F(30)=0.61		F(77)=2.39		F(29)=2.34	
<i>R<sup>2</sup></i>		0.029		0.075		0.110		0.244	
Step 2	Happiness	0.32	2.91**	-0.22	-0.87	0.43	2.82**	0.39	1.46
	Optimism	0.05	0.46	0.45	1.93	-0.19	-1.33	0.26	1.04
	Self-Esteem			-0.4	-0.19	0.04	0.27	0.05	0.28
	Engagement	0.00	-0.04	0.35	4.61***	0.38	2.04	0.35	3.37**
<i>F-score</i>		F(129)=7.49***		F(25)=1.61		F(66)=4.64***		F(21)=3.46*	
<i>R<sup>2</sup> (<math>\Delta R^2</math>)</i>		0.317 (.288)		0.340 (.265)		0.360 (.250)		0.568 (.324)	

Note: \*= $p < .05$ ; \*\*= $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*= $p < .001$ . Standardised betas are reported.

The table indicates that for Step 1, none of the variables were significant predictors of WPLE. For Generation X employees, however, hours worked significantly negatively predicted WPLE. No other significant results were seen for other generation categories.

For Step 2, Happiness (positive) and Engagement (positive) were significant predictors of WPLE, explaining an additional 29% of the variance. This was also seen for Generation X employees (with hours worked also being a significant negative predictor), explaining 36% of the variance in total. No individual significant predictors were seen for Generation Y. However, the regression model was significant and explained 57% of the variance in WPLE.

#### 7.6.4 Tests for significant differences

Descriptive statistics for WLB and SWB across the whole sample and by generation were done and additionally, ANOVAs were calculated to assess differences in levels of WLB and SWB across generations. Results are shown in Tables 7.28 and 7.29.

*Table 7.28: Descriptive statistics and ANOVAs of generational differences in WLB factors*

	Total (n=178)	Baby Boomers (n=40)	Generation X (n=106)	Generation Y (n=32)	F-Value ( $\eta^2$ )
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	
WILP	3.00 (1.62)	3.19 (1.66)	2.95 (1.60)	2.92 (1.67)	0.31 (0.01; ns)
PLIW	2.43 (0.75)	2.47 (0.83)	2.38 (0.78)	2.49 (0.56)	0.27 (0.00; ns)
WPLE	4.96 (1.29)	5.05 (1.31)	4.99 (1.24)	4.79 (1.44)	0.35 (0.01; ns)

Note: WILP=work Interference with personal life; PLIW=personal life interfering with work; WPLE=work and personal life enhancement; (ns)=non-significant

Table 7.29: Descriptive statistics and ANOVAs of generational differences in SWB factors

	Total ( <i>n</i> =178)	Baby Boomers ( <i>n</i> =40)	Generation X ( <i>n</i> =106)	Generation Y ( <i>n</i> =32)	F-Value ( $\eta^2$ )
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)	
Happiness	6.12 (0.79)	6.24 (0.59)	6.20 (0.70)	5.77 (1.09)	3.70* (0.05)
Optimism	5.75 (0.81)	5.95 (0.74)	5.75 (0.79)	5.51 (0.91)	2.71 (0.03; <i>ns</i> )
Self-Esteem	5.61 (0.76)	5.78 (0.48)	5.58 (0.79)	5.46 (0.92)	1.39 (0.02; <i>ns</i> )
Engagement	4.94 (1.50)	5.07 (1.49)	4.88 (1.49)	4.95 (1.59)	0.20 (0.00; <i>ns</i> )

Note: \*= $p < .05$ ; (*ns* =non-significant)

The tables indicate only one result to be significantly different. An overall difference was noted for Happiness across the generations, with a borderline medium effect size. Post-hoc Tukey analysis (see Tukey, 1949) indicated Generation Y employees have significantly lower levels of Happiness than Generation X employees ( $p=.03$ ). Differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomers bordered on significance ( $p=.05$ ), whilst no significant difference was noted for Generation X and Baby Boomers.

### Interpretation of differences

The results indicated that there were some statistically significant differences between generations (represented by Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y) with regard to WLB (represented by WIPL, PLIW and WPLE) and SWB (represented by Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement). For Baby Boomers and Generation X, WLB was influenced by SWB factors, whilst for Generation Y it was mostly influenced by biographical variables. The results showed that hours worked, and hours paid as biographical variables were predictors of WIPL for both Generation X and Generation Y. These were not predictors for the Baby Boomer generation; however, Self-esteem as a construct of SWB was a significant predictor for this generation.

With regard to PLIW, hours worked as a biographical variable and Happiness as a construct of SWB were found to be predictors for Generation X, whereas hours paid was a negative predictor for Generation Y. Again, it was found that biographical variables had no significant effect on the Baby Boomer generation, but the

Engagement construct of SWB was a significant negative predictor. Furthermore, hours worked as biographical variable, and Happiness and Engagement as constructs of SWB were found to predict WPLE for Generation X.

An overall difference was noted for Happiness across the generation with Generation Y employees having significantly lower levels of Happiness than Generation X, whilst no significant difference was noted for Generation X and Baby Boomers.

## **7.7 RESULTS RELATING TO THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

Table 7.30 summarises the empirical research aims and their corresponding research hypotheses, research results and the decisions either to accept, partially accept or reject, or reject the research hypotheses. Based on the outcomes of the analyses and the discussion thereof, two of the hypotheses were fully supported by the data, whereas two were partially supported and one was rejected. It should be noted that, even though the practical effect size was relatively small, results of the empirical research clearly indicate that there is a statistical effect between generations, WLB and SWB manifested in the research participants.

Table 7.30: Results relating to the research hypotheses

	<b>Research hypotheses</b>	<b>Decision</b>	<b>Research results</b>
<b>Research aim 1:</b> To investigate empirically the nature of statistical relationships of WLB and SWB as manifested in a sample of respondents across generations in the South African working population.	<b>Ho1A:</b> SWB is proposed as a latent variable comprising Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement.	Accepted	Results of exploratory and CFA
	<b>Ha1A:</b> SWB is proposed as a second-order latent variable comprising Happiness, Optimism and Self-Esteem as one observable variable and Engagement as another observed variable.	Rejected	
	<b>Ho2A:</b> There is no statistical relationship between WLB (represented by WIPL, PLIW and WPLE) and SWB (represented by Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement)	Rejected	Results of correlation analysis and SEM
	<b>Ha2A:</b> SWB (represented by Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement) will significantly relate to WLB (represented by WIPL, PLIW and WPLE)	Partially accepted	
<b>Research aim 2:</b> To investigate empirically whether significant differences exist between generations between WLB and SWB.	<b>Ho3A:</b> Significant differences in WLB and SWB will occur across the generations.	Accept	Results of regression analysis and test for significant differences
	<b>Ha3A:</b> There are no statistically significant differences between generations (represented by Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y) in levels of WLB (represented by WIPL, PLIW and WPLE) and SWB (represented by Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement).	Partially rejected	

## 7.8 DISCUSSION AND INTEGRATION OF RESULTS

This section discusses and integrates the results of the empirical study with the literature study.

The item data obtained in this research indicate that the participants across the generations experienced positive WLB and SWB overall, despite the changing working environment. It is generally agreed that WLB is important for an individual's PWB, and that high Self-esteem, satisfaction, and overall sense of harmony in life can be regarded as indicators of a successful balance between work and other life roles (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004).

### 7.8.1 Generations

In the proposed **theoretical model** (Figure 7.3), generations in the current world of work are represented by Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y, and are determined and influenced by biographical variables.

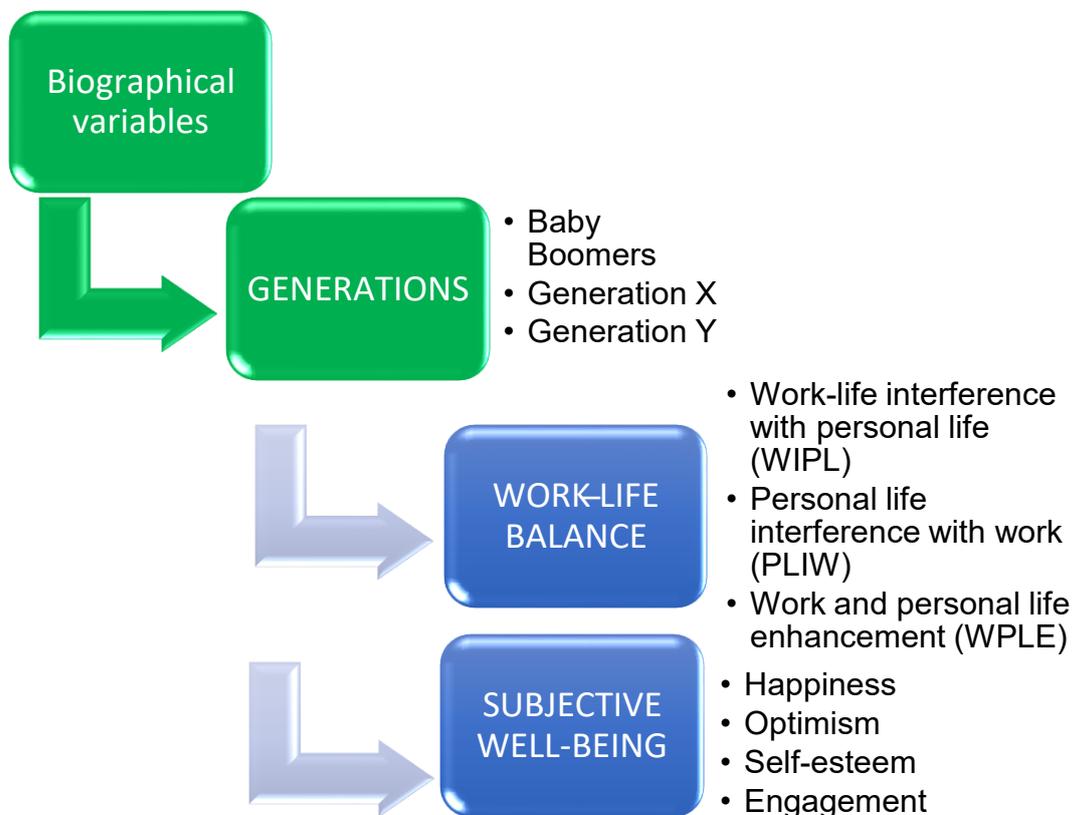


Figure 7.3. Proposed theoretical model highlighting the construct of generations (Source: Author's own compilation)

The data revealed a representative distribution of the generations, based on knowledge of the population and the purpose of the study (Babbie, 2014). This sample reflected the multi-generational character of the current workforce and population in South Africa (Mattes, 2012). The results clearly showed that employees of all generational cohorts (Figure 6.3) and both genders are represented in the workplace in various organisations.

Race, geographical spread and level of employment distribution mimicked the current profile of the South African workforce population as described in the literature review (Stats SA, 2017). The tenure distribution concurred with the literature results on the distribution of the generations in the world of work (Fry, 2016; Van der Walt, 2010; Weeks et al., 2017; Zemke et al., 2011). The researcher decided that the sample was representative of the South African workforce, as it mimicked the distribution indicated in the literature results in Chapter 2 with regard to the current working population statistics.

Sample size is important in quantitative research. Ethics committees and funding agencies are aware that if a research project is too small, it will not achieve that aims of the research project. By producing a false negative result a study may do a disservice to research by discouraging further exploration of the area, and waste the input of the study participants.

When choosing a sample, the sample should be representative of the population, and be precise. An unrepresentative sample will result in biased conclusions, and the bias cannot be eliminated by taking a larger sample. If you have a finite population, the sample size you need can be significantly smaller. According to Leedy & Ormond (2001) smaller samples are needed for homogeneous populations. For an exploratory study, a margin of error of  $\pm 10\%$  is perfectly acceptable. A 10% margin of uncertainty can be achieved with a sample of only 100 (Cohen et al, 2000)

The chosen sample allowed the researcher to include participants who could help to build and expand on the substantive theory (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The participants in the selected group were able to benefit from the results of this research, as it was possible to make them aware of their current WLB and SWB levels, and the influence of these on their positive psychological functioning.

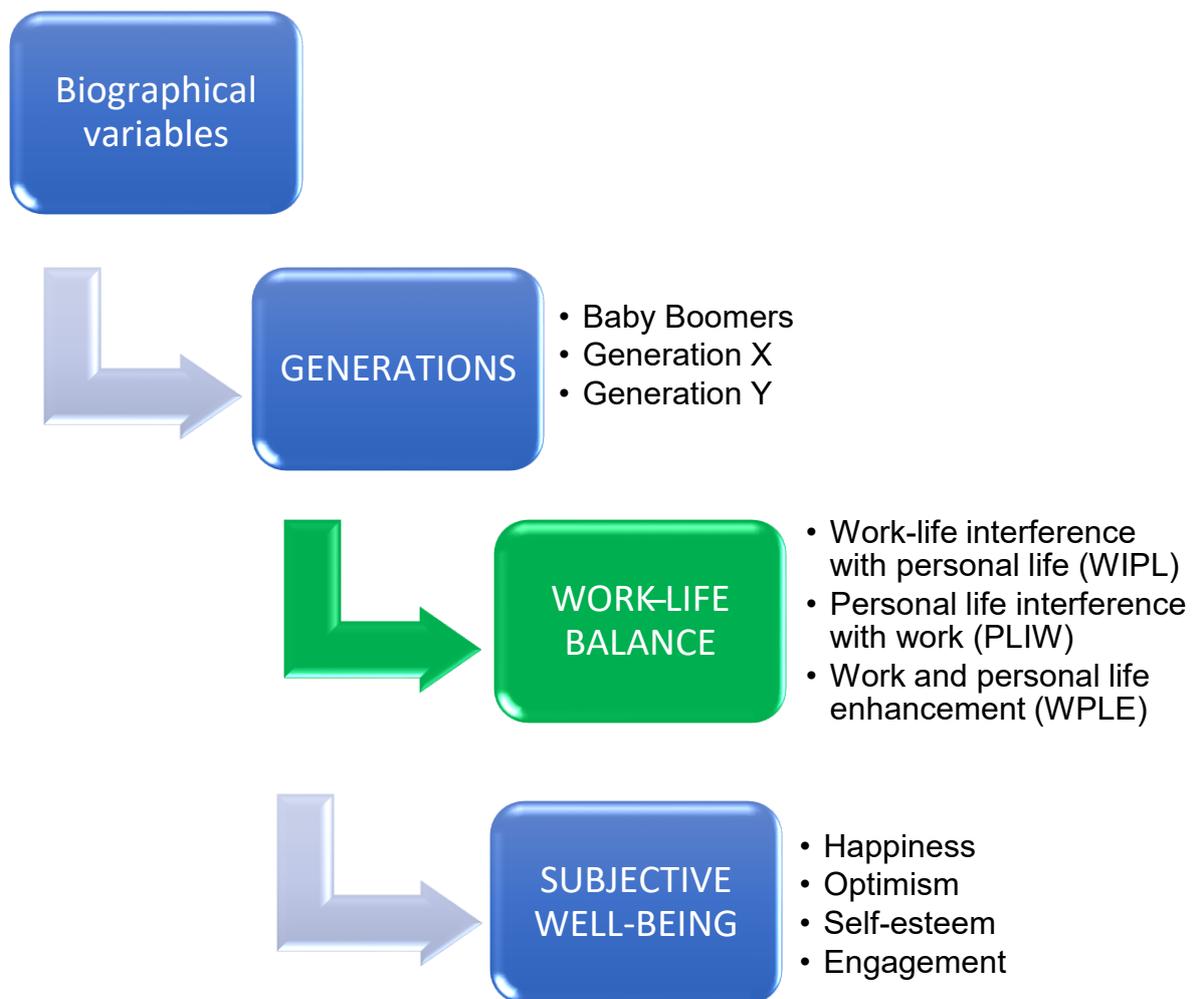
Researchers in organisational psychology have found that there are certainly some relationships and differences between older and younger workers, and have found evidence for gradual changes over time in work-related variables (Foster, 2013; Lester et al., 2012; Lyons & Kuron, 2014; Ng & Feldman, 2010; Parry & Urwin, 2011; Roberts et al., 2006; Twenge et al., 2010). It was found that being in a managerial position is one of the causes of negative WLB (Skillsoft, 2011; Yost, 2004); however, studies have found that women and men find it equally challenging to balance the demands of work and family, despite the common perception that women feel such conflict more than men. Studies also found that there was little overall difference in the amount of work–family conflict felt by women and men and that mothers reported slightly more PIWL than fathers did (Casale, 2004; Casale & Posel, 2002).

The current study found that older men were more likely to be in senior positions within organisations than women. This skewness was expected because prior to political dispensation the world of work was dominated by traditional roles of men as breadwinners and women only being appointed in senior positions much later in their careers. Although Meister and Willyerd (2012) predict that there would be a major increase in professional positions by older women, it seems that this is still not the case.

The current study also found that participating younger employees had been in their role and organisations for shorter periods and were less likely to be in managerial positions. These results were in line with the literature results reported in Maroun (2013) that most corporate executives (managerial positions) fall into the Baby Boomer generation.

### **7.8.2 WLB**

In the proposed **theoretical model**, WLB comprises three dimensions, namely WIPL, PLIW and WPLE. This is depicted in Figure 7.4



*Figure 7.4. Proposed theoretical model highlighting the construct of WLB (Source: Author's own compilation)*

The results of this study indicated that the three dimensions of the Work-life Balance Scale showed sufficient reliabilities, and for the purposes of this research, the psychometric properties of the WLB Scale were regarded as acceptable. Considering the reliability of the WLB Scale, sufficient evidence was found to consider it a reliable measuring instrument to determine the WLB levels across the various generations.

The results indicated positive (where 1–2.9=low, 3–4.9=moderate and 5–7=high) WLB levels across the generations, which refers to the tendency to engage in every sphere equally with high energy, commitment, attention, and care (Grant et al., 2013; Mageni & Slabbert, 2014; Nizam & Kam, 2018; Zheng et al., 2015). When individuals have a healthy WLB, they feel they are in control of their lives and are able to organise life around what is most important to them creating EWB, social wellness and internal

locus of control (Seligman, 2011), and thus become flourishing individuals (Keyes, 2007). The Baby Boomers showed the highest levels of WLB, followed by Generation Y and then Generation X. This is consistent with previous research results (Aydemir, Dinç, & Çağlar, 2016; Smith, 2010; Twenge, 2010; Urick et al., 2017).

The current results indicated that, across the generations in this sample, there was a harmonious interaction between work and life most of the time and across the generations, their personal lives enhanced work, and work did not interfere with personal life. Previous research had found that positive WLB is important for an individual's PWB, satisfaction, and overall sense of harmony in life (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; McMillan et al., 2011).

The results further indicated that this group of participants did not struggle to juggle work and non-work roles, and were happy with the amount of time for non-work activities, indicating that participants from the sample were in agreement that their personal life did not have a negative effect on their work lives. These results imply that the participants of the study had the energy to be effective at work, and their work was not affected by their personal lives. Overall the WLB Scale, indicated agreement across the sample regarding consistent views on personal life, giving participants energy to do their job most of the time.

These results correlate with previous research, which found that, when individuals have healthy WLB –

- they have enough energy to do their jobs;
- they come to work on time and feel refreshed;
- they are prepared for their day's activities; and
- they work with others collaboratively and communicate clearly (Skillsoft, 2009a).

Results by Copp (2012) showed that such workers are appropriately open about their schedules and responsibilities, including their needs to attend to their personal lives, and they are able to set boundaries and plan accordingly so that they can have a life outside of work.

The results of the current research indicated that the Baby Boomers had the highest level of WLB across the generations in the sample. These results could imply that resilience is developed more by individuals who had been exposed to work for longer periods of time, which means that older employees in managerial positions may have the capacity to bounce back from adversity, failure, challenges or changes occurring in their work and personal lives.

Significant differences in levels of WLB did not occur across the generations. However, in the context of the South African workforce – with skills shortages, an ageing workforce and employment equity – it is imperative for organisations to understand what the influences on WLB are, and to put strategies and interventions in place to attract and retain talent from diverse social groups from different generations. The current study found a relationship between the biographical variables of the generations and WLB as described below.

(a) *Hours worked and hours paid*

Evidence was found in the literature that there are various causes for negative WLB for individuals, such as working longer hours, being in managerial positions and having multiple jobs, and finances (Skillsoft, 2011; Yost, 2004). The current changing work environments, fuelled by constant connectivity via smartphones, pagers and the Internet, have led to longer working hours, which demand 60-hour work weeks (Downes & Koekemoer, 2011; Grace & Graen, 2014; Olivier, 2013).

The current study found that hours worked, and hours paid influenced WIPL. The imbalance of hours worked and paid contributed strongly to WIPL. Hours worked and hours paid were significant predictors of WIPL for both Generation X and Generation Y participants. Although both these generations were willing to invest high levels of energy into work and displayed a strong psychological identification with work, they might have trouble detaching themselves from work. This often has a negative influence on SWB and could be seen by the lower levels of Happiness and Optimism that were reported on in the current study for these two generations. This could be a reflection that they felt overworked, or that they felt they had to work long hours because of economic pressures. The literature also indicated that constant overtime was found to be one of the causes of negative WLB for Generation Y (Cordington &

Grant-Marshall, 2006, Crampton & Hodge, 2009; Grace & Graen, 2014; Van der Walt & Du Plessis 2010, Zemke et al., 2011).

Research has found that Generation Y employees are generally willing to put in extra work and hours if it means gaining rewards and recognition (Alexander & Sysco, 2012); however, this generation sees a contribution to society, money and mental stimulation as forms of reward and recognition (Crampton & Hodge, 2009). The research results of the current study also correlate with previous results that working 50+ hours per week has a negative effect on individuals, compared to working 30–40 hours per week (Chongvilaivan & Powdthavee 2012; Hsu et al., 2019; Pereira & Coelho, 2013; Skidelsky & Skidelsky 2013). These results are also in line with previous research on work and health, which found that individuals who were working longer hours started showing deterioration in both their health and performance (Sparks et al., 1997).

The current study found that hours worked, and hours paid were also predictors of PILW. Hours worked positively predicted PLIW for Generation X, and hours paid, negatively predicted PLIW for Generation Y. The Baby Boomers were affected less by hours worked on this dimension. These results are supported by literature results that Generation X is motivated by rewards, such as non-work time or vacation for family needs and cash bonuses (Erickson, Alsop, Nicholson & Miller, 2009; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010). Members of Generation X consider personal time to be very important, and value WLB over dedication and self-sacrifice work (Maroun, 2013). These results confirm the importance of spending quality time on personal life and valuing WLB over self-sacrifice at work and concur with the characteristics of Generation X described in Chapter 2 (Campbell et al., 2015; Maroun, 2013; Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018). The results imply that Generation Y requires flexibility to balance their work and personal lives, and generally will not sacrifice their personal life for work. These research results are supported by Loehr and Schwarz (2003) who argue that Generation Y employees want work schedules that will give them WLB.

The current study also found that hours worked negatively predicted WPLE only for Generation X. This seems to indicate that the nature of work or the job itself is uniquely important for Generation X.

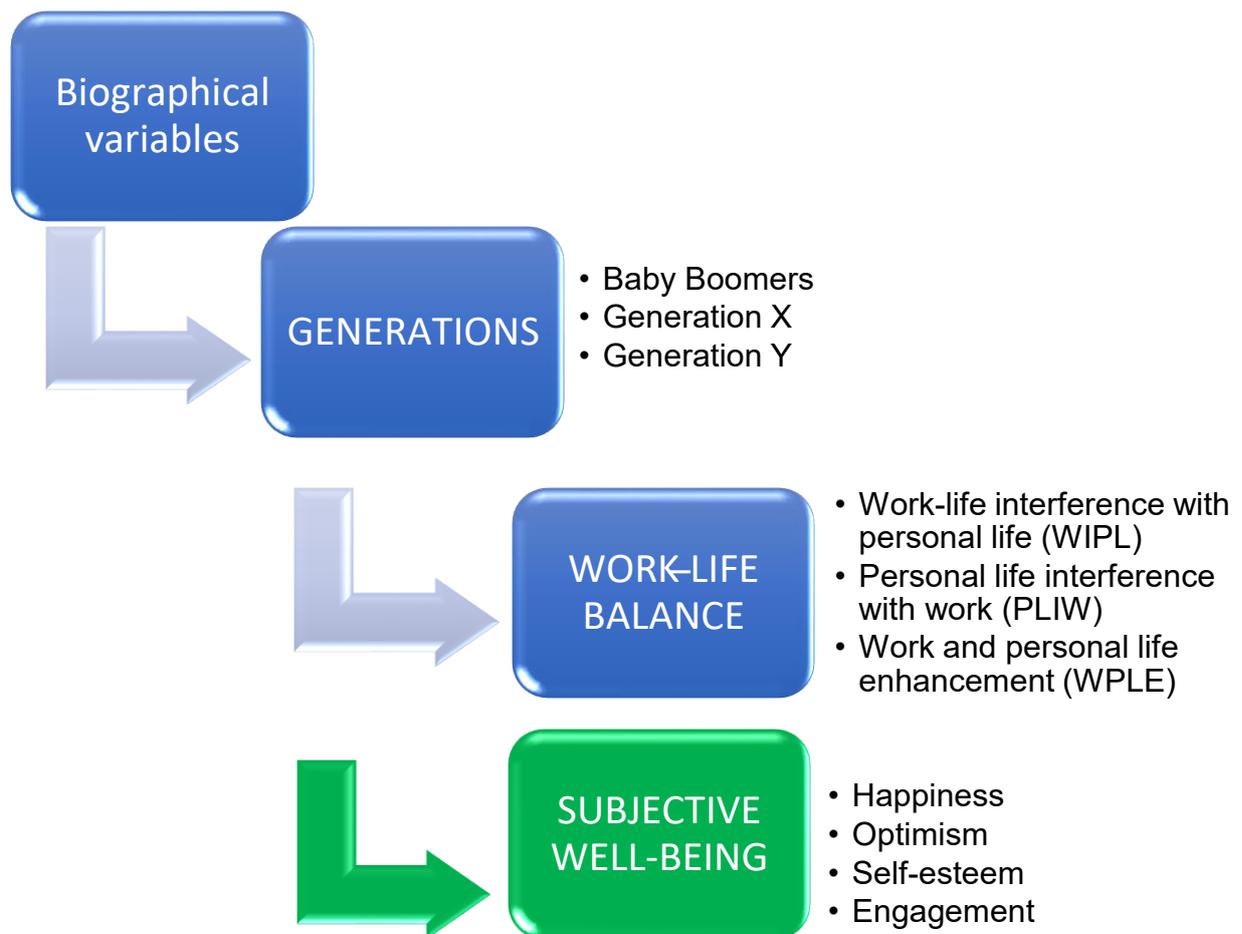
(b) *Level of education*

This study found a correlation between level of education and PLIW across the generations. Higher-educated employees were found to be working longer hours and were less satisfied with their jobs. This was an interesting finding, as in accordance with literature trends, individuals with higher levels of education, have ample opportunities to utilise their psychological strengths, and should, therefore, adapt better to challenges in their environment. These results could be due to the skills shortages and economic slump currently being experienced in the South African context (Koekemoer & Mostert, 2010; Rezvani, 2010; Statistics South Africa, 2017), as well as the changing expectations about the availability in workplace, and less time being spent on the directions of career paths (Friedenberg et al., 2008; Meister & Willyerd, 2012). These environmental factors could influence individuals leaving them feeling frustrated, demotivated and dissatisfied (referred to as 'languishing individuals').

The results in this study were in contradiction with the results of Argyle (2013) in whose study it was found that educational level had a positive relationship with PWB. Wissing et al. (2008) however found spending time on improving one's education to secure a satisfying career is important, because work has been associated with PWB.

### **7.8.3 SWB**

In the **proposed theoretical model**, SWB comprises Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement. This is depicted in Figure 7.5. Previous academic research suggested that SWB at work is comprised of Well-being-related psychological constructs (e.g. Happiness, Optimism and Self-Esteem) and Engagement (Diener, 2000b; Eid & Larsen, 2008; Frey & Stutzer, 2012; Seligman, 2011; Rothmann, 2015).



*Figure 7.5. Proposed theoretical model highlighting the construct of SWB (Source: Author's own compilation)*

SWB is a function of multiple elements, each of which can be measured individually and then be applied holistically with one another to achieve overall Well-being. SWB has been associated with Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem (Seligman, 2011) and Engagement (Rothmann, 2014). Relevant previous research in the literature on each of the individual facets indicated its importance and popularity (Baumeister et al., 2003; Carver et al., 2010; Diener, 2009a; Diener et al., 2017; Furnham & Petrides, 2003; Ötken & Erben, 2013; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015; Seligman, 2011).

The current study provided psychometric evidence for the proposed model where SWB is a latent variable comprising Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement. This contributes to the body of psychological construct research and the

flourishing model (see Keyes, 2007), as this proposed model for SWB could be used as a measurement for SWB in future research.

The researcher proposes a model where these four constructs could be used to measure SWB and help determine whether significant relationships and differences exist between WLB and SWB as manifested in a sample of respondents across generations in the South African working population. The results of the current study indicated that the facet scales for the TEIQue showed sufficient high reliabilities (Tredoux & Durrheim, 2013). Overall, for the purposes of this research, the psychometric properties of the TEIQue were regarded as acceptable. Considering the reliability of the TEIQue, sufficient evidence was found to consider it a reliable measuring instrument to measure Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem as constructs of SWB levels across the various generations. Furthermore, the dimensions of the WEQ28 showed sufficient high reliabilities. Given the reported results, the psychometric properties of the WEQ28 were regarded as acceptable. Considering the reliability of the WEQ28, sufficient evidence was found to consider it a reliable measuring instrument to measure Engagement across the various generations as a construct of SWB.

This study found fairly high levels of SWB reported across the generations in the sample. This implies that the group of participants felt content and good about the present and positive about the future, they were confident and had high levels of self-respect.

In general, the participants showed high levels of Happiness, reflecting the tendency to be content with life and feel good about the present as compared to participants with lower Happiness, who are considered very serious, sad and dissatisfied with life (Petrides, 2009). This correlates with previous research results that Happiness is an important contributor to SWB (Diener et al., 2008; Park et al., 2009).

The high levels of Optimism may imply that the current group had a positive attitude and tended to find the positive sides of things even when there is a negative situation. High Optimism often correlates with positive affect, but also includes positive expectations about the future (Diener et al., 2017). High Optimism is related to positive psychological and physical outcomes and lead to sustained efforts to achieve goals.

Higher levels of Optimism relate to lower levels of psychological distress, while lower levels of Optimism relate to reports of more distress in some difficult situations in the changing world of work (Avey, Luthans, & Jensen, 2009; Carver et al., 2010). The results also correlate with other studies (Harris & Cameron, 2005; Petrides, 2009; Rashida et al., 2012).

Although, Self-esteem was scored the lowest relative to the other two dimensions, a high level of Self-esteem indicated that the participants were satisfied with virtually every aspect of their lives (Petrides, 2009), buffering against negative emotions, and enhancing personal adjustment (Hsieh, 2004). High Self-esteem can improve quality of life and enhance performance and productivity (Di Paula & Campbell; 2002; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), and contributes to the effective performance of an individual and promotes personal SWB. The results imply that the group of participants will encourage goal setting and commitment, will show persistent effort and perseverance, display resilience and reduction in stress (Bandura, 2007). The results also correlate with a previous research finding by Frone (2003) that the higher the Self-esteem, the higher the perceptions of successfully managing WLB and SWB. The similar trajectory across the generations for Self-esteem correlates with the finding with multiple cohort studies by Orth and Robbins (2014) which showed that there is no difference in the lifespan trajectory of Self-esteem between generations due to societal changes, such as grade inflation in education or the presence.

These results also correlate with results by Luthans (2012) that Well-being is heightened by positive emotions, such as Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem, which are all closely related to the performance of an organisation.

With regard to Engagement, the results of this study showed that the participants were in agreement that they genuinely enjoyed the work that they do and that the people with whom they worked were friendly and co-operative, whereas recognition and appreciation were areas that caused lower Engagement levels for the participants overall. This is supported by the results of Stander and Rothmann (2010), which confirm that the experience of meaningful work contributes to the Engagement of individuals.

The current study found that Baby Boomers were the most engaged across the generations. This implied that participating Baby Boomers genuinely enjoyed the work they were doing. This could be because Baby Boomers are goal-orientated individuals who are competitive and identify with their jobs (Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010) and they also equate being successful in the workplace with having successful lives (Campbell et al., 2015, Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Freedman, 2011; Maroun, 2013). These results can be compared with the research reported by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) and Schaufeli et al. (2006) who established that older workers were found to be more engaged in their work roles than younger employees. The results also correlate with results by Stark and Poppler (2018) that Baby Boomers appear to place much greater importance on a job where work is important, and which provides a sense of accomplishment. The results also confirm the results by Benson and Brown (2017) that Baby Boomers tend to be more satisfied with their jobs compared to Generation Xers.

Furthermore, the current study found that the Baby Boomers do not always feel appreciated and recognised for the work that they do. This could be because Baby Boomers value and feel a responsibility toward future generations and view themselves as 'trustees for the future' (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Freedman, 2011; Maroun, 2013; Weeks et al., 2017). Baby Boomers find reward in being perceived as status symbols and achieving visible rewards (Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010); however, studies by Singh and Weimar (2017) found that the Baby Boomers were the least empowered employees in organisations.

The results of the current study indicated that Generation X felt trusted with the responsibility to make decisions in their work, and this made them feel more engaged. This correlates with the literature results that Generation X has the characteristic of a cynical attitude that helps them with analytical problem solving because they are good critical thinkers, self-motivated and independent (Campbell et al., 2015; Cordington & Grant-Marshall 2006; Maroun, 2013; Zemke et al., 2011). The results of this study also correlate with previous research that Generation X has a preference for positive working relationships and being a coach or mentor (King et al., 2017; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010), and that Generation X individuals enjoy teamwork, but prefer working alone. Singh and Weimar (2017) found that Generation X belongs to a group

of persons who seek high levels of responsibility and challenges in their cluster of empowered employees.

The results of this study further showed that Generation X indicated that not receiving recognition for the work they do made them feel less engaged. This generation is recognised by management responsibilities and independence (Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010) and freedom (King et al., 2017). However, they may feel that promotional and advancement opportunities are restricted (Benson & Brown, 2011), and hence feel less engaged in this area.

The results of the current study indicated that Generation Y participants experienced the people with whom they worked as friendly and co-operative, and that this increased their Engagement. This could be because Generation Y is comfortable with direct mentoring and prefers to sit down one on one with older individuals to discuss topics and receive advice, and they are not interested in business leaders posturing, behaving unethically or communicating ineffectively because of office politics (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006, SkillSoft, 2011). The results also confirm that Generation Y participants were interested in authenticity, had a need for communication, open collaboration and constant feedback (Crampton & Hodge, 2009; Sakdiyakorn & Wattanacharoensil, 2018). This group of participants enjoyed interpersonal relationships, were highly social, cherish teamwork and team spirit, which is similar to previous research results by Sakdiyakorn and Wattanacharoensil (2018).

However, the current study also found that the participants from this generation did not always feel that the work they were doing at the time made use of their strengths and talents. These results are important because a recent study on the employment expectations of Generation Y found that enjoyment, opportunity and progression were dominant themes – both entry-level employment expectations and long-term career employment expectations (Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2017).

Significant differences in overall levels of SBW did not occur across the generations. The psychological construct of Happiness as part of SWB was however found to differ across the generations. Generation Y employees had significantly lower levels of Happiness than Generation X employees.

Research has found that Happiness and Optimism play vital roles in the positive psychological functioning, and that lower levels of Happiness and Optimism are related to higher levels of psychological stress and dissatisfaction (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1992). The current study found that the younger generations were less happy and less optimistic about the future. Lower levels of Happiness and Optimism could imply that the younger generations do not take credit for positive happenstances and may also blame themselves for negative aspects. These results concur with the literature that Baby Boomers tend to be more optimistic and believe they can change the world (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Freedman, 2011; Maroun, 2013) and that increasing age was associated with increasing levels of Happiness (Roysamb et al., 2003; Veenhoven, 2010). These results were similar to the literature results of Roysamb et al. (2003), who found that age groups were an important factor influencing Happiness in individuals. These authors found that that increasing age was associated with increasing levels of Happiness. Other studies confirmed the relationship between age and Happiness (Veenhoven, 2010). The results from the current study concurred with results by Pavot and Diener (2013) that Happiness increases slightly with age, specifically between the ages of 40 and 65, but tends to decrease again towards the end of life. However, the results of the current study are in contradiction with literature results by Half (2005) that Generation Y tends to be optimistic and confident individuals.

Since this research was conducted from the positive psychology paradigm, it is important for researchers to take note of this finding and pay attention to how to increase Happiness and Optimism across the younger generations.

Differences between Generation Y and Baby Boomers bordered on significance, whilst no significant difference was noted for Generation X and Baby Boomers. This indicated that there was an overall influence of generation on Happiness, but no specific differences could be attributed. Further research is needed to clarify this relationship.

These results are of importance in the changing work environment as having high Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem implies that the individuals across generations thrive on challenges and persevere when faced with obstacles. Flourishing characteristics as indicated by high Happiness, Optimism and Self-esteem (Keyes,

2007) could drive individuals to reach their capacity, demonstrate a positive psychological view towards the changing workplace and pay attention to personal PWB.

Understanding SWB across generations and how it relates to WLB, allows industrial and organisational psychologists and organisations to help individuals feel satisfied with their work and life roles, and flourish at work and in life. The evidence found in the current study contributes to the field of research on how SWB and WLB are connected and how they influence each other. The results of this study overall showed that WLB and SWB are strongly connected across generations and have many common areas that can be researched.

The **theoretical model** also proposed that there is a relationship between WLB and SWB.

Based on the results of the SEM, SWB was found to have a relationship with two dimensions of WLB, namely PLIW and WPLE. This reinforces the importance of individual SWB in explaining WLB. However, SWB was not found to have a direct relationship with the WIPL dimension of WLB. Instead, biographical variables, namely the number of hours an individual works and the number of hours for which he or she is paid, played a role in WIPL. Although the increasing diversity of work schedules has stimulated interest in the effect of nonstandard working time on individuals' Well-being (Bell & Blanchflower, 2011; Bunting, 2004), there have been renewed calls for radical reductions in average working hours (Skidelsky & Skidelsky, 2013). The SWB effects of working hours are still a contested area, and in general, working long hours is associated with lower Well-being, and both men and women working long hours suffer more job-related anxiety and depression than those working standard full-time hours (30–40 hours).

Differing levels of SWB had no effect on the negative outcome of hours worked and hours paid on WIPL. Although researchers have investigated the effect of working hours on SWB, controls for working hours have long been included in studies of job and life satisfaction (Clark, Oswald, & Warr, 1996). In studies that include a continuous control for long working hours, the coefficient is typically negative and significant, indicating that long hours lower job satisfaction (Chongvilaivan & Powdthavee, 2012)

and life satisfaction (Pereira & Coelho 2013). Researchers have also found that working more than 50 hours per week has a particularly adverse effect on women's work and personal life satisfaction (Berger, 2013; Booth & Van Ours, 2008), but not for men (Booth & Van Ours, 2009).

The following SWB constructs were found to have a relationship with WLB:

(a) *Happiness*

The positive psychology paradigm advocates the experience of Happiness (Rothmann & Cooper, 2015).

The current study found that Happiness (negative) was a significant predictor of PLIW for Generation X. This concurs with the literature results that when an individual spends the majority of his or her time on work-related activities and feel he or she is neglecting the other important components of his or her life, stress and unhappiness will result (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004; De Klerk & Mostert, 2010; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; McMillian et al., 2011, Jacobs, Mostert, & Pienaar, 2008). The results concur with results from previous research (Hoffmann-Burdzinska & Rutkowska, 2015) that WLB of an individual is one of the factors that affect the satisfaction or happiness with life and can be measured through the construct of SWB.

Happiness (positive) also played a role in WPLE across the generations of the sample. These results concur with the literature results indicating that positive relationships between WLB and Happiness of Generations X and Y had previously been found (Ötken & Erben, 2013).

While studying the relationship between Happiness and WLB, it should be taken into consideration that generational difference is an important variable to take into consideration, as generations differ from each other based on their characteristics, life and work values and attitudes.

The current study found that, at the time of this research, Generation Y was experiencing lower levels of Happiness than the other generations. This was an interesting finding as previous research indicated that this cohort typically tend to be optimistic and happy, confident in their technical abilities, and able to multitask easily

(Campbell et al., 2015; Half, 2005; Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2017; Van der Walt & Du Plessis, 2010; Weeks et al., 2017).

*(b) Self-esteem*

It was noted in the literature that Self-esteem is a personal resource that is correlated to SWB, buffering against negative emotions, and enhancing personal adjustment (Covin, Donovan, & MacIntyre, 2003; Crocker, Brook, Niiya, & Villacorta, 2006; Hsieh, 2004; Petrides, 2009). It was also found that the higher the Self-esteem, the higher the perceptions of successfully managing WLB (Frone, 2003; Rashida et al., 2012; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015).

The current study found that Self-esteem (positive) as a construct of SWB was the only significant predictor that influenced WIPL for Baby Boomers. This would suggest that Baby Boomers are not influenced by biographical variables, but that the younger generations are. It also implies that Baby Boomers are more inwardly focused and that they invest their efforts in the quality of their work and emotional connectedness. Reflecting on the context, and results that many corporate executives fall into the Baby Boomer generation, Baby Boomers are probably paid more than the other generations and are less concerned about the many hours they work. Individuals with higher Self-esteem, have a higher perception of successfully managing WLB, and coping with the conflicting demands of work and family roles. It is generally agreed that WLB is important for an individual's PWB, and that high Self-esteem can be regarded as an indicator of successful balance between work and other life roles (Clark, 2000; Clarke et al., 2004; Marks & McDermid, 1996). Good Self-esteem is also known to be a characteristic of flourishing individuals. This is also important in the changing world of work, as having high Self-esteem implies that Baby Boomers thrive on challenges and persevere when faced with obstacles. It could also suggest that the SWB of Baby Boomers is often dependent on their ability to satisfy their need for autonomy and self-determination.

The results of this study concur with the literature results that Baby Boomers equate being successful in the workplace with having successful lives, high salaries and long working hours, and they do not prioritise WLB (Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Freedman, 2011; Maroun, 2013, Van der Walt & du Plessis, 2010). Baby Boomers

find reward in being perceived as status symbols and achieving visible results. The results also correlate with the results by Frone (2003), Hsieh (2004) and Rashida et al. (2012) that individuals with higher Self-esteem, have a better level of WLB.

(c) *Engagement*

Positive WLB refers to the tendency to engage equally in every sphere with high energy, commitment, attention and care. This will lead to ease and enhancement of Well-being and consequently flourishing individuals (Keyes, 2007). Previous literature results indicate that individuals who experience positive balance are more committed and engaged (Mostert, 2006), and organisations with an engaged culture lead to WPLE (Clark, 2000; Green, 2001).

For individuals to flourish, it is necessary for them to be fully engaged (May et al., 2004). The results also showed that there is a relationship between WLB and employee Engagement. The current study found that Engagement (negative) influenced WIPL and PLIW across the generations. Specifically, for Baby Boomers, Engagement was a negative predictor of PLIW. The current study further found that Engagement (positive) was a significant predictor of WPLE, which leads to positive WLB.

These results concur with the research results by Maslach et al. (2001) and May et al. (2004) that there are areas of Engagement that influence WLB, namely control and responsibility, rewards and recognition, and community and social support. Engaged individuals were found to possess high levels of personal resources, including optimism, Self-esteem and active coping styles (Luthans, Youssef-Morgan, & Avolio, 2015; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009). Slaski (2014) found that a positive sense of Engagement, in turn, leads to enhanced job performance, commitment and SWB. Engaged individuals could use their SWB constructs of Happiness, Self-esteem and Optimism to adapt to their environment and to flourish.

By understanding the relationships between biographical variables of generations and WLB and SWB factors for different generations, organisations can promote a positive working environment and at the same time retain happy, fulfilled flourishing individuals. Recognising the relationships and differences amongst the generations could assist an understanding of what creates positive WLB for these generations and how

researchers and organisations can get the best from each generation and help create flourishing individuals.

This concludes the discussion and integration of the empirical results with the literature.

## **7.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter reported the research results and results. The chapter gave an overview of the statistical results that were relevant to this research and enabled the researcher to integrate the results of the empirical research with the literature study. The results provided supportive evidence for the stated research hypothesis. The following empirical research aims were achieved in this chapter:

**Research aim 1:** to investigate empirically the nature of statistical relationships of WLB and SWB as manifested in a sample of respondents across generations in the South African working population.

**Research aim 2:** to investigate empirically whether significant differences exist between generations between WLB and SWB.

This research report is concluded with the final chapter. Limitations will be discussed and recommendations for future research will be made.

## **CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **8.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the conclusions drawn by the researcher based on the research aims. The limitations of the study, as perceived by the researcher, are discussed and finally, recommendations are made for future research in the field of IOP. This chapter concludes with a summary.

### **8.2 CONCLUSIONS**

Step 8 in the research process focuses on the conclusions, based on the literature and empirical studies in accordance with the aims of the research, as set out in Chapter 1 (see 1.4).

#### **8.2.1 Conclusions relating to the literature review**

The general aim of this study was to determine whether relationships and differences existed between WLB and SWB as manifested in a sample of respondents across generations in the South African working population.

The sections below present the conclusions drawn for each specific research aim in terms of the literature review.

##### *Research aim 1:*

The first literature aim, namely to conceptualise the construct of generations, was achieved in Chapter 2. The following conclusions were drawn:

A generation is defined as a group of individuals born during the same period and who experience the same culture. Identifying diversity factors, such as age and building the understanding of generational differences, present advantages to organisations. It was concluded that, although some distinctions between older and younger workers were found, more similarities than differences were found. Many of the same influences have shaped the lives and work experiences of the Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y individuals. At the same time, however, each generation has its own distinct attitudes, priorities and work habits. Generational differences between employees create challenges for organisations, and the literature

review emphasised the need each generation has for a WLB. It was concluded that all generations have a need for WLB, but that each generation interprets this concept in a different way, and that different drivers and different psychological constructs would influence WLB for the different generations.

It was concluded that having insight into a generation's characteristics and perceptions is extremely valuable to individuals, organisations and researchers. Shared values between generations could create natural alliances and sharing information and energies among older and younger individuals could increase innovation and creativity. Younger and older individuals can often learn from each other and understanding the different generations and characteristics could help to communicate properly.

#### *Research aim 2:*

The second literature aim, namely to conceptualise the construct of WLB, was achieved in Chapter 3. The following conclusions were drawn:

WLB is the individual's ability to manage the multi-faceted demands of life and the extent to which an individual has a sense of happiness, optimism, self-esteem and engagement and simultaneously maintain an overall sense of well-being across the spheres of work and life. It was concluded that striving for WLB is not unique to any one generation; instead, it is a common desire. However, what constitutes WLB differs across generations depending on life stage and career phase. There is an implicit normative assumption that balance is good. To balance work and life implies human agency, which means steps can be taken to manage the balance. It was concluded that for most individuals, a healthy WLB means getting an acceptable share of time between their needs and those of others around them, whether in the workplace or in personal life. Many individuals experience first-hand how spending too much time at work could affect their personal lives negatively. Conversely, being pulled in by too many demands from home can make it hard to concentrate on work. Whether there is too much focus on work – or too little – when work-life and personal life feels out of balance, the result is dissatisfaction.

WLB as a concept has grown and expanded over time and looks very different in the current world of work. Technological advancement, globalisation of markets, changes

in workforce demographics across generations, various generations in the workplace and the traditional work–family balance changing – these all played a role in work–life balance in the current world of work. It was concluded that WLB in the current world of work is not about how individuals can make up time for all the demands in their lives, but rather how individuals can manage their lives by balancing time, involvement and satisfaction, and become flourishing individuals. WLB has become a matter of priorities and values, personal preferences and overall well-being. Although all three generations participating in the current research believed in a balance between life and work, the researcher concluded that Generation Y respondents gave their personal lives, personal values and goals more importance than Baby Boomers and Generation X.

It was concluded that WLB remains a complex issue that needs to be addressed by individuals, researchers and employers. WLB is contentious, because it is individual, and yet universal across generations in the current world of work. By understanding WLB, organisations can promote a positive working environment and healthy, flourishing employees.

*Research aim 3:*

The third literature aim, namely to conceptualise the construct of SWB, was achieved in Chapter 4. The following conclusions were drawn:

SWB is a function of multiple elements, each of which can be measured individually and then applied holistically with one another to achieve overall well-being. It was concluded that WLB and SWB are strongly connected.

It was further concluded that SWB is associated with the psychological constructs of Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement, and that it could be proposed as a latent variable for this study. It was generally agreed that WLB is important for an individual's PWB, and that high self-esteem, satisfaction and an overall sense of harmony in life could be regarded as indicators of a successful balance between work and other life roles. SWB is related to WLB and flourishing individuals, and that it is achieved when people are satisfied with their work and life roles.

*Research aim 4:*

The fourth literature aim, namely to conceptualise a theoretical model of the relationships between generations, WLB and SWB as well as the differences in the WLB levels and SWB levels across generations in the current world of work, was achieved in Chapter 5.

The following conclusions were drawn:

The interrelationship and differences between the three constructs were studied from a national as well as an international research perspective.

In the literature review, it was clear that that the majority of individuals have the need and are able to optimise their WLB. It was concluded that managing WLB and SWB effectively in a multi-generational workforce, consideration should be given to the relationships and differences caused by gradual developmental and demographic changes that have occurred over time (Ng & Feldman, 2010; Roberts, Walton, & Veichtbauer, 2006; Twenge et al., 2010). It was also concluded that generations are determined and influenced through various biographical variables and, if managed correctly, a diverse workforce, comprising members from different generations, could enhance performance and productivity in individuals and organisations (Frye & Breaugh, 2004; Heathfield, 2013; Hudson Global Resources, 2005).

The current study was conducted from the perspective of positive work and organisational psychology, and it is therefore noteworthy that the results from the literature review in Chapters 2, 3 and 4 emphasise that there is an **importance** and **need** for each generation to have high WLB and SWB levels (Constanza & Finkelstein, 2015; Cordington & Grant-Marshall, 2006; Urick & Hollensbe, 2014; Van der Walt & du Plessis, 2010; Weeks et al., 2017; Zemke et al, 2011). It was concluded that by understanding and conceptualising the relationships and differences amongst the generations and understanding what creates positive WLB and SWB for these generations, researchers could get the best from each generation and consequently help create flourishing individuals (Cilliers & Flotman, 2016; Luthans, 2012; Rothmann & Cooper, 2015).

It was also concluded that SWB at work is comprised of well-being-related

psychological constructs (e.g. Happiness, Optimism and Self-Esteem) and Engagement (Diener, 2000b; Eid & Larsen, 2008; Frey & Stutzer, 2012; Seligman, 2011; Rothmann, 2015), and that these four psychological constructs could be used to measure SWB and help determine whether significant relationships and differences exist between WLB and SWB as manifested in a sample of respondents across generations in the South African working population. The conclusion of this section of the literature review was that a positive theoretical relationship exists between the WLB and SWB constructs. It was also concluded that acknowledging relationships and differences between generations can maximise organisational effectiveness (King, Murillo, & Lee, 2017; Weeks et al., 2017).

This finalises the conclusions in terms of the literature review.

### **8.2.2 Conclusions relating to the empirical results**

The empirical aims of this study were to investigate the following:

#### *Research aim 1:*

The first research aim, namely to investigate empirically the nature of the statistical relationships of WLB and SWB as manifested in a sample of respondents across generations in a South African working population, was achieved. The empirical results in Chapter 7 provided supportive evidence for research hypotheses Ho1A, Ha1A, Ho2A and Ha2A.

The following conclusions were drawn:

The concepts of generations, WLB and SWB are interrelated variables that influence each other in different ways across generations.

SWB is a latent variable comprising Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement. SWB significantly predicted WIPL and WPLE reinforcing the importance of SWB and the linkage to WLB. Happiness and engagement as constructs of SWB are significant predictors of WPLE. Negative WLB perceptions are not moderated by SWB. The negative perceptions created by the number of hours worked and paid,

which had an influence on WLB, were not moderated by SWB, and differing levels of SWB had no effect on the negative outcome of hours worked and paid.

Generations were significantly related to two of the SWB factors, namely happiness and optimism. Biographical variables across the generations were significant predictors of WLB perceptions, and these included number of hours worked, number of hours paid and level of education. Level of education related to PLIW, and number of hours worked and paid, correlated with WIPL.

It was concluded that WLB has been found to influence SWB and vice versa across generations and that relationships do exist. It should be noted that the correlations do not imply causation, but merely give some insight into key strategic areas, which organisations could consider as potentially having an influence on flourishing individuals.

#### *Research aim 2:*

The second research aim, namely to investigate empirically whether significant differences exist between generations between WLB and SWB, was achieved. The empirical results in Chapter 7 provided supportive evidence for the research hypotheses Ho3A and Ha3A.

The following conclusions were drawn.

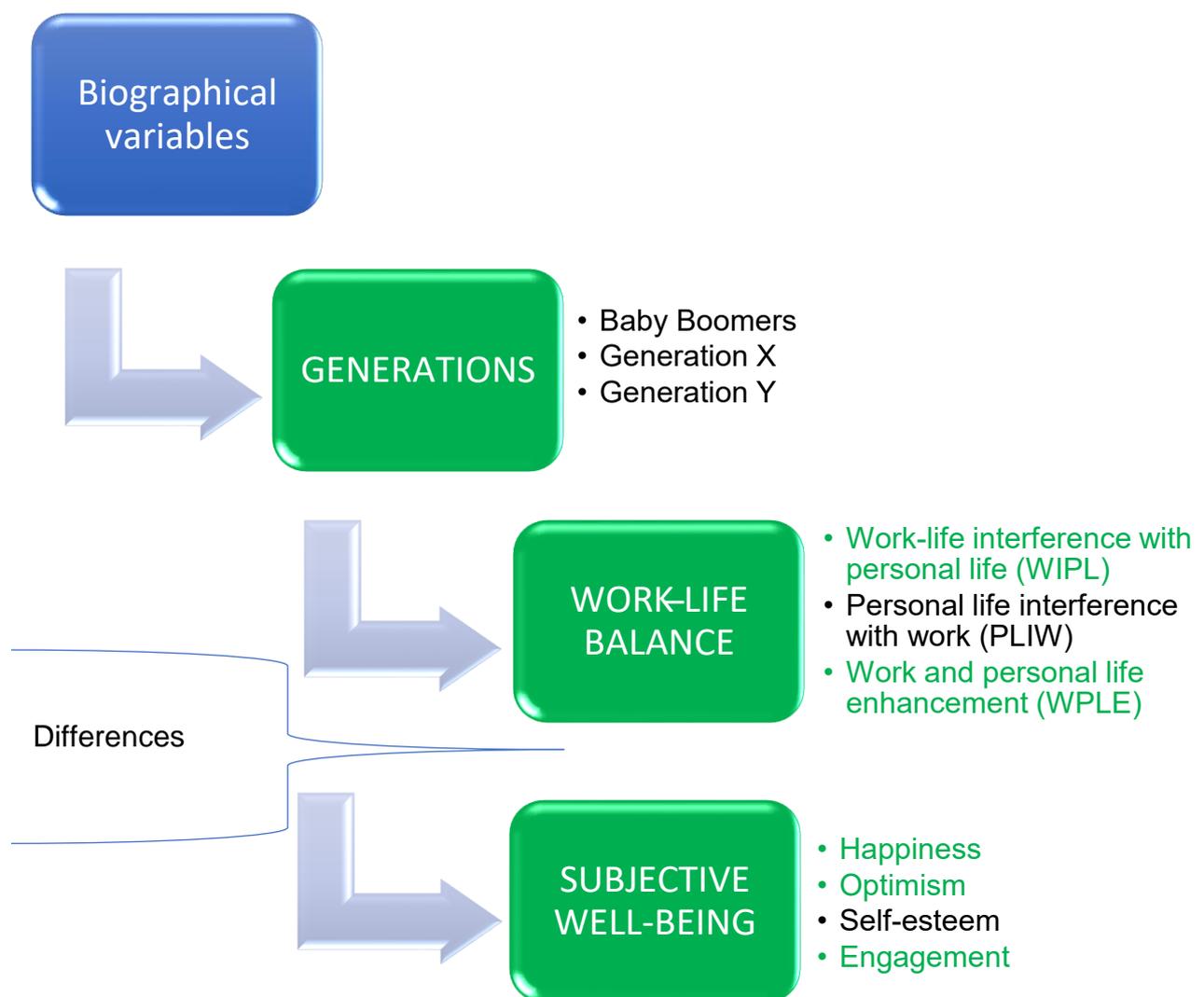
Significant differences in levels of **WLB** levels did not occur across the generations. High levels of WLB were reported across the generations implying that the sample group was feeling good and functioning well, referring to the components of flourishing individuals.

Although no significant differences were found in levels of WLB across the generations, differences were found in what influences WLB. Level of education, hours worked and hours paid were biographical variables that influenced WLB across the various generations. Hours worked and hours paid were significant predictors of WIPL for Generations X and Y, but not for Baby Boomers participating in the research.

Significant differences in **levels of SWB** did not occur across the generations. It was concluded that the sample group showed high levels of SWB, which could manifest as

positive emotions, such as happiness, optimism, high self-esteem and engagement in everyday work.

Although no significant differences were found in levels of SWB across the generations, differences were found in SWB regarding happiness, optimism, self-esteem and engagement across the generations, and how these influenced WLB. Generation Y had significantly lower levels of happiness than Generation X. Self-esteem as a construct of SWB was a predictor of WLB for the Baby Boomer generation, but not for the other generations. This suggests that Baby Boomers who perceived a favourable relationship between their work and personal life were able to increase their discretionary effort at work. Engagement as a construct of SWB was a predictor of PILW for participating Baby Boomers, whereas happiness as construct was a predictor for Generation X.



*Figure 8.1: Proposed theoretical model (Source: Author's own compilation)*

It was concluded that there are relationships between generations, WLB and SWB in that SWB significantly correlates with the two dimensions of PLIW and WPLE, engagement as a construct of SWB correlates with WIPL, and that generations are significantly related to two of the SWB constructs namely happiness and optimism. These are depicted in Figure 8.1.

The researcher concluded that members of a generation are not all the same, but relationships and differences can be observed between the constructs and be valuable information adding to the body of research. Contrary to popular belief the researcher concluded that although there are generational differences amongst individuals born in different eras, there are not significant differences in the overall levels of WLB and SWB of these individuals. It was concluded that individuals from all the different generations have the need for WLB and SWB, and to become effective flourishing individuals. Happiness as a construct of SWB plays a vital role in becoming a flourishing individual, but it was concluded that the younger generations are feeling less happy in general than the older generations.

This concludes the integration of the empirical results with the literature.

*Research aim 3:*

The third research aim, namely to formulate recommendations for organisations, IOP, as well as future research, based on the results of the research project was discussed in section 7.4.

### **8.3 LIMITATIONS**

Several limitations regarding the literature review and the empirical study have been identified, as indicated below.

#### **8.3.1 Limitations of the literature review**

The following limitations were evident in the literature review:

Although a considerable amount of literature is available on generational theory, WLB and SWB, very little is specifically related to the South African context. The researcher also found that the media and electronic resources, such as Google and Facebook, were bombarded with opinions and stereotyping of generations and WLB interventions that had not necessarily been verified by scientific research studies and results.

Limited research was found on the interrelationship between generations, WLB and SWB. Although there is ample research on generations, WLB and SWB as separate constructs, little research was found on the relationship between generations and WLB as well as SWB. This limitation made it difficult to refer to previous studies during the interpretation of the research results.

The study was limited to the positive organisational psychology and the Mental Health Continuum Positive Psychology Model (see Keyes, 2007), which focused on the discipline of IOP and its subfields, positive organisational psychology, personnel psychology and psychometrics.

### **8.3.2 Limitations of the empirical study**

The following were the limitations encountered in this research in respect of the empirical study:

Whilst the sample group was representative, it was small in terms of trying to establish significance. Because of the relatively small sample applied in this study, the results of this study cannot be generalised to the overall population across South Africa. A larger sample with more representatives in terms of different generations would have been desirable since it would have made it possible to generalise the results. Conducting well-designed small studies are acceptable by researchers, but they need to be interpreted carefully. Data from such studies should be used to design larger confirmatory studies.

Gaining access to participants is often difficult in the research setting. In an effort to improve the response rate for the benefit of statistical analysis, participants had to be reminded a few times to complete the measuring instruments. Despite the invitation being sent to 900 respondents, only 178 eventually participated in the study.

There were also limitations relating to the nature of the participants. Most of the participants had higher education to a certain degree. Responses from these participants may differ from other individuals who do not have higher educational levels.

Three measuring instruments, namely the Work-life Balance Scale (Hayman, 2005), the TEIQue (Petrides, 2009) and the Work Engagement Questionnaire (Slaski, 2014) were used in this study. As only one instrument for each construct was used, different measuring instruments might have revealed different results.

Another limitation pertaining to the study was the use of a cross-sectional design (Zacher, 2015). This limited the inference and confirmation of causal relationships between generations, WLB and SWB. It is recommended that longitudinal research be conducted to undertake further investigation into the drivers of WLB and SWB across generations.

Despite the above-mentioned limitations of the study, it may be concluded that the results of the study contribute valuable new knowledge on the South African organisational and psychology environment. These results will afford future researchers' opportunities in terms of the relationship between the variables of generations, WLB and SWB that influence the current world of work. It is important to consider the significance of the optimisation of positive behaviours and emotions within the work environment, which contribute to flourishing individuals. The insights derived from the study have deepened our understanding of the importance of WLB and SWB for positive work and organisational psychological functioning. It is also important that negative psychology and emotions should not be ignored, and where necessary addressed to provide healthy future prospects and provide a platform to develop positive emotions.

#### **8.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

To achieve empirical aim 3, namely to formulate recommendations for organisations, IOP and future research, the following recommendations are made based on the results, conclusions and limitations of this research.

#### **8.4.1 Organisational recommendations**

To accommodate the complexities of the current world of work, the researcher recommends that organisations create well-being programmes that are flexible, rather than inhibiting, to optimise WLB and SWB. Employers should be embracing a variety of strategies that cater for the various generations and their various needs. Successfully achieving WLB and SWB will ultimately create flourishing individuals at work, which will contribute to productivity and success in the workplace, and overall well-being.

For the Baby Boomer generation, organisations could attempt to make clear the meaning of their work and the purpose of their lives. It is recommended that Generation X be given opportunities to divide their time appropriately between their work, family, and social activities, as time balance remains the most difficult balance for this generation. Because Generation Y has the view that work and life cannot be divided, it is recommended in terms of this generation, organisations could promote WLB and SWB by giving them flexibility in their work scheduling, dress code and work programmes. It is recommended that industrial and organisational psychologists and organisations be conscious and educated on each generation's preferences in terms of attaining work balance and SWB, as it is a powerful tool because enables organisations to develop strategies to address the specific needs of individuals.

The researcher recommends that the factors influencing the current world of work, such as globalisation and technology advancements, be used to create opportunities rather than challenges to reinforce positive work and organisational psychological functioning. Interventions can be put in place, specifically targeting the younger generations, focusing on their happiness and optimism.

Based on the results of this research, it is recommended that WLB and SWB be increased, by decreasing the number of hours worked, especially for Generations X and Y. It is recommended that organisations review the workload of employees, ensure that job resources are sufficient, and hours worked vs. hours paid are perceived as fair in terms of effort and time, and that barriers that may prevent the optimal functioning of employees be eliminated.

Understanding the WLB and SWB of different generational cohorts will assist organisations to manage their human capital and develop an advanced understanding of employee behaviour and ways to create flourishing employees.

#### **8.4.2 Industrial and organisational psychology recommendations**

Acknowledging WLB and SWB and educating individuals and organisations in this regard could provide meaningful support to individuals. When individuals are challenged by WLB and struggle to function and feel as well as they could, it is recommended that researchers and industrial and organisational psychologists offer coaching and support, through conceptualising the psychological constructs of generations, WLB and SWB and the way in which they relate to each other.

The literature review provided a valuable foundation for the investigation of the relationships and differences between generations, WLB and SWB. The empirical study confirmed the relationships and differences between generations, WLB and SWB and the results could be used as a framework for IOP.

Based on the preceding discussions, it can be said that, although similarities between the three generations exist, each generation has a distinct and unique perception of WLB. These differing perceptions influence the approach each of the generations will have in optimising their work–life balance. It is also clear that striving for a WLB and SWB is not unique to any one generation; instead it is the desire of all; however, what influences and predicts this balance differs depending on the life stage and career phase of the individual concerned. Acknowledging these differences could assist industrial and organisational psychologists in reducing negative balance and applying the relevant interventions to optimise positive WLB and SWB. Interventions that were effective earlier when one size fitted all may not resonate with all generations today, and it is recommended that these results be taken into consideration by the IOP field.

It is furthermore recommended that industrial and organisational psychologists use the results that provide a valuable understanding to create specific interventions necessary to develop positive organisations and flourishing individuals who are psychologically connected to their work.

### **8.4.3 Future research recommendations to contribute to the field of study**

The researcher recommends that the constructs of Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement and the influence of these on WLB be researched, and interventions around these topics be included in future development of WLB programmes.

It is recommended that future research continue to explore the relationships between WLB and SWB across generations but using a wider sample.

It is recommended that future studies be done to investigate the effect of the influencers of level of education, hours worked, and hours paid on WLB and SWB of individuals using longitudinal studies rather than cross-sectional studies.

Future research could be done to investigate the effect of the changing world of work on the work–life balance and SWB of individuals globally as well as in South Africa. The influence of technology, the changing profile of the workforce, the changing demands for availability from industry and the globalisation of the world of work, need to be explored in future research studies.

The results of this study have shown that WLB and SWB are connected and have areas that can be researched, such as understanding the relationship between WLB and SWB, which will contribute to the field of positive psychology, and which is an important direction for future research.

Future research could also incorporate the negative psychological aspects, to make businesses vigilant of possible unhealthy behaviours that need to be addressed in forming a positive/healthy work environment.

Lastly, it is recommended that similar studies be explored in the larger industry and with bigger samples, to generalise results and conclusions.

## **8.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS RESEARCH**

Although the topics of generations, WLB and SWB have been well researched, little research has been done on the linkage between the constructs. This research provides statistical evidence for this. The current study linked the emerging constructs of positive psychology in general by investigating the relationships and differences

between generations, WLB and SWB. The results could be used as a framework for IOP.

The research makes a contribution to the field of Industrial and Organisational Psychology on three levels, namely, on a theoretical, an empirical and a practical level.

### **8.5.1 Contribution on a theoretical level**

On a theoretical level, readers of this study will develop a better understanding of the constructs of generations, WLB and SWB. The conceptualisation of the constructs may prove useful to future researchers in exploring possible interventions to enhance positive work and organisational psychological functioning. The research results contribute to the body of knowledge concerned with positive psychological factors that may increase a person's psychological functioning, flourishing and well-being in a changing work environment.

### **8.5.2 Contribution on an empirical level**

On an empirical and methodological level, the research provided useful insights into the relationships and differences between the constructs of WLB and SWB across generations. The results are useful in informing industrial and organisational psychologists on the way in which positive psychological constructs and biographical variables play a role in the psychological functioning, WLB and SWB of individuals.

By understanding how WLB is influenced for different generations, organisations can promote a positive working environment and at the same time retain happy, fulfilled and flourishing individuals. By recognising the differences amongst the generations and understanding what creates positive WLB for these generations, researchers and organisations can get the best from each generation and help create flourishing individuals. This study contributes to the body of knowledge concerned with positive psychological factors in a South African context, which could be a starting point for future research and comparisons.

### **8.5.3 Contribution on a practical level**

Understanding SWB across generations and how it influences WLB, allows industrial and organisational psychologists and organisations to help individuals feel satisfied

with their work and life roles, and flourish at work and in life. The evidence found in this study contributes to the field of research on how SWB and WLB are connected and how they influence each other.

This study adds value to the field of positive psychology in that SWB was proposed as a latent variable consisting of Happiness, Optimism, Self-esteem and Engagement, and statistical evidence was found to confirm this. The results of this study can be incorporated into a framework that can be used to enhance WLB and SWB and create flourishing employees.

The relationships and differences found between the variables may prove useful to future researchers in developing interventions to enhance WLB and SWB and create flourishing individuals. Future studies could also incorporate the negative psychological aspects to make businesses vigilant of possible unhealthy behaviours that need to be addressed in forming a positive and healthy work environment.

## **8.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter presented the conclusions drawn by the researcher based on the research aims. The limitations of the study were discussed and finally, recommendations were made for organisations and future research in the field of IOP.

This concludes this thesis.

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**APPENDIX A**

**BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE**

Please complete the following questionnaire as accurately as possible using a black ink pen. After completion, please return to your HR Manager.

<b>Surname</b>		
<b>Full Names</b>		
<b>Email Address</b>		
<b>ID Number</b>		
<b>Date of Birth</b>		
<b>Gender</b>		
<b>Please choose your race:</b>		<b>Please tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>
African		
Coloured		
Indian		
White		
<b>Please choose your geographical location</b>		<b>Please tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>
Gauteng		
Free State		
Western Cape		
North West		
KwaZulu-Natal		
Limpopo		
Eastern Cape		

Mpumalanga	
Rather not say	
Other	
<b>What is your highest level of education?</b>	<b>Please tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>
Less than matric	
Matric	
Diploma/certificate	
Degree	
Honours degree	
Master's degree	
Doctorate	
Rather not say	
<b>How long have you been working at your organisation?</b>	<b>Please tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>
< 1 year	
1–2 years	
3–5 years	
6–10 years	
11–15 years	
16–20 years	
21+ years	
<b>How many hours do you work per week?</b>	
<b>How many hours are you paid for per week?</b>	
<b>What is your level of employment?</b>	<b>Please tick <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></b>
Non-managerial	

First-line management	
Middle management	
Executive & senior management	
Other managerial level	
I'd rather not say	

**Thank you for completing this questionnaire.**

**LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH STUDY**

Good day

My name is El-Karien van der Linde, I am a Doctorate student in the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology at Unisa. The purpose of this study is to gather data for my Doctoral research project. I am investigating constructs concerning **work-life balance** and **subjective well-being** across the various generations in the world of work. The benefit of the research to you as an organisation is that it will provide you with an opportunity to contribute to the knowledge base in a South African context, that will allow me to contribute to the improvement of work-life balance and subjective well-being of individuals.

I would like to request permission to conduct the research within your organisation by conducting questionnaires on the Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y employees. The questionnaires should take about 15 to 20 minutes of their time. Follow up questionnaires may follow after, of which you will be informed.

Please be assured of total anonymity, as measures have been used to protect the identity of all participants. Should you have any further questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

The success of this research study depends on the participation of a variety of individuals. Your time and effort are greatly appreciated!



El-Karien van der Linde

Head of Psychology and Training

Industrial & Organisational Psychologist: PS0097233

t 012 111 0821

m +27 76 283 7726

el-karienl@thomas.co.za

**Permission granted:**

Signature:

Name:

Designation:

Name of company:

## APPENDIX C

### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY AS PART OF COMPLETION OF PHD IN WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING

The purpose of the research study and the nature of the questionnaires have been explained to me.

I consent to take part in the research study and to complete the assessments required for the study.

I also consent to the data collected be used for research purposes.

My participation is voluntary. I understand that I am free to leave the group at any time, and that I will not be compensated in any way for participation.

If I decide not to participate at any time during the process, my decision will in no way affect the services that I receive.

None of my experiences or thoughts will be shared anyone outside of the research team unless all identifying information is removed first.

The information that I provide during the study will be grouped with answers from other people so that I cannot be identified.

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Please Print Your Name

Date

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Please Sign Your Name