The Opt-Out Revolution by Women in Management: Myth or Reality?

A Research Report

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Abstract

Women around the world are not making much progress up the corporate ladder but instead; many are frustrated and choosing to leave their jobs. The purpose of this study was to identify what challenges are facing senior level women in the corporate world, which would make them leave/desire to leave work and the role played by organisations in this situation.

Interviews and survey research were done on a sample of qualified, experienced women over the age of 30, who are either in the corporate world or who have left. The study showed that women are leaving or have a strong desire to leave due to a combination of workplace and personal factors, and that South African organisations are not doing much to retain them. The implication of this is that they are going to continue losing high calibre women, if they do not implement effective retention strategies very quickly.
Acknowledgements

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Chapter 1: Orientation

1.1 Introduction

A major dilemma facing professional women all over the world is the conflicting demands on their time. A significant amount of work has been done in the United States and other countries to understand this problem faced by professional women, but very little in South Africa. A lot of the work done overseas reveals that professional, career oriented women are leaving their jobs in large numbers.

A gap in the existing literature in SA has therefore led to the need for an understanding of what challenges are faced by South African professional women in balancing their work and family lives, that may lead to some leaving or wanting to leave the corporate world.

Many reasons have been given for this phenomenon abroad. These include work-related factors like the “glass-ceiling”, the “glass wall” and personal factors such as the demands of family and the need for a balanced life. This phenomenon has received an unprecedented amount of media and academic attention, making it a topic of interest for anyone interested in gender-related issues.

The topic also raises many questions for organizations that certainly cannot afford to lose the relatively few women that they have in senior positions, especially in South Africa as seen by the comment from Business Women’s Association of SA (BWASA):

“While women make up 51% of the adult population in South Africa, and only 2,9% of the working South African population, they constitute only 19,2% of all Executive Managers and only 13,1% of all Directors in the country” (BWASA-Catalyst, 2007)
1.2 Purpose/objectives of study

The primary purpose of this research project is to obtain an understanding of the combination of factors that are affecting professional women in the workplace, which may be resulting in many leaving the corporate world, or to remain and not make progress. The role played by SA Corporates in retaining their female professional staff will also be investigated. A great deal of work has been carried out in the United States and the rest of the developed world and there is evidence that large numbers of highly qualified women are taking a break from their careers.

Although much work has been done to understand the appointment of women into senior positions and the progress of female professionals in general, not much work has been done in South Africa to understand the phenomenon of highly qualified, successful women leaving/wanting to leave the corporate world.

The research problem is to investigate the challenges affecting South African professional/management level women that may be resulting in many leaving or wanting to leave the corporate world. The role of South African organizations in curbing this possible “brain-drain” will also be investigated.
1.3 Statement of Problem and Sub-Problems

1.3.1 Problem

Extensive work has been done in the United States and other countries that point to the fact that highly qualified and experienced women are leaving their senior management positions in large numbers (Belkin, 2003; Hewlett & Buck-Luce, 2005). The research does not claim that the majority of women are leaving, but the phenomenon has drawn a lot of media and academic interest worldwide, and does warrant some investigation in South Africa.

The relatively low number of women at executive management level in South Africa points to the fact that women are not progressing as fast as they should (Catalyst, 2007).

The researcher has also recently encountered several highly qualified women in South Africa who have resigned from their senior management positions, as well as media articles that show that several women are making career decisions that are not in line with traditional career models. This by no means implies a revolution, as it has been referred to overseas, but it does indicate a problem that affects not only organizations, but also the country as a whole.

The value that women can bring to business is encapsulated in Catalyst (2007) as a business case for having female directors on boards in South Africa, which includes the following elements:

- “Women are a potential source of competitive advantage. The degree, to which women are currently represented on the boards of South African corporations, does not reflect their influence and importance in the economy as workers, consumers and business owners.”
• Women are a source of independent board candidates. Recent local and international scandals continue to put an increasing emphasis on even stricter adherence to the requirements of corporate governance, which among other things stresses the importance of director independence. Consequently, companies need to look further afield for independent board candidates, and existing directors have to start limiting the number of boards they sit on. In this way the need for, and the potential of, women directors is opened up.

• The presence of women on boards is a powerful indicator of a company’s intentions and environment. The battle for talented employees is one that is faced by all companies competing in today’s world. As women become more qualified and more discerning in their choice of employers, the presence (or not) of women on boards and in executive management ranks sends a powerful message from a company to potential employees about that company’s ability and willingness to attract, promote and retain women” (Catalyst, 2007:21).

Although this problem potentially has a huge bearing on the economy of the country, insufficient research has been done in South Africa.

1.3.2 Sub-Problems

South Africa cannot afford to lose the professional/management level women that it has strived so hard to develop, and in so doing lose its competitive advantage. There are obviously several reasons that would contribute to a woman wanting to leave a senior position that she has worked very hard for. These are possibly a combination of work and personal factors. These reasons need to be understood.

The roles played by South African organizations in the retention of their senior women should also be understood.
1.4 Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

Professional/Management Level Women in the workplace are facing challenges both work related and personal, causing many to consider leaving work.

Hypothesis 2:

South African Organizations are not doing enough to retain their professional/management level female staff.

1.5 Definitions

CEPR – Centre for Economic Policy Research (US)
EOWA- Australian Govt. Equal Opportunity Women’s Agency
Opt-Out revolution – a term used to describe the exodus of many women from the corporate world in the US and elsewhere.
EOC – Equal Opportunities Commission

1.6 Delineations and Limitations of the study

The study focuses on highly qualified women in managerial/professional positions in the South African Corporate world, as well as women with a similar profile who have left the corporate world. Only women with a minimum of a 4 year undergraduate degree and from middle management and upwards will be researched.
This study will focus on the workplace and personal challenges that affect professional women. The findings cannot be generalized to all women but will certainly help to get an understanding of what some women are dealing with across different industry sectors in South Africa.

The research only covers women over the age of thirty, since these are the women on the participant list who meet the criteria for the research.

1.7 Assumptions

The assumption that has been made is that all the women surveyed are extremely ambitious, career-oriented women. The fact that the majority have undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, and have invested many years in their careers, supports this assumption. It is also understood that many women choose not to get married and many choose not to have children. This becomes particularly relevant when the discussion of the demands of children on women takes place. During the report, wherever reference is made to Women in Management, this reference also includes Women in Senior Professional/Specialist positions.

1.8 Importance of the study

Despite stringent employment equity legislation, after democracy was achieved, many professional women in South Africa are not reaching the pinnacle of success but instead facing many challenges in their careers – both work related and personal. This situation is similar to that faced by female professionals around the world, resulting in large numbers choosing to leave the corporate world.

Women have been fighting for equal opportunities for decades, and when women who have worked very hard and achieved a great deal of career
success decide to leave, there are many questions that arise as to the reasons for this. One has to probe deeply to understand the conflicting factors and myriad of emotions that the person has to deal with in making this significant, life-changing choice.

This exploratory study will assist South African women to understand what their colleagues are dealing with, and possibly identify with some of them. It will also help organizations to understand the challenges facing these women and to enable them to amend their retention policies accordingly.

Krishnan, Park and Kilbourne (2006) state that high turnover amongst women adversely affects firm performance because:

- High turnover among women, as is the trend today in Corporate America, can be harmful to the organization by destroying its resource base.
- Women have a unique combination of technical and survival skills after having survived the effects of male hierarchies and traditional methods.
- It sends a negative signal to key stakeholders that the firm makes very little effort to embrace diversity and lacks the infrastructure to protect its human capital.

There is clearly a great need for organizations to sit up and take notice of this phenomenon and put proper policies in place to reverse this “brain-drain”.

The results of the survey done by the researcher will be compared to the existing literature and the implications thereof discussed.
1.9 **Layout of Research Report**

The theoretical frameworks underlying the phenomenon being investigated will be discussed in Chapter 2. The dominant theoretical paradigm used to understand the experiences of women in management will be explained.

Chapter 3 presents a critical review of the literature on women in management in several countries around the world and in South Africa. It is categorized into statistics of women in management, the female “gender advantage”, the challenges faced by women, the implications of women leaving the workforce and the “opt-out revolution”.

Chapter 4 involves a comprehensive discussion of the retention strategies of organizations, highlighting the best practices of organizations around the world.

Chapter 5 explains the sample, the measuring instruments and method of data analysis. The justification for the choice of sample, the interview schedule and the design of the research instruments will be presented. The statistical analysis techniques that will be used to analyse the data will also be discussed in this section.

In Chapter 6, the data obtained from the study will be analysed and the results will be presented in tables and graphs. The biographic details of the participants will be discussed.
In Chapter 7, the outcome of the study will be discussed and compared to the information presented in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. The implications of the research results and recommendations for further research will be discussed.

The next Chapter (Chapter 2) presents a discussion of the foundation of the study and a critical review of the different theories around women in management.
Chapter 2: Dominant Theoretical Frameworks

The theoretical frameworks in the field of women in management are discussed in this chapter. The hypotheses used to answer the research problem have been drawn up based on the theories presented in this chapter.

Fagenson (1990) examined the dominant theoretical frameworks in the field of women in management. These were applied in an attempt to explain why women are not rising faster and in large numbers in the corporate world. She discussed three frameworks - the gender-centred/person-centred perspective, the organization structure perspective and the Gender-organization-system approach (GOS).

### 2.1 The Gender-Centred Perspective

The gender-centred perspective says that women’s failure to progress is due to factors internal to women, for example, their attitudes, behaviours, inappropriate traits, etc. The basic premise of this theory underlies most of the research done on women in management and states that males and females are basically different. Gender-centred theorists do not believe that the organizational or societal context is relevant, and when they do find gender differences, they attribute them to early sex-role socialization (Fagenson, 1990).

Still (2006), concurs by presenting two evolutionary psychology arguments – women and men on average are different, and men and women on average, value different things. She went on to explain that organizations fail to understand this basic premise, and tend to motivate men and women in the same way. This can have a major impact on women’s progress and the retention of women.
2.2 The Organization-Structure Perspective

The organization-structure perspective emphasizes that organization structures, as opposed to factors inherent in women, shape and define the behaviour of women in the workplace. Kanter (1993), who believed strongly in this approach, put forth that the reasons why women have not risen to the top ranks in the same way as men are due to the person’s position in the organizational structure, the amount of power they exert in their jobs and the number of women in these positions.

According to Kanter (1993), there are two types of job situations in companies: advantageous and disadvantageous. Women are located in the majority of the latter and males in the former. The advantageous positions foster attitudes, behaviours and values that push people along the fast track to success. The people in disadvantageous positions develop attitudes and behaviours that justify their placement, like a self-fulfilling prophecy. She therefore believes that women’s possession of feminine traits, and related behaviours like risk aversion, are due to their disadvantaged positions in organizational structures and not their gender.

Studies done using this framework often ignore factors other than the structure of the organization, and factors outside the organization that may affect women’s behaviour at work. This framework basically says that if women are placed in positions of little power, and opportunity, then it is highly possible that they got themselves into that position (Fagenson, 1990).
2.3 The Gender-Organization-System Approach

The third framework – the Gender-organization-system approach (GOS) puts forth that both organization structure and gender can shape and define women’s behaviour in the workplace. This perspective agrees with the gender-centred perspective and the organization-centred perspective, but states that it is not an “either-or” situation. Both perspectives jointly have an impact on women’s behaviour in organizations (Fagenson, 1990).

In the organization-centred approach, organization structure implies “power and opportunity structures and individuals’ numbers as being the organizational variables that shape women’s behaviour” (Fagenson, 1990:271).

The GOS perspective, on the other hand, advocates that the organizational context, a broader concept than structure, is relevant. The organizational context includes factors like the corporation’s culture, history, ideology, policies, culture, etc., in addition to its structure. Women’s failure to progress may be attributed to, for example, a paternalistic culture where a person is promoted based on their golf performance instead of their work performance (Fagenson, 1990).

A third factor, not discussed in the first two theories, is the social and institutional systems in which organizations are situated. The GOS framework suggests that this additional factor also influences women’s behaviour and their ability to obtain jobs at very senior levels. What this means is that organizations are located in societies with specific cultural values, histories, societal practices, ideologies, expectations and stereotypes regarding appropriate roles and behaviours for men and women and in so doing, they affect the internal structures and processes of organizations. A good example is affirmative action laws that affect the way women are treated and viewed within organizations. These factors can
affect and be affected by the attitudes, behaviours and thought processes that women develop towards their jobs and companies (Fagenson, 1990).

The GOS perspective suggests that when researchers are trying to understand why women are having limited success in the corporate world, one should try to identify the characteristics of the organization context, the social system and that of the individuals (that is their gender), which could possibly be affecting men and women’s attitudes, cognitions and behaviours (Terborg, 1981 in Fagenson, 1990).
2.4 **Assumptions and influencers affecting women’s progress**

During the last century, gender-based discrimination was based on traditional beliefs that men are more qualified to be in a leadership role than women are.

“These beliefs involved assumptions about:

- The traits and skills required for effective leadership in organizations (implicit theories)
- Inherent differences between men and women (gender stereotypes)
- Appropriate behaviour for men and women (role expectations)”

(Yukl, 2006: 427).

In addition to these assumptions made by both men and women, Volpe (2006) states that there are 3 primary influencers on women in the workplace:

- Social norms, upbringing, values and norms consciously and unconsciously influence and affect women’s behaviour, attitude and expectations, that is, females were raised to be good, feminine girls
- As girls, females were encouraged to co-operate and not compete. Women therefore need to learn the requisite skills with which to compete on the corporate playing field. These are political savvy, strategic management of careers, negotiation, and etcetera.
- One must acknowledge the concept of informal organizational culture, that is, the old boys network, decisions made prior to the formal meeting being called and the concept that “the workplace was designed for men, by men with wives.”
2.4 The Female Gender Advantage

Eagly and Carli (2003) found that female managers have a small advantage in leadership style but can face disadvantage from “prejudicial evaluation of their competence as leaders” especially in male dominated leadership roles. The aggregate result of the advantage and disadvantage can be a net advantage, disadvantage or no difference. This depends on several factors, for example the extent to which the organizations try to achieve gender equality with respect to leadership roles, especially in male dominant environments. Eagly and Carli (2003) quoted Sharpe (2000):

“After years of analysing what makes leaders most effective and figuring out who’s got the Right Stuff, management gurus now know how to boost the odds of getting a great executive: Hire a female” (Sharpe, 2000, in Business Week).

Women are rising into leadership roles at all levels, albeit slowly. Eagly and Carli (2003) suggest the following reasons for this:

- Women have changed – women are assuming the personal characteristics needed to succeed in the new roles.
- Leadership roles have changed - these provide environments that welcome women’s managerial competence
- Organizational practices have changed - due to changes in gender equality legislation as well as changes made by the organizations themselves. Examples are: that organizations are less hierarchical, more driven by results than “old boys network”, organizations are supportive of women by providing mentorship, networking and having more family-friendly policies e.g. Deloitte & Touche who put into practice these changes, tripled the number of women in leadership

- The culture has changed - there is symbolic significance in the appointment of women to positions where previously men were in charge and then been caught for fraud e.g. the replacement of a senior executive charged with fraud with a smart woman symbolizing integrity and honesty.

These findings conflict with the statistics (Catalyst, 2007; Catalyst, 2006, Australian Government-EOWA, 2006) due to the fact that they show that very little progress has been made in executive ranks, and with the challenges that professional women are still facing (see next section).

The South African Government has committed itself to eliminating unfair discrimination and to encourage fair treatment and equal opportunity in the workplace. They believe that the country’s employment equity objectives are linked strongly to the country’s economic growth objectives.

“As a country we have set ourselves the national goals of increasing our economic growth to 6% and halving unemployment by 2014. Increasing South Africa’s GDP growth rate to more than 6% per annum, when combined with micro-economic reforms, will materially address unemployment, facilitate greater transformation (because of the higher growth in economic opportunities), reduce poverty and help address absolute levels of inequality – particularly in relation to the unemployed and women” (Commission for Employment Equity, 2006:1).

The history of the country has been peppered with numerous changes, especially so since democracy in 1994.
A significant amount of legislation was introduced post 1994 (South Africa-Department of Labour). They are:

- The Labour Relations Act (LRA) (1995), which took effect in 1996
- Constitution of SA, 1996
- The Employment Equity Act came into effect on Women’s Day, 9 August 1999.
- The Skills Development Act 1998
- Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) Act
- The Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act came in 2004.

These different Acts were introduced with the aim of correcting historical imbalances in the workplace.

Despite the introduction of the different legislation, and the government’s emphasis on gender equality, the reality is that black and white women are both a minority in senior management positions in SA, but black women suffer a double disadvantage – being discriminated against on two counts.

Booysen (2005:28) says:

“SA Black women are see-sawing between being doubly jeopardized (previously low status) and low status in the management system and doubly advantaged (recent high status) in the supra system, due to political changes and AA, EE and BEE legislation.”

Booysen (2005) states that the current management power structures in organizations favour white males, and so the relative advantage is therefore reduced. Black women have had to learn to adapt to the white culture and to the male culture. White women, despite the larger pool of
talent and higher representation in management structures, are now at a
disadvantage due to being excluded from BEE and being last on the EE
list. White women are now considered to be in a double disadvantaged
position (white and female).

Deemer and Fredericks (2003) suggest that women are struggling to get
beyond a certain level in organizations by trying to adopt masculine traits
and suppressing the feminine advantages they possess. They use the
metaphor of a woman being a square peg trying to squeeze into a round
hole and in the process causing rough edges on her shape and not being
happy or fulfilled. They go on to suggest that women must be themselves
because their feminine traits and leadership styles are just as effective if
not more effective than the male style.

An interesting paradox – The Female Advantage Paradox, becomes
evident. If women have gender advantage, why are they not progressing
to the top as quickly as they should (BooySEN, 2005)?
2.5 Summary of Dominant Theoretical Frameworks

Three major theoretical frameworks were discussed. These are the gender-centred, the organization-centred and the gender-organization-system perspectives. The gender-centred perspective puts forth that men and women are basically different and that women’s failure to progress is due to intrinsic factors like their attitudes, behaviours, traits, etc. and not the organizational or societal context.

The organization-structure perspective emphasizes that organization structures, as opposed to factors inherent in women, shape and define the behaviour of women in the workplace. The reasons why women have not risen to the top ranks in the same way as men are due to their position in the organizational structure, the amount of power they exert in their jobs and the number of women in these positions. Women’s possession of feminine traits, and related behaviours like risk aversion, are due to their disadvantaged positions in organizational structures and not their gender.

The GOS perspective takes into account the gender-centred perspective, the organizational context perspective and brings in a third factor - the social system. It suggests that in trying to understand why women are having limited success in the corporate world, one should try to identify the characteristics of the organizational context, the social system and that of the individuals (that is their gender), which could possibly be affecting men and women’s attitudes, cognitions and behaviours.

There are several age-old beliefs based on assumptions regarding implicit theories, gender stereotyping and role-expectations that have led to gender discrimination against women in the workplace.
Research by Eagli and Carli (2003) and Booysen (2005) showed that females have a gender advantage but are also faced with a disadvantage due to the current power structures that favour white males. Although legislation was introduced in South Africa to correct gender equity imbalances, the situation has still not improved. Black women, who are doubly jeopardized due to their race and gender, face a further complication.

It is against this background that the literature review will be conducted on women in management and the ‘opt-out revolution’.
Chapter 3: Women in Management and “Opt-Out”

A review of the literature on the “opt-out revolution” in the US as well as the literature on women in management in the global context and in South Africa is presented.

3.1 Women in Management

The following section involves a discussion of the status of women in management in South Africa and worldwide, the gender advantage that women supposedly possess and the challenges faced by women in the workplace, highlighting the unique situation in South Africa.

Despite equal opportunity legislation, for example the Employment Equity Act (Department of Labour, 1998) as well as decades of work by women fighting for equal opportunities, professional women seem to be making very little progress up the corporate ladder (Catalyst, 2007). The statistics of women in senior management positions around the world and in South Africa are presented below.

3.1.1 Representation of Women in Management-Worldwide

The 2006 Census of Women in Fortune 500 Corporate Officer and Board Positions in the US released in February 2007 (Catalyst, 2007) found that:

- There is a persistent shortage of women in corporate leadership positions
- Women are dramatically under-represented at the highest levels of business
- Women held 15.6% of Fortune 500 Corporate Officer positions, down from 16.4% in 2005
• The number of companies with 3 or more women corporate officers decreased
• Women in top paying positions rose to 6.7% from 6.4% in 2005.
• At the current rate of change it could take women 47 years to reach parity with men as corporate officers of Fortune 500 companies
• At the current rate of change it could take women 73 years to reach parity with men in board director positions
• Women held only 14.6% of Board seats compared to 14.7% in 2005.

According to Helfat, Harris and Wolfson (2006), the data suggests that there will be a slow increase in the percentage of CEO’s that are female. However the percentage is likely to remain relatively low. They expect that 6% of CEO’s in the Fortune 1000 will be women by 2016, if current trends continue.

The 2005 Census of Fortune 500 companies in the US revealed similarly, that women continue to be severely under-represented in top corporate leadership positions (Catalyst, 2006)

If this rate of progress continues, it could take 40 years for women to achieve parity with men in corporate officer positions (Catalyst, 2006:2).

President of Catalyst, Irene Lang stated: “Smart companies know that developing and retaining top talent yields solid results. Women have the education, expertise, experience and ambition to advance to these top positions in much greater numbers. However, this census reveals that some companies have yet to understand the compelling business case for diversity and women’s advancement or to take meaningful steps to develop and retain women leaders.”

An interesting finding was that companies that were ranked higher on the Fortune 500 had greater numbers of women in positions of power.
The 2006 “EOWA” Australian Census of Women in Leadership showed equally dismal results and the headline read: “Australia’s Boardrooms closed to Women”. The key findings were (Australian Government - EOWA, 2006):

- Australia’s top 200 companies have made little progress in increasing the numbers of women in their boardrooms
- Percentage of women board directors: 8.7%. Tiny incremental improvement since 2002
- Percentage of female CEO’s has not increased since 2003 (3%)
- Percentage of women executive managers rose from 11.4% in 1994 to 12%

“Women remain largely excluded from positions which have significant influence over Australia’s business direction, economy, public policy and the community generally.” Ms Anna McPhee-EOWA Director (Australia-EOWA, 2006:1).

3.1.2 Representation of Women in Management in South Africa

According to the Commission for Employment Equity’s Annual Report of 2005-2006 (Department of Labour, 2006), women occupy 30.2% of the category ‘Legislator, Senior Officials and Managers’ positions in South Africa and Men 69.8%. This represents a slight increase for women from 2004 (Dept. of Labour, 2004). The results reveal that this category is still dominated by White Males (43.1%) and White Females (16.7%).

A special report compiled by the Department of Labour provided an overview of the changes in the status of women in the South African Labour market between 1995 and 2005 (Dept. of Labour, 2006) led to the conclusion that:
“It is evident that women continue to suffer discrimination in the labour market, in terms of lower quality employment and lower remuneration. The number of women in the workforce has increased. While progress has been made in advancing the position of women in the labour market over the past decade, important challenges remain.”

The 2007 census done on women in corporate leadership by the Business Women’s Association of SA (BWASA) shows that although constituting 42.9% of the working population, there are only 8 female CEO’s out of a total of 318 companies surveyed – an increase of 1 from 2006. The momentum of female leadership appointments is decreasing although the opportunities are there (BWASA, 2006). It showed that although there were more opportunities to appoint women in executive management positions, this did not materialize. Men were instead appointed in these positions. Of concern is the fact that 77% of women executive managers are white (BWASA, 2006).

The 2007 Census Pyramid is presented below.
Niven Postma, former CEO of the BWASA discussed the business case for diversity in the face of a looming skills shortage crisis in South Africa. She referred to a Catalyst Study where it was stated that companies that promote women to high-level positions don’t just improve their equity figures and image, but also reap the benefits to the bottom line (Meyer & Boninelli, 2004).

A recent survey by Empowerdex on how state entities compare to the private sector with respect to gender equity, reported in the Star (The Star, 2006) found that the SA Government has 11 women out of a total of 28 cabinet ministers. The report also stated that private sector progress is slow. In State Owned Enterprises (SOE’s) women chair 17.6% versus private entities where women chair 1% (2 women). The gaming industry is reportedly making great strides in the up-skilling and representation of women. Tsogo Sun has 33% female directors. Noeleen Bruton, Marketing
Director of Tsogo Sun states that BEE requirements have taken precedence over gender equity in SA business today.

“Women must be encouraged to compete as women in the business world and not as men in a man’s world. They have their own valuable and unique perspectives to contribute to business”, says Bruton (The Star, 2006).

A discussion of the challenges faced by professional women around the world and in South Africa follows in the next section.

3.1.3 Challenges faced by Women in the Workplace

For decades, women have been striving for equal opportunities and for gender discrimination to be eliminated, yet stereotyping, ‘glass ceilings’ and ‘glass walls’ still continue to limit the participation of women in the most senior decision making positions of organizations around the world (Bratton, Grint & Nelson, 2005).

Bratton et al, 2005, define the ‘glass ceiling’ as: “a metaphorical transparent barrier that keeps women from rising above a certain level in organizations as a result of discrimination that decreases their upward mobility”. They further define ‘glass walls’ as “barriers that channel women into staff/support positions rather than allowing them to move to positions of responsibility that directly contribute to the profitability of the organization”.

Bratton, et al (2005) put forward the Sex-Role and Managerial stereotypes of Men and Women, as depicted in Table 1 below:
Table 1: Sex-Role and Managerial Stereotypes (Bratton et al, 2005)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>Affectionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant</td>
<td>Nurturing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambitious</td>
<td>Gentle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitive</td>
<td>Loyal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-sufficient</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational</td>
<td>Intuitive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acting like a leader</td>
<td>Warm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The differences between the sexes can be clearly seen in this table, with men having the “hard” attributes and females the “soft” attributes.

A study by Booysen (1999) on the differences and similarities regarding culture and leadership values between Male and Female Managers in Retail banking in South Africa yielded the following gender differences, as depicted in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Gender Differences between Male and Female Managers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Managers</th>
<th>Female Managers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Focus on:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance</td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition and winning</td>
<td>Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domination</td>
<td>Intuition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control and Directive Leadership</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemotional behaviour</td>
<td>Empowerment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective behaviour</td>
<td>Self-disclosure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rational Behaviour</td>
<td>Subtle forms of control</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 shows the different areas of focus demonstrated by the men and women in the study. Tables 1 and 2 show that the sexes are vastly different with men being seen as competitive and performance orientated while women are seen as softer and focusing on the warmer, emotion related aspects of leadership. From here it can be deduced that women are viewed as not competitive or ambitious, exactly the antithesis of what women have strived so hard for.

A replication of the original Schein studies on sex-role stereotypes in management, and the characteristics of successful managers, was carried out by Booysen and Nkomo (2006) with a large sample of MBA students. They hypothesized that both males and females perceive that successful middle managers possess those characteristics more commonly ascribed to men. For males, the hypothesis was confirmed, but not for females. The SA females indicated that women resemble the behaviour of middle managers and not men. The SA Males in the study perceive: Think Manager-Think Male.

The Females’ perception of Managers tends to be: Think Manager-Think Female. In other countries, both males and females confirmed the hypothesis of: Think Manager-Think Male. There is a proven shift in management stereotypes in women, towards valuing feminine leadership – possibly due to the increase in the numbers of women in management and the focus on gender equality in SA (Booysen & Nkomo, 2006).

Schein (2007) corroborated these views when she reviewed her research from the 1970’s, replicated in the USA and internationally, on gender stereotyping and requisite management characteristics.
She asked the questions: How has the “think manager, think male” attitude changed over the past 30 years since the author’s initial research? What are the implications of the outcomes for women’s advancement in management today?

The results reveal the strong, rigid views of the “think manager – think male” attitude held by males across time and national borders. Over the last three decades corporate males in the USA continue to see women as less qualified than men for managerial positions. Internationally, the view of women as less likely than men to possess the required management characteristics is also a commonly held belief among male management students in the USA, the UK, Germany, China and Japan (Schein, 2007).

Further evidence of this is an ESAMI study of Women Executives in East Africa several years ago, which probed the major constraints to career success for women (Booyse & Nkomo, Power Point Presentation, 2006). These are presented in Table 3 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Constraints</th>
<th>Freq. (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple roles, family responsibilities</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male dominance, unsupportive husbands, inferiority complex of husbands</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of opportunities, education and training</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional values, lack of political support, discriminatory laws &amp; practices</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s own attitudes, lack of self-confidence, fear of risk taking, fear of criticism</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No constraints</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings in Table 3 show that the major inhibitors to the career success of women are family responsibilities and lack of support at home.
Discrimination against women and lack of opportunities has a smaller inhibitory effect. The personal attributes of women have a very small effect on the progress of women.

Wellington, Brumit-Kropf and Gerkovich, 2003; and Ohlott, Bhandary and Tavares, 2003, state that women face several challenges in trying to advance to the highest levels of corporate leadership.

The findings by these researchers (above) suggest that glass ceilings and glass walls are very much in place. The main issue is top leadership’s failure to ensure that women get the necessary experience that would qualify them for the senior posts. About 67% of the women and over 50% of the CEO’s surveyed agreed that the failure of senior leadership to assume accountability for women’s advancement is a key barrier.

The reality of the glass-ceiling phenomenon in South Africa was examined by Mathur-Helm (2006) when she interviewed 40 women managers in 4 of the country’s largest retail banks.

Her results indicate that the glass ceiling is not a myth, but very real. It is nurtured by the organizational culture, policies and strategies besides women’s own inadequacies. She mentioned that SA women decline several career opportunities because of their significant family and household responsibilities. The results of the study show that the majority of the women mentioned several barriers to their growth.

The challenges faced by women as cited by Yukl (2006), Bell and Nkomo (2001), Mathur-Helm (2006), Volpe (2006), Wellington, Brumit-Kropf and Gerkovich (2003) and Ohlott, Bhandary and Tavares (2003) are presented in Table 4 below. Challenges unique to South Africa have been italicised.
### Table 4: Challenges faced by Professional Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>Challenges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lack of general management and line experience.</td>
<td>16. Insufficient qualifications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Inability to cope with the numerous and constant transitions</td>
<td>17. Conflicting relationships amongst women in senior and top management positions. Women creating stiletto ceilings for other women. <em>Black and white women competing for the same jobs.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Exclusion from informal networks</td>
<td>18. Distrust in women’s capabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Stereotypes about women’s roles and responsibilities, as well as women in senior management positions</td>
<td>19. Domination of the male values system. Women losing their identities and trying to fit in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Failure of top leaders to assume accountability for women’s advancement</td>
<td>20. Gender bias in promoting women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Lack of role models</td>
<td>21. Informal promotion without advertising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Commitment to personal or family responsibilities</td>
<td>22. Lack of specialized women development programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Lack of mentorship, lack of confidence.</td>
<td>23. Invisibility vise-mistakes get noticed, but good work is taken from granted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Patriarchy.</td>
<td>24. Women’s lack of experience and qualifications compared to men, due to South Africa’s history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Lack of awareness of organizational politics and turbulence in environment</td>
<td>25. Gender equity overshadowed by racial and ethnic equity issues in present day SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Different behavioural style from organization’s norm</td>
<td>26. Lack of networking skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Lack of opportunities for visibility</td>
<td>27. Not happy when socializing in typical male fashion: entertaining guests in the suites at sports stadiums, playing golf and socializing in pubs after work. A large percentage of the women studied had to pick up children after work, so were not able to socialize at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Inhospiteable corporate culture</td>
<td>28. Lack of self-management skills to reach senior levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Lack of opportunities for challenging assignments</td>
<td>29. Not in management ranks long enough</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Ineffective leadership style</td>
<td>30. Sexual harassment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The findings presented in Table 4 show clearly that there are numerous challenges faced by women in senior positions. Some of these are “pull factors” and some of these are “push factors”. Pull factors are those that draw a woman away from work, for example family responsibilities, while push factors are those that force a woman to leave, for example discrimination at work.

Findings from a past study by the same author, Mathur-Helm (2002) in Mathur-Helm (2006) is consistent with these findings. She found that:

“SA business and MNC environments still reflect a strong traditional, hierarchical and ‘male-dominated’ work culture, that does not promote women in the workplace since the organizations lack faith and trust in their capabilities” (Mathur-Helm, 2002: 321).

Males, the majority of whom are part of the ‘old-boys club’, which excludes women, largely dominate the SA banking sector. Another study by Mathur-Helm (2004) in Mathur-Helm (2006) suggests that Affirmative Action in SA is overshadowing other forms of discrimination in the workplace, namely gender discrimination.

Given the history of SA, it is clear that any discussion of leadership issues must include an added dimension, that of race.

Littrell and Nkomo (2005) investigated the differences in preferred managerial leadership behaviour among genders and racial groups in South Africa and found that the most similar grouping was black males with white males and females, and that the coloured sample was the most dissimilar to the other groups. The implications of this is that leadership development programs in SA must consider that race and gender dynamics extend beyond Black and White and should include all race groups (i.e. Asian and Coloured) as well.
McCallum (2006), asked, “How do black women in post-apartheid South Africa experience empowerment on a psychological level?” She interviewed several successful black women and found that these women physically split their selves favouring the masculine, intellectual side and suppressing the traditionally feminine and emotional side. She stated that:

“The term empowered women is thus a paradox, for these women are only empowered in as much as they act more like men and deny their feminine selves” (McCallum, 2006: 1).

She stated that this problem would continue for as long as society values the masculine qualities over the feminine. Vice President Mlambo-Ngcuka at the 2005 Conference for SA Women in Dialogue said that: “women must not try to be like men.” She also said recently that despite government’s initiatives to improve gender equity, there was still a problem (McCallum, 2006).

The findings of this and other studies have provided ample evidence to indicate the strong presence of the glass ceiling as a “subtle yet strong barrier” preventing women from reaching the top.

Berens (2006) investigated the reasons for the continuing lack of women in board level jobs in the UK. The study found that more significant progress has been made in the public sector due to several government initiatives to support women’s careers, but the private sector is failing to recognize the specific needs of women as they rise through the ranks.

A female manager from General Electric in the US recently decided that she was not going to accept the blatant discrimination that she was experiencing. She is suing the company for $500 million for gender discrimination regarding pay and promotions. She said that she had
progressed steadily for 13 years up the ranks until she bumped up against the ‘glass ceiling’ into the executive ranks. More than 1700 women are expected to join the lawsuit in support (Deutsch, 2007).

Berens (2006) refers to the EOC’s Annual “Sex & Power” report, which paints a bleak picture of the future of working women. It suggests that unless certain barriers are removed, it will take the public service 20 more years to achieve gender equality, and it will take the private sector double that, i.e. 40 years. This concurs with the findings of the 2005 Catalyst Census on Women in Corporate Leadership in the US.

Given all of the above, managers who do want children, have to constantly consider the impact of having children, on their careers. Wood and Newton (2006) as a follow up to a study in 1996, found that male and female managers are aware that delaying child bearing or remaining childless will better suit a career in management. They also acknowledged the impediment that children are to a career path. One must acknowledge, though, that not all women are married and that some choose not to have children.

The organizations have clearly not put in enough effort with respect to family friendly policies for their senior management. The impact of these decisions on the population growth and economic competitiveness of Australia is yet to be seen (Wood & Newton, 2006).

Female Managers who already have children are therefore presented with a double challenge – how to balance the workplace challenges they face with the demands from their private lives.

The majority of the factors listed in Table 4 are push factors. The actual weightings of the different factors and their effect on women cannot be
deduced from this study, as compared to the findings in Table 3 where the pull factors accounted for 75% of the constraints faced by women.

The literature on women in management has shown that there is definitely a glass ceiling in place and that it is having a negative effect on women’s progress in the workplace (in general). The statistics show limited growth in the numbers of women at senior level. The problems faced by women with workplace and personal challenges and their response to these will be discussed in the next section. These comments by no means indicate that all women are experiencing this phenomenon. The opt-out phenomenon (possible exodus of senior women from the workplace) will be discussed in the next section.
3.2 The “Opt-Out Revolution”

The opt-out phenomenon, which is prevalent around the world, is discussed in this section.

3.2.1 Background

A cover story called “The Opt-out Revolution” in the New York Times Magazine by Lisa Belkin in October 2003 caused major controversy in the US. The author presented the results of some research that she had conducted which revealed that professional, highly qualified women in the US were leaving the corporate world in large numbers (Belkin, 2003).

Belkin (2003) based her findings on interviews that she had conducted with a sample of approximately 40 highly qualified women who had chosen to leave their jobs in favour of staying at home with their children. It sparked a wave of debate between feminists who have advocated women’s rights for years, and the traditionalists, who believe that women should not be in the boardroom anyway.

She states that these women surveyed are exactly the ones who would have been out there competing successfully with men on their level and made a controversial comment: “Women don’t run the world- because they don’t want to”.

She went on to make the point that many women do not have linear careers and that this might be a new trend. She subsequently joined a task force set up by the Centre for Work Life Policy in the US to study the “hidden brain drain” of women. The members of this task force are representative of huge organizations that have come to acknowledge that it is not enough to promote and retain talent. Organizations need to take a step further and accept that talented workers will leave (off-ramps) and
that you need to have mechanisms to help them return (on-ramps). She says that more and more men are leaving too. For example, 46% of the employees taking parental leave at Ernst and Young in 2002 were men (Belkin, 2003).

Belkin herself conceded that her study was limited to successful, upper middle class women who all have husbands who earn very well and that the sample was too small to lead to generalizations. She however, wanted to share the outcome of her findings with the public because she believed that for successful women to leave careers that they had invested so much in, there had to be a deep-rooted problem, and that it was worth investigating and sharing with the public.

Every woman she interviewed had an undergraduate degree and a MBA and they had all reached a senior level in their respective organizations. She herself fell into the category of women who had chosen to make a different lifestyle choice and she felt strongly enough to pursue the investigation.

She presented thought provoking statements from two women in the study:

“It’s not that women aren’t competitive; it’s just that they don’t want to compete along the lines that are not compatible with their other goals” (Belkin, 2003: 7)

“Quitting is driven as much from the job-dissatisfaction side as from the pull to motherhood side” (Belkin, 2003: 11)

Marshall (1995) conducted a study of 16 professional, highly qualified women who had all left their jobs for various reasons.
The one point that was made very clear was that most of the women had made the decision to leave irrespective of their financial situation. Some were even the family breadwinner when they decided to leave. Marshall (1995) pointed out that the study was small but that the results were very revealing and would go a long way towards helping people understand the experiences of some women in management. She does not claim to generalize the findings to the rest of the female population and neither does Belkin (2003). Marshall (1995) showed that many single women had also left their positions, showing that it is not necessarily only women with children who quit to stay home.

Recently Elizabeth Vargas, a prominent news anchor at a top television station in the US gave up her highly coveted position because it took up too much of her time and kept her away from her family (Oprah Show Transcript-“Career or Children”, 2007). This announcement created media frenzy and many questioned whether it was a step backward for the feminist movement.

Vargas stated categorically that this decision was the best one for her and her family at that time and that it had no bearing on the achievements of women in general. She emphasised that one of the greatest achievements of women is the right to choose what is best for her. She subsequently went on to take a lower level position at a smaller station, a job that gave her greater flexibility (Oprah Show Transcript-“Career or Children”, 2007).

A recent internal investigation by British Telecom into why female employees were leaving the company revealed a clear frustration with its male dominated culture (Berens, 2006). A former employee was quoted as saying:
“Those women who do succeed here seem to do so on very ‘male’ terms. I believe that women quite often sacrifice who they really are at work, which can be very tiring. We quite often work and think in a different way from men. This is not valued, even though it is equally valuable” (Berens, 2006:15).

3.2.2 Wanting Different Lifestyles

A recent poll of 1000 female managers by recruitment firm Hudson revealed that 54% were either seriously thinking of escaping the 9 to 5 grind or had already escaped it. The reason they gave was: "a bid to reinvent working patterns" and find career choices that offer “flexibility and autonomy”. The proportion of escapees in the accountancy sector was 44%. They found that more than 75% of female accountants were disappointed with their working lives due to a “lack of free time” and “poor career prospects” (Berens, 2006).

The Managing Director of Hudson (Guy Howard) said:

“It is not only the demands of family life that are making them (the female managers) look further afield. Many have tasted corporate life and decided that there are better ways of making their mark on the world than following the traditional working model set before them” (Berens, 2006:17).

Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) developed the kaleidoscope model, which helps to understand the “opt-out of career” phenomenon. Like a kaleidoscope that produces different colours as you rotate the tube, women shift the pattern of their careers by rotating different aspects of their lives to arrange their roles and relationships in different ways.

Each career choice/action was evaluated in light of the impact it would have on her relationships with those around her, as opposed to its impact on her as a stand-alone entity. The women factored in the needs of their
children, husbands, parents, clients, colleagues, as compared to the men who tend to keep their work and non-work lives separate. “The women in our study were more interested in making their careers suit their lives rather than allowing the career to overtake their lives” (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

3.2.3 Off-Ramps and On-Ramps

The controversial article by Belkin (2003) led to Hewlett and Buck-Luce (2005) investigating the following: What Is The Role Of Off-Ramps & On-Ramps In The Lives Of Highly Qualified Women? What is the scope of the opt-out phenomenon in the US? What proportions of women take off-ramps? Are they pushed or pulled? Which sectors of the economy are most affected? How many years do they spend out of the workforce? When they decide to re-enter, what are they looking for? How easy is it to find on-ramps? What policies and practices help them to return to work?

They discovered that 37% of women have left work voluntarily at some point. For mothers, this figure is 43% and for men, this figure is 24%. They also found that 1 in 3 white female MBA graduates is not working full-time versus 1 in 20 white male MBA graduates.

“When women feel hemmed in by rigid policies or a glass ceiling, for example, they are much more likely to respond to the pull of family” (A respondent in Hewlett & Buck-Luce, 2005:44).

They pointed out that only a few privileged women have the option of quitting and that their spouses need to earn very well. 32% of the women stated that their spouses earned enough to enable the family to live on one income. This was one of their reasons for “off-ramping” (Hewlett & Buck-Luce, 2005).
For men, the dominant reason for off-ramps was to strategically reposition their careers. Hewlett and Buck-Luce (2005) found that it was an extremely difficult decision for the women to leave their careers and give up their experience and training. 93% of those surveyed said that they want to return to their careers at some point.

Most stated the need for financial independence as their reason for wanting to return. 43% state that they want to experience again the enjoyment and satisfaction they used to experience in their careers. They stated in the focus groups that: “work gives structure and shape to their lives, boosts confidence and self-esteem and confers status and standing in their communities.”

Most kept their professional identities as their primary identity even though they off-ramped. They discovered that off-ramps are easy but onramps hard to find. The off-ramps lasted 2.2 years on average. In addition, women who spend 3 years or more out of the workforce, have their earning power reduced by 37%. Many women were found to have declined a promotion in order to fulfil family responsibilities (Hewlett & Buck-Luce, 2005).

Stone and Lovejoy (2004) conducted a study similar to that done by Hewlett and Buck-Luce (2005). They investigated why 43 female professionals with children under 18, had quit their careers, and the work-family context within which the decision was made. Their findings that women struggle to make these decisions were corroborated by the findings of Hewlett and Buck-Luce (2005). Many of the women were found to have made numerous attempts to reduce hours and to avoid having to resign, but to no avail.
Stone and Lovejoy (2004) categorized the factors that women cited for leaving, into work-related, their children’s influence on the decision, and their husband’s role in the decision.

The findings of Hewlett and Buck-Luce (2005) and Stone and Lovejoy (2004) are categorized into “Push” and “Pull” factors in Table 5 below. “Pull” factors are those that draw you away from work (mainly by husbands and children in this study). The “Push factors” are those that push you out of work. The percentages in brackets are the findings from the study, showing the frequency of that particular factor.

Table 5: Factors influencing women’s decision to quit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Push Factors</th>
<th>Push Factors</th>
<th>Pull Factors</th>
<th>Pull Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Earn a degree or do other training (23%)</td>
<td>Workplace inflexibility</td>
<td>Care for children or parents</td>
<td>Pull of younger children. Primacy (your need to care for your baby) of parental care, emotional pull of younger children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work not enjoyable or fulfilling (17%)</td>
<td>‘Mommy tracking’ and the maternal (glass) wall</td>
<td>Husbands not doing enough around the house (44%).</td>
<td>Pull of older children – increased demands, lack of substitutability of own care, time and pleasure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had to move away (17%)</td>
<td>Economic restructuring-manager turnover, changes in corporate culture</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of husband’s help with parenting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table shows that there were a combination of push and pull factors for women.

As an interesting point of comparison, the push factors for Men were identified as:

- Changed careers (29%)
- Earn a degree (25%)
- Work not fulfilling (24%)
- Not interested in field (18%)
- Family time (12%).

In terms of workplace push factors, Still (2006) found that the exodus of women is mainly because organizations have failed to understand the differences between men and women, and this ignorance has led to flawed incentive structures that force women out.


"Just as the institution of motherhood makes extraordinary demands on women, the institution of work makes similar demands. The ideal worker is one who works 40 years straight, relocates on demand, travels whenever the company needs him or her to, works long hours (often 50 or more a week) and needs no time off for personal issues or illness" (Still, 2006: 163).
Still (2006) made the point that:

"It is easier to quit a job than to quit being a mother – and more in keeping with evolved psychological mechanisms" (Still, 2006:163).

Her research showed that women are significantly more likely to value reduced working hours.

Still (2006) then presented her view on how US Companies fail women:

- **They assume that men and women value the same things** - companies motivate employees with pay, promotions and power - distinctly male values.

- **They assume that their managers are unbiased** – three types of stereotyping: hostile (open hostility re pregnancy, etc.), benevolent (spare a mother from working late or taking on a new project) and descriptive (motherhood status is assumed to explain an observed behaviour e.g. lack of productivity).

- **They ‘accommodate’ women symbolically**, i.e. token efforts at assisting women.

The furore caused by Belkin’s controversial article on the Opt-Out revolution (Belkin, 2003) led to Williams, Manvell and Bornstein (2006) doing a comprehensive review of 192 articles written on the subject of the “Opt-Out Revolution” in the US. They critically analysed the articles and presented new angles on how the issue should be reported by the press. They believe that “push” factors play a much bigger role in women leaving, and not “pull” as viewed by most people. They pointed out that the US cannot be competitive if they continue to pay large sums of money to educate and up-skill women who are then driven out by inflexible
workplaces and discrimination due to family responsibilities. They refer to this as “macro-economic deskillling “ (Williams, Manvell & Bornstein, 2006).

In South Africa, certain alarming trends are being observed as reported by Futhi Ntshingila in the Sunday Times:” About 45% of Women CA’s want to quit.” This was based on a survey done by Landelahni Business Leaders (Ntshingila, 2006).

The survey was initiated when Landelahni saw a trend in the recruitment of women who entered the sector and left it again and wanted to understand the reasons why they were leaving.

The survey investigated the attitudes, perceptions, compensation and overall satisfaction of SA women in the financial services industry. The findings were (Ntshingila, 2006):

- A large number felt that the industry had not transformed
- Industry still dominated by chauvinist males
- Female accountants felt that they had to work harder than their male counterparts to gain equal recognition
- Most felt that conditions within the sector have not improved in recent years
- 45% plan to leave within 5 years
- More than 60% felt that they seldom felt part of a team and always felt isolated
- More than 70% of women over 30 said that they had to adopt a more male-oriented approach in order to be heard and to survive
• Almost all women under 30 believe that less time and attention are devoted to their training and development than that spent on men
• Majority said that at some point in their careers they were moved into admin roles, irrespective of education and experience
• They felt that to fight against the situation would lead to them being sidelined
• Whisky and golf found to be the quickest way to climb the corporate ladder

The President of the Chartered Accountants Institute of KZN said that women must rise above the male chauvinism and not make gender an issue. She said that the women must not give up too easily. She said that transformation was a gradual process and should not be a deterrent to the female Chartered Accountants (CA’s). A major limitation of this survey is the limited sample size (only 50). There are 25000 CA’s in South Africa. The number of women CA’s could not be confirmed.

Very little work has been done in South Africa with respect to women who take career breaks. One exception is a study of the career development and return to work of a group of professional SA women with children by Geber (2000). The pattern of their career breaks and return to work were investigated alongside their activities during the break.

51% of the sample put their career on hold while they raised their children. The hypothesis that professional women do not pursue their careers seriously after motherhood was not confirmed. It was found that:

• Professional women do take relatively short career breaks particularly if they are not employed by others
• Professional women embark on further academic studies which may enhance their career prospects after re-entry
• Many after re-entry experience increased symptoms of stress.

The work done by Geber (2000) was done on a non-random sample of 51 professional white women, which is not representative of the current situation in South Africa. The work was also done 7 years ago, with many changes having occurred since then.

More recently (mid-2007) a study of twenty-one South African female executives, who resigned, was conducted and published in www.Leader.co.za. Of the twenty-one, eight were chief executive officers, one was a chief information officer and another a chief financial officer. Seven of the participants were senior managers, two were executive managers and one was an acting chairperson. These are very influential women in the country and have appeared in CEO Magazine’s list of Top Business Women. The majority were pioneers in their fields and each was the only female at that level in the organization. They all shared in detail, with anecdotes, their reasons for resigning and these are summarized below (Clark, 2007):

• Need to make a difference – they felt they were no longer making a difference
• Political Acumen – they lacked political acumen and could not fight the corporate politics they encountered
• Burnout – exhaustion due to very long hours and not enough rest and family time.
• Social Networks – they were excluded from the “old boy’s network” where many decisions were made on the golf course. Some men were in positions based on the fact that they went to a certain
university in SA and their positions were not in line with their performance

- Lack of organizational support and mentorship – no women at the same level. In some cases, women who were there did not want to help.
- Values clash – between themselves and their organization or between themselves and their immediate supervisor.
- Shocks – it took one particular incident, for example, finding out that a male colleague on the same level had told one woman about his salary and perks, and they were twice as much as hers. This was the final deciding factor.
- Intimidation – sexual advances from colleagues and seniors as well as a lack of respect.
- Organisational culture – paternalistic – they were tired of being females in a male dominated culture. They said that the work environment is too white and too male.

The overall findings show that the reasons why women normally leave organisations are much deeper than what the media reports on (Clark, 2007).

“The essence of the women executives – their pioneering spirit, competitive nature, compulsion for success, their search and dependence on freedom, autonomy and making a difference – is what drives their exit from inflexible, staid, unaccommodating organisations” (Clark, 2007:5).

One more factor affecting professional women is the pull of older children. This is discussed in the next sub-section.
3.2.4 The Pull of Older children

Most literature on the subject of the dilemma faced by women, regarding the balancing of family and work, focuses mainly on women with babies. Not much research has been done on the issues faced by parents with school going children.

A study by Catalyst in 2006 called: "After School Worries: Tough on Parents, Bad for Business" probed the issue of the concerns parents have over their school going children and what arrangements they had made for their children during after-school hours. They went on to identify the workplace support and job characteristics that either contribute to or help ease those concerns. They surveyed 1755 parents with school age children (45% fathers and 55% mothers) employed at 3 Fortune 500 companies in the US.

They found that two-thirds of working parents are employed full-time and that workplace stress costs companies an estimated $50 billion-$300 billion in lost productivity each year. They developed a term: PCAST meaning: Parental Concern over After School Time. They found that PCAST potentially affects one-third of the labour force e.g. it causes job disruptions, distractions, errors, negative attitudes about promotion opportunities and lower job satisfaction (Catalyst, 2006). The organizations they work for need to take these concerns into account in order to have a happy, productive workforce. Adequate support goes a long way towards helping employees have a balanced work-family life.

In the same vein, a study conducted in Canada, Argentina and Mexico on the career life issues of successful women in these countries by Lituchy, Monserrat, Olivas-Lujan, Duffy, Gregory, Punnett and Santos (2007) found that the women surveyed conveyed more subjective measures of career
success, for example contributing to society and learning in their work as well as receiving recognition. In addition, it was found that social support, particularly from family, is an integral part of women’s career success and life in general.

### 3.3 Summary of Women in Management and the Opt-Out Phenomenon

Statistics in the US and Australia have shown that women continue to be severely under-represented in top corporate leadership positions. If this continues, it could take 40 years for women to achieve parity with men in corporate officer positions. Companies ranked higher on the Fortune 500 have greater numbers of women in positions of power.

In the SA situation the number of women in the workforce is increasing but not necessarily in the professional ranks. The economic situation in SA has forced the majority of women to go to work. Most do not have the luxury of the choice to either stay in their jobs or to leave. Many women in South Africa are the sole breadwinners for their families. Although constituting 42.9% of the working population in SA, there are only 8 female CEO’s out of a total of 318 companies surveyed. In addition, 77% of women executive managers are white.

The sexes are vastly different with men being seen as competitive and performance orientated while women are seen as softer and focusing on the warmer, emotion related aspects of leadership. From here it can be deduced that women are viewed as not competitive or ambitious, exactly the antithesis of what women have strived so hard for.

Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) showed that each career choice/action made by a woman was evaluated in light of the impact it would have on her
relationships with those around her, as opposed to its impact on her as a stand-alone entity. The women factored in the needs of their children, husbands, parents, clients, colleagues, as compared to the men who tend to keep their work and non-work lives separate.

Research has shown that the glass ceiling is in place in SA. It is nurtured by the organizational culture, policies and strategies besides women’s own inadequacies. In SA, affirmative action and Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment are overshadowing gender discrimination as a major issue.

There are numerous challenges faced by women in senior positions. Some of these are “pull factors” and some of these are “push factors”. Pull factors are those that draw a woman away from work, for example family responsibilities, while push factors are those that force a woman to leave, for example discrimination at work, lack of support by senior management and inhospitable corporate culture. Many women have to consider the impact of having children, (should they want any) on their careers.

The top female performers in South Africa have a need for freedom and autonomy and the desire to make a difference – to their organisations and to this country. However, recent work done in South Africa showed that organisations are failing to keep their female talent because of their paternalistic organisational culture, the poor quality of management and their inability to accommodate these needs (Clark, 2007).

Parents with older children (not babies, but under the age of 18) suffer a great deal of stress about what happens to their children after school. This affects work performance and organizations need to understand this and ensure that their strategies and policies are family friendly.
The work done by Hewlett and Buck-Luce (2005), Still (2006) and Stone and Lovejoy (2004) as well as the other authors cited, clearly illustrates the fact that women in the workplace are facing tough challenges in handling the competing demands of their professional lives and their family lives. Many women, who have no choice, are forced to remain at work and several adopt male traits in order to fit in.

The organisations are clearly not doing much to address these issues and instead are instrumental in creating environments that are pushing women out. Those women who can afford to quit are doing so and achieving great personal fulfilment.

Organisations that wish to address issues around the topic of voluntary turnover of their female executives, and to develop effective retention strategies need to have a good understanding of all the factors that contribute to a women making the decision to resign or even wanting to resign. When highly qualified senior women, who have been very successful for several years, decide to resign, this should sound an alarm and this must be prevented in future. The following section deals with the topic - Retention of Women in the corporate world.
Chapter 4: Retention of Women

This section deals with the topic of retention of women, and is split into retention in South Africa, strategies that women need to adopt, strategies for organizations and a sub-section profiling best retention practices in different companies and different countries.

4.1 Retention in South Africa

A study by Booysen (2007) on barriers to employment equity implementation and retention of blacks in management in South Africa showed an overlap in terms of the barriers.

She found that a lack of communication and shared understanding of employment equity, a white male dominated organisational culture, low commitment from top leadership and inconsistency in the implementation of Employment Equity are major barriers to effective implementation of Employment Equity and Retention of black employees. In addition, Booysen (2007) identified two new barriers – and these include the role of white fear and lack of meaningful consultation with white male employees. Although this study is not female-specific, females made up 49.3% of the sample, making these findings very relevant to the issue of retention of women in South Africa.
4.2 What Women Need to Do

In order to help women to counteract the barriers they face at work, a few recommendations were made by Volpe (2006), Booysen (2005), Mathur-Helm (2006) and Schein (2007).

**Academic and Career Development**

Mathur-Helm (2006) stated that women must grow, develop and empower themselves through academic and career development.

**Personal Mastery to Conquer Challenges**

Volpe (2006) suggested that women should use personal mastery – the ability to respond positively with feelings, behaviour, attitudes and thoughts to the stimulations we receive from people, data and things, in order to conquer any challenges that arise (Volpe, 2006).

**Cultural Intelligence**

Booysen (2005) suggests that all managers must become culturally intelligent in order to deal with the leadership challenges they face. The leadership philosophy must have a balance between African and Western and feminine and masculine management practices and values.

**Use Perception and Overcome challenges**

The practical implications of all the researcher’s findings are that women’s continued progress depends on women being able to recognize the rigidity of the negative attitudes they face and to continually seek ways to ensure that these attitudes do not derail their success (Schein, 2007).

**Challenge the ‘Corporate convenient’ way of work**

An argument was also made for challenging the “corporate convenient” way of working and for restructuring managerial work to facilitate a work and family
interface. The “corporate convenient” way of working is the system that was
designed by male managers for a male dominated work environment and it
benefits the organization only, with no consideration for the special needs of
corporate women (Schein, 2007).
4.3  **Best Practice Companies and Countries**

The literature on best practice companies and countries was reviewed and the findings are presented in this section. They have been categorized into flexible work policies, maternity benefits, part-time work and special staff services.

**Flexible work policies**

Deloitte & Touche has doubled the number of employees on flexible work schedules and more than quintupled the number of female partners and directors (from 97 to 567) in the past 10 years. IBM employees can request up to 156 weeks of job-protected family time off (Belkin, 2003).

**Maternity benefits**

In Germany, mothers are given 14 weeks leave at full pay and after that either parent can take leave and may receive a monthly sum (up to the child’s 3rd birthday). In Canada, maternity benefits are paid for 15 weeks and parental benefits up to an additional 35 weeks. In Finland, Mothers can take 106 paid days and then either parent may take 158 paid days after that (Still, 2006).

In the Netherlands, maternity benefits include four to six weeks of pre-birth leave and 16 weeks of after-birth leave with 100 percent salary. Parental leave laws allow parents, after twelve months on the job, to take up to thirteen weeks full-time or six months part-time unpaid leave to care for children up to four years old. Surprisingly, these laws even cover those working less than 20 hours per week (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

In France, mothers receive a yearlong paid maternity leave and can place their three-year-olds in public nursery school free of charge. In addition to free health care, mothers receive a cash allowance for each child to be used as she chooses, including paying a nanny or other household help (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).
In Sweden, new mothers receive a year’s paid leave, the right to work a six-hour day with full benefits until their child enters primary school, and a government stipend to help pay childcare expenses. Married couples are taxed independently; women earning less than their husbands are taxed at a lower rate, making it economically worthwhile for her to work (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005).

**Part-time work**

The EU has made it illegal to give part-time workers less favourable terms and conditions (pro-rata) merely because they work less hours, and strongly encourages part-time jobs in higher paid occupations and sectors so that part-time work is no longer synonymous with low paid, low-quality work (Still, 2006).

The Dutch 2000 Law on Working Time Adjustment gives employees with a minimum of 1 year’s service in companies with at least 10 employees, the right to demand a reduction in working hours. This request, which in effect amounts to a change in contract, has to include the desired weekly hours, their distribution between different days, and the effective starting date of the part-time work. The employer has to grant the request unless there are demonstrated serious business reasons. The German Part-Time law is similar to the Dutch one, but the employer only has to demonstrate “business and organizational reasons” to refuse a request (Still, 2006).

The UK approach provides much weaker rights - the law is limited to parents with children under 6 or a disabled child under 18. Usage in the UK has been 10 times as high as in Germany within 1 year of both laws being implemented. Companies must respond to not only women but also other employees who value something else as much as or more than work
e.g. someone who wants a reduced schedule to study, or care for an elderly parent or train for competitive sport (Still, 2006).

**Special Staff Services**

In South Africa, a recent survey done by Horning (2007) showed that companies like Derivco, Business Connexion, the UNISA SBL and Unilever are making great strides in addressing the needs of their female staff members. Flexibility, increased representation of women, excellent company benefits like study assistance, as well as additional perks like gyms and concierge services are but a few examples of what these innovative organizations are offering.
4.4 Summary of Retention

On investigating the barriers to employment equity implementation and the retention of management level blacks in SA, Booysen (2007) found that a lack of communication and shared understanding of employment equity, a white male dominated organisational culture, low commitment from top leadership and inconsistency in the implementation of Employment Equity are major barriers to effective implementation of Employment Equity and retention of black employees.

In addition, Booysen (2007) identified two new barriers – and these include the role of white fear and lack of meaningful consultation with white male employees. Although this study is not female-specific, females made up 49.3% of the sample, making these findings very relevant to the issue of retention of women in South Africa.

In order to reverse the female ‘brain drain’ in South Africa, both women and organisations need to make an effort. Women can empower themselves in the workplace by focusing on their own academic and career development. In addition, they should use personal mastery - the ability to respond positively to any situation - to conquer any challenges they encounter (Volpe, 2006).

They should also become culturally intelligent to help deal with leadership challenges they face (Booysen, 2005). Schein (2007) said that they should use perception and overcome any challenges they encounter, for example, they should challenge the ‘corporate convenient’ way of working and restructure managerial work to facilitate a work and family interface.

A review of best practice companies and countries with respect to retention was conducted and these were categorized into flexible work policies, maternity benefits, part-time work and special staff services.
These were then used to compile a list of retention strategies for South African organizations. These recommendations are presented in the Recommendations section.

The next Chapter (Chapter Five) involves a discussion of the methodology of conducting research to determine what work-life issues a sample of South African professional women are experiencing. A survey of what their organizations are doing in terms of female retention will also be done.
Chapter 5: Research Methodology

Chapter Five presents the research design, including the research processes, sampling, sample size, data collection methods and techniques and data analysis techniques, as well as study limitations, ethical procedures and project management of the research report.

5.1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this research project is to obtain an understanding of the combination of factors that are affecting professional women in the workplace, which may be resulting in many leaving the corporate world, or to remain and not make progress. The role played by SA Corporates in retaining their female professional staff will also be investigated.

This research effort includes qualitative as well as quantitative research. Multi-method data collection techniques have been utilized to obtain meaningful results.

5.2 Research Design

The research design includes qualitative and quantitative research. The qualitative aspect (exploratory) is a phenomenological study and the quantitative research (descriptive) aspect involves survey research (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Multiple data collection methods will be used to triangulate in order to answer the research question.

The reason for this is based on information gathered on what other researchers around the world have done. Most researchers, whose work was reviewed, interviewed or conducted focus groups with fairly small samples. They did not extend the study quantitatively to improve the validity of their findings.
Most have utilized interviews only in order to gather the data. A key limitation observed on the research done by others is the single method, as well as the limited sample utilized, leading to generalizations about the population.

5.2.1 Research Process

The first stage of the research takes the form of a qualitative study utilizing semi-structured interviews.

In order to improve on the data quality, the second stage of the research involved survey research utilizing questionnaires.

5.2.2 Sample

The population of this study is senior level women, with a minimum of an undergraduate degree, in Specialist or Management roles in the Corporate World.

The sample for the qualitative study utilizing semi-structured interviews is a group of eight women. The selection criteria for the sample is that every participant had to be female, highly qualified, and who have given up their senior positions in the corporate world to take career breaks. Every woman selected had to have been in a senior position in the corporate world prior to resigning. They come from a variety of industries like Fast Moving Consumer Goods, Aviation and Tourism.

The sample was non-random and based on the researcher's network, due to the fact that it is not easy to find all the senior level women who have left the corporate world. The reason for interviewing only women, who have left, is to obtain a full understanding of all the factors that contributed to them making the decision to leave. These factors are extremely
important when addressing the issues faced by women currently in the workplace, and the issue of retention.

The survey research was carried out on men and women with the selection criteria being a minimum of an undergraduate degree, and occupying Specialist or Management roles in the corporate world. The participants come from different industries in South Africa, including aluminium production, telecommunications, banking, Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG), Aviation and Electricity Supply.

Men and women were surveyed, for comparison purposes, but not in equal proportions. The sample size aimed for was seventy. The eventual response was sixty-five. The sample was non-random and a snowball effect was achieved, as the researcher requested all participants to pass on the questionnaire to all their colleagues who met the selection criteria.

The survey method, using structured, Internet questionnaires enabled the researcher to reach more people, as it was done via e-mail.

The link to the questionnaire was e-mailed to several participants who then passed it on to others. Students studying for their Masters in Business Leadership (MBL) were also asked to participate as the questionnaire link was placed on the special website used for communication at the UNISA SBL.

To achieve valid results, the sample covered several industries and race groups in South Africa and included men and women. The use of mixed-methodology should also improve the validity of the data considerably.

This 2-phase design has yielded valid data that has been meaningfully interpreted to add value to the body of knowledge.
5.2.3 Data Collection Methods

In the first stage of the research, interviewees were asked to relate their experiences, something that cannot be achieved in survey research.

A key strength of this type of data gathering is the ability to obtain: “thick description” (Lee, 1999).

A disadvantage of the interview method is the time-consuming nature of it and the fact that the quality of the data is largely dependent on the skill of the interviewer (Lee, 1999).

The four criteria for judging qualitative data are: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lee, 1999, Leedy & Ormrod, 2005, Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2005).

The interview schedule was drawn up in such a manner that any researcher should be able to conduct the interviews.

The findings from the interview process were used to draw up the questionnaire for the second stage of the research - the survey.

The advantage of the survey method is that one can reach a large number of people, using the Internet and e-mail and one can then perform statistical analyses on the data obtained, to yield meaningful results.

A weakness of the survey method is the low response rate (Hofstee, 2006). The researcher avoided this by carefully selecting the sample and doing follow up checks to ensure that they responded.
Generally, quantitative data is considered to be valid and reliable if one has a properly designed questionnaire and a reasonably sized representative sample. The larger the sample, then the more meaningful is the data obtained. The questionnaire was so designed that any researcher should be able to conduct statistical analyses on the data and reach the same conclusions.

5.2.4 Data Collection Techniques

The interviews were conducted on the sample of eight participants over a period of three weeks. Each participant was sent a covering letter and the questions that were going to be used to guide the interview. Each participant was asked to provide demographic information like age, race group, marital status, number of children, qualifications, highest position reached, number of years of experience and income status in family. The list of participants in the interviews, the interview schedule and the covering letter to the participants is included in Appendix Two.

The findings from the interview process, as well as the literature review were used to draw up an Internet questionnaire for the survey research. The questionnaire included questions of a demographic nature. Questions using a 4-point Likert scale (no neutral choice) were included in the questionnaire. A copy of the survey questionnaire is presented in Appendix One.

The questionnaire was developed on a survey website and was divided into four sections. It began with an introductory section, followed by sections on demographics, work-life satisfaction and retention, with questions totalling fifty-four (54).
The first section, the Introduction, explained the purpose of the survey and invited people who met the selection criteria to participate. It stated how long it would take to complete the survey and guaranteed confidentiality.

The second section - the demographics section (Questions 4-11) asked questions to establish gender, marital status, number of children under 18 (if any), highest formal qualification, income status in family, number of years of work experience and age group.

The third section was labelled Work life Satisfaction (Questions 14-34). The data for the variables “Desire to Leave” (Question 32), “Push Factors” and “Pull Factors” as well as “Work Life Satisfaction”, were obtained from the responses to these questions.

This section asked participants to rate their agreement or disagreement with several factors, asked them their reasons for working and what factors would make them leave work.

The fourth section, Retention, yielded data for the variable “Retention” (Questions 36-41). The participants were asked to rate the importance of several work related factors, their agreement or disagreement with statements regarding retention in South Africa, and finally the effectiveness of several retention strategies. The retention strategies used were obtained from the literature review and the outcome of the interview process.

Table 6 below shows how the main hypotheses were tested.
Table 6: Testing of Main Hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main Hypotheses</th>
<th>Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The workplace and personal challenges faced by SA Professional Women are forcing many to want to leave their jobs.</td>
<td>a) Work Life Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b) Push and Pull Factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c) Desire to Leave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. SA Organizations are not doing enough to retain their talented women</td>
<td>d) Retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e) Desire To Leave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A consistency matrix showing the link between the problem statement, research question and data analysis is shown in Appendix Three.

5.2.5 Data Analysis

The analysis of the data from the interview process is a subjective process, but another researcher who has a full understanding of the purpose of the research and the related literature should also identify the themes identified by this researcher.

The data obtained from the interview process was analysed using meaning condensation and themes were identified.

The data from the survey research was analysed quantitatively using statistical analysis software. Graphs and tables have been utilized to illustrate the findings.

The five key variables are Work Life Satisfaction, Push Factors, Pull Factors, Desire to Leave and Retention. These are listed in Table 6 along with the main hypotheses.
Details of the types of analyses that have been done are listed below (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2005).

a) Survey statistics
b) Demographic data – gender, marital status, number of children under 18 years, highest formal qualification, income status in family, work experience and age group.
c) Summary statistics for the five key variables listed above – mean, median, mode, minimum and maximum, 1st percentile, 3rd percentile, skewness and kurtosis.
d) Anderson-Darling tests for normality on all five variables. Sub-hypotheses:
   Null Hypothesis: \( H_0 \): Distribution is Normal
   Alternative Hypothesis: \( H_1 \): Distribution is not Normal

e) Comparison of the means of the five key variables across genders
f) Test for retention of women – 1 sample T-test based on outcome of normality tests.
   Sub-Hypotheses:
   Null Hypothesis: \( H_0 \): \( \mu \leq 2 \)
   Alternative Hypothesis: \( H_1 \): \( \mu > 2 \)
g) Construction of a Correlation Matrix for all variables. Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation used based on results of normality tests
h) Multiple regression model to test relationship between Desire to Leave and Work Life Satisfaction.
   Sub-hypotheses:
   Null Hypothesis: \( H_0 \): \( B \) (i) = 0
   Alternative Hypothesis: \( H_1 \): \( B \) (i) \( \neq \) 0.
i) Analyses of the reasons why women and men work, and the factors that would make them leave work and the rating of the importance of key work-related factors
j) Rating of the effectiveness of different retention strategies
5.3 Limitations

The sample is non-random (reasons given in 5.2.2), as it consists of managers within the researcher’s network, but it does have a random element as the “snowball effect” was achieved and several MBL students participated. In addition, measures have been put in place to ensure better validity and reliability (see 5.2.3 above).

5.4 Ethical Procedures

A copy of the interview schedule was sent in advance to each interview participant. The highest standards of ethics were guaranteed. Many women revealed personal information about their personal lives and the companies they previously worked for. They needed to be reassured that the information they shared would be used for research purposes only and that their names would not be used.

The survey research was confidential and anonymous, and a cover letter explaining that the data will only be used for academic research purposes was sent along with the questionnaire.

The next chapter (Chapter Six) presents the findings from the interview process and the survey research. The findings are presented in the form of demographic data of the participants, as well as themes from the interviews and frequency analyses of the survey data.
Chapter 6: Research Results

This Chapter presents the research findings and is divided into two major sections – the interview findings and the survey findings. Each section describes the demographic profile of the participants and the results of the research.

6.1 Interview Findings

Eight women who had been in senior specialist or management level positions in the corporate world, and who took career breaks, were interviewed. The interview schedule can be found in Appendix 2.

The demographic data of the interview participants are discussed in this section. This data is categorized into age group, race group, marital status, number of children, qualifications, highest position reached, number of years of experience and income status in family.

The responses from the interviews were then analysed for themes and these are presented below. These have been categorized into the decision to leave work, reasons for leaving (push and pull factors), the challenges faced by women in the corporate world and retention.
6.1.1 Demographic Profile of Interview Participants

The demographic data for the interview participants is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Demographic Data of Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>35-39 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-44 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race Group</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of children</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Position reached</td>
<td>Executive level</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Middle Management</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years of experience</td>
<td>10-13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14-16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income status of participant before she took a career break</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the eight women interviewed, 75% are in the 35-39 years age group and the balance in the 40-45 years age group. Of the interviewees 63% are White and 87.5% are married with 2 children. It was established that none of the participants were cohabiting - they were either married or divorced.

Most of the women (87.5%) have a postgraduate degree and 62.5% had reached executive level in their organizations prior to taking a career break. Women at Senior Management level were classified as being at Executive level for the purposes of the study. All the women are highly experienced with between 10 and 16 years experience each. Before they took their career breaks, 62.5% of the women interviewed contributed equally to the income in their household. In 7 out of the 8 cases, their income status changed to secondary after they resigned.

6.1.2 Reasons for leaving - Push and Pull Factors

The reasons given by the participants for leaving their full-time jobs have been categorized into push and pull factors in Table 8 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Push Factors</th>
<th>Pull Factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No support in work environment</td>
<td>Need to spend time with young children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on delivery against all odds</td>
<td>Husband’s hectic schedule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long working hours or shift work</td>
<td>Not enough support at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots of travelling</td>
<td>Good salary, but not worth it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of understanding by company, of the unique situation faced by managers</td>
<td>No balance between home and work. Not enough time for tertiary studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>who are also mothers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of mentorship</td>
<td>Too much of stress trying to cope with everything, not enough rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough flexibility in schedule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strained relationship with boss, job became unbearable</td>
<td>Nobody to pick up kids from school and take them to extra-murals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opportunities for growth</td>
<td>Not happy leaving kids in day-care the entire day</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participants cited several reasons for leaving, some being work-related (push factors) and some personal (pull factors) as can be seen in Table 9 above. The over riding theme that comes through clearly is the need for a balanced life. They all gave the impression of being pulled in several directions at once. One participant said:

“I had just had a baby and could not continue to work 70 hours a week and not expect my family to suffer. There was not enough appreciation of my situation by the company. As women, we cannot have it all, contrary to popular belief”.

Another participant echoed this when she said:

“I left because I wanted the flexibility to have a career and to manage the demands of two very little children”.

Another participant who was at an executive level at a high profile organization was frustrated at her company’s refusal to acknowledge the value she could add. She was quite candid and said:

“I was working for a very large multinational looking after 11 different companies with each having a very strong brand in the market place. They were all facing the very difficult challenge of meeting their BEE criteria or face losing major contracts. The holding company had a BEE partner at holding level but was not meeting the challenges at the operational level. In the current climate of BEE, I could not accept that they would choose to find external Black professionals to form a partnership with them at operational level while I sat as an executive who was adding a lot of value. I was told to choose – i.e. do I want to become a shareholder of some company (in which case there is no place for me) or do I want to remain a loyal, hard-working employee. I decided to take my chances”.

Clearly, the women interviewed were very passionate about their jobs and are all high achievers. Every participant made it clear that they were not abandoning their careers, but merely re-focussing their energies in a direction that they were more comfortable with. They wanted to utilize their
considerable skills, but on their own terms. They each went through a traumatic period during which they eventually made the decision to leave.

6.1.3 The decision making process

Each participant explained the process that she went through to make the decision to give up her job and take a career break. Most of the women said that the decision to leave was an extremely difficult one to make and needed to be thought through properly. Each stated that they re-evaluated their priorities and had discussions with their managers, who without fail could not provide a solution to make them stay. The different factors and parties that influenced this decision are presented below.

a) Their Partner’s influence on the decision to leave

All the participant’s partners were very supportive about their decision to leave work, and allowed the decision to be made by the women alone.

Many of the partners were instrumental in the decision being made in the first place. Many of them had very hectic schedules with long hours being worked. One was an International Airline pilot who was hardly at home and could therefore not provide the support his family needed. Many of the partners were very relieved and happy when their wives resigned because they believed that they and the children would then receive all the attention they needed. One couple had to go for counselling because the long hours worked by both, and subsequent lack of attention to each other, had resulted in marital discord.
b) Their Children’s influence on the decision to leave

Most of the participants said that their children were the ultimate deciding factor in their decision-making. They all said that if they had not had children, their careers would have taken a different path completely.

Comments like the following illustrate the participant’s thought processes:

“I was tired of feeling guilty about them all the time and really wanted to be there for them. The improvement in their behaviour, schoolwork and confidence has made all this worthwhile”.

And

“I resigned for their well being. My son was forgotten at school twice by friends, who were supposed to take him home to my domestic worker, while I was working and unable to get away. My daughter started calling my domestic worker ‘Mommy’ and spoke more Zulu than English”.

One participant said that becoming a mother had changed her outlook of the corporate world and that ‘climbing up the corporate ladder’, was inconsequential. She said that seeing to the needs of her young family had taken preference.

c) The Influence of their work situation on the decision to leave

In addition to personal factors, their work situation played a significant role in the participants’ decision to resign. In one case, the participant was very happy in her job and said that her work situation did not really impact her decision to leave. However, for the other seven participants, work was a major
contributory factor. Examples of the different situations that they experienced prior to leaving are as follows:

- Merger situation with centralisation, no support, no budgets. Expectations for miracles, yet with no means to do what was required. Lots of politics and fallouts with manager about lack of support.
- Management unsympathetic and refused to amend the shift roster.
- Lack of support from colleagues. No model to allow part-time work or work from home. Many staff issues in the company. No hope for improvement.
- In the process of Private Equity deal. Lots of significant changes were being introduced.
- Manager refused to acknowledge skills and contribution.
- Lack of mentorship

Only three out of the eight participants have had mentors during their careers. Those that had mentors said that there were a few women role models whom they respected, but they were not in the same company they worked for. They provided assistance with the decision-making process related to leaving the company.

They said that the roles of the mentors in their lives were to always be there to listen and provide a shoulder to cry on when things were stressful. They also provided guidance based on their own experience and first hand knowledge. As one participant said:

“They reinforced the decision to follow my heart and that a few years out of my full time career would not damage my career in any lasting way”.
The importance of mentorship for women came through strongly in the interviews, yet very few of the women had had the privilege of being mentored. The valuable contribution that can be made by female mentors to professional women was emphasized.

d) The Role of Finances in the decision to leave

The majority of the participants said that their husbands were able to support the family. They also said that they were very confident that with their skills and experience, they were well able to do some kind of work to earn an income if they chose to, even if it was only to help retain the luxuries that they were used to.

Many of the participants said that they were seriously considering doing consulting work after leaving. Each participant did a financial assessment prior to making the decision to leave. One participant had to downgrade her car and one saved funds for a while before resigning, because she was a single parent. She then formed her own company directly after leaving.

One participant took a break for 18 months and decided to focus on her postgraduate studies with only a limited income from investments coming in. She said that she was lucky, in that although she had been contributing 50% to the household income prior to leaving, they were still able to cope with only her husband’s income, with a few sacrifices having to be made.
6.1.4 Challenges faced by women in the corporate world

When asked what barriers to growth (if any) they have experienced in the workplace, the participants mentioned the following:

- Conflict between business and family values
- In and out groups (for example the old boys cub). Women feeling left out.
- Predominantly male management
- Inflexible work schedules preventing women who are mothers from continuing to work shifts. One participant mentioned that one of the first ‘words of wisdom’ shared with her by her male managers when she started her career was to never get married and have children
- Different performance standards for male and female managers. The work done by women is never good enough. Men feel that they are better and also get away with below standard performance
- Long hours and late meetings taken as the norm
- Needing to be flexible and to leave at normal time, for example to pick up children is taken as a lack of commitment
- Level of authority that women have is less than what men have
- No workplace crèche to assist with childcare
- No half day positions available
- Sexism
- Gender stereotyping

The common theme running through is that corporate SA is male dominated, men are the decision makers and women have to constantly strive to prove themselves in an environment that is very hostile to women who have children.
6.1.5 Current work and future plans

The participants are all extremely happy with the decision they made and are focusing on their consulting work, doctoral studies and caring for their children. They are generally content to work a few hours per day, with enough time dedicated to their children.

One participant said that the only things she missed were the perks that went with her former job, for example, the company driver, IT support and extensive travel. She also said that having to do everything yourself when you open your own business is quite a difficult experience.

The general feeling of the participants is encompassed in the words of one participant, a former Human Resources Executive:

“I am quite content doing freelance consulting work and caring for my family. I have been so happy freelancing that I wonder if I will ever go back to the corporate way of life. I earn better, have a fraction of the stress and can choose what work I want to do. Best of all, my work fits in around my life rather than the other way around”.

6.1.6 Retention

All the participants indicated that the companies they worked for did not have retention strategies that were female orientated. Some indicated that their companies had no retention strategies at all, even though they are large multinational organizations. One said that they were allowed to work from home for two days per week, but that their workload and meeting schedules did not permit this, so nobody utilized it.

One said that her company had developed some retention strategies but that none had been implemented to date. She went on to say:

“I am aware of at least three highly qualified women that the company has allowed to resign for the very same reasons as myself, over the last five years”. 
On being requested to make recommendations for female retention, they responded with the following strategies as presented in Table 9 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work schedules</td>
<td>Allow females to work from home or do a combination of this and part-time work. Provide 20 hour a week jobs. Part-time work must still be meaningful and value the skills of the women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisational Culture</td>
<td>Change the culture to one where females are valued. Change the attitude of men to the hiring of women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit the role of “politics” at work</td>
<td>Eliminate the “in and out” groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and development</td>
<td>Provide specialized training and development to women to allow them to reach their full potential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship</td>
<td>Provide mentorship by men and women from different race groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family friendly policies</td>
<td>Provide day care facilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One participant captured the feelings of the others when she said:

“The first step would be to take time to understand the women that work for them and what makes them tick. Understand their career plans and life choices and then work out what would make/break it for them. Currently, it is a one size fits all. It is not only about the money – but about job satisfaction and the sense of adding value”.

Clearly, the message is that the companies the participants worked for have not done enough to retain women, but the recommendations, if implemented properly, can change this situation for women who are still in full time employment. The next section presents the results of the survey research.
6.2 Survey Findings

As the second stage to the two-stage approach selected for this research project, a survey questionnaire was drawn up based on the findings from the interview process and the related literature review.

Men and women in the corporate world were sent a link to the Internet questionnaire developed for the survey research (See Appendix 1 for the Internet Questionnaire). The survey statistics are presented first, followed by the demographics and finally the analyses of the data from the survey research. The survey statistics are presented in Table 10 below.

6.2.1 Survey Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10: Survey Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The internet questionnaire was:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viewed by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Started by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completed by</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Completion Rate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drop Outs (After Starting)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A “snowball effect” was achieved with the questionnaire being sent to approximately forty people, who then e-mailed it to their colleagues. The statistics show that one hundred and forty-eight (148) people actually looked at the questionnaire, with only one hundred and twelve (112) of this number starting it and sixty-five (65) completing it. The data from the respondents was collated and prepared for analysis. The analysis of the different variables is discussed in the next section. The initial plan was to have a sample of seventy (70).
### Demographics of Survey Participants

The demographic profile of the survey participants is presented in Table 11 below. Many participants started and did not complete, making n=72 here.

#### Table 11: Demographic Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Value labels</th>
<th>Absolute Value</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>72.22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Married</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>76.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Co-habiting</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children&lt;18 years</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>70.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No Children</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>29.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Children less than 18</td>
<td>One</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>years old</td>
<td>Two</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Three</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Four</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Five</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Six</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Formal Qualification</td>
<td>Undergraduate degree</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>40.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate degree</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>59.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Status in Family</td>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>58.57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Equal</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Experience</td>
<td>6-10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23.61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11-15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>41.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-20</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age Group</td>
<td>25-29</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-34</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35-39</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45-49</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50-54</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>55-59</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The data for each demographic variable is presented in graphical form below, and then discussed.

a) Gender

Females constitute 72% of the sample and males 28%.

b) Marital Status

76% of the sample is married, with 13% divorced and 8% single.
c) Percentage of participants with children under the age of 18 years

Graph 3: Percentage of participants with children <18

71% of the sample has children under the age of 18. This variable was brought in because parents with school going children have added responsibilities, and these need to be understood.

d) Number of children under the age of 18

Graph 4: Number of children under the age of 18

44% of the sample has 2 children and 40% has 1 child under the age of 18 years.
e) Highest formal qualification

Graph 5: Highest Formal Qualification

60% of the sample has a postgraduate degree and the balance of 40% has an undergraduate degree. The respondents satisfy the criteria of “highly qualified” managers and specialists.

f) Income Status within Family Unit

Graph 6: Income Status within Family

59% of the respondents are the primary source of income in their homes, whilst 31% occupy an equal role with a partner.
g) Number of years of work experience

Graph 7: Number of years of work experience

76.4% of the respondents have more than ten years of work experience while the balance has less than 10 years of work experience.

h) Age Group Distribution

Graph 8: Age Group Distribution

The majority of the sample (91.7%) is over the age of 30 years, with the largest group (30%) being the 30-34 year olds.
6.2.3 Summary Statistics for Average Scores of the Key Variables

The five key variables that have been analysed are Work Life Satisfaction, Push Factors, Pull Factors, Retention and Desire to Leave.

The data for the five different variables were analysed for descriptive statistics. Relevant responses were reverse coded before they were averaged so that low scores have a positive meaning and vice versa. The Likert scale that was used in the questionnaire ran from 1-4, Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

The mean gives the average of the sample and is useful in testing hypotheses. The standard deviation is a test of variance in the sample. The first quartile (Q1) shows that 25% of the responses fall below that value and the third quartile (Q3) shows that 75% of the responses fall below that value. This yields the interquartile range which is a measure used to see how much of the data lies in between Q3 and Q1. The skewness and kurtosis are both factors used to describe the shape of the distribution of the variables. The main purpose here is to determine whether the distributions are normal or not-normal, thereby guiding the choice of statistical tests that have to be done.

The summary descriptive statistics is presented in Table 12 below.
Table 12: Summary Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Work Life Satisfaction (X)</th>
<th>Push Factors (Y)</th>
<th>Pull Factors (Z)</th>
<th>Retention (A)</th>
<th>Desire to Leave (B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>3.081</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.58</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) Work Life Satisfaction

- The mean is very close to 2 and the mode is 2, indicating that work life satisfaction is at a satisfactory level.
- The first quartile indicates that only 25% of the respondents had a rating less than 1.33 and Q3 indicates that 75% had a rating less than 2.33, indicating average levels of work life satisfaction.
- The skewness coefficient is very close to zero (0.47), indicating that the distribution is positively skewed.
- The kurtosis is positive, indicating that the distribution is leptokurtic (more peaked) (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2005).

b) Push Factors

- The mean is 2.39, and the mode is 2, indicating that push factors are a problem for the respondents.
- The first quartile indicates that only 25% of the respondents had a rating less than 2.14 and Q3 indicates that 75% had a rating less
than 2.64, with the interquartile range being 0.5. This shows low variability of the data.

- The skewness coefficient is not very close to zero (0.48), indicating that the distribution is positively skewed.
- The kurtosis is positive, indicating that the distribution is leptokurtic (more peaked) (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2005).

c) Pull Factors

- The mean is 2.68, and the mode is 3, indicating that pull factors are a big problem for the respondents.
- The first quartile indicates that only 25% of the respondents had a rating less than 2.23 and Q3 indicates that 75% had a rating less than 3, with the interquartile range being 0.67. This shows low variability of the data.
- The skewness coefficient is very close to zero (0.1), indicating that the distribution is practically normal.
- The kurtosis is positive, indicating that the distribution is leptokurtic (more peaked) (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2005).

d) Retention

- The mean is 2.48, and the mode is 2.5, indicating that retention is low.
- The first quartile indicates that only 25% of the respondents had a rating less than 2 and Q3 indicates that 75% had a rating less than 3, with the interquartile range being 0.7. This shows low variability of the data.
- The skewness coefficient is very close to zero (-0.21), indicating that the distribution is negatively skewed.
• The kurtosis is positive, indicating that the distribution is leptokurtic (more peaked) (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2005).

e) Desire to leave

• 75.41% of the respondents said that they would leave full-time work if they had the means and opportunity to do so.
• The mean is 3.08, and the mode is 4, indicating that desire to leave is strong.
• The first quartile indicates that only 25% of the respondents had a rating less than 1 and Q3 indicates that 75% had a rating less than 2.5, with the interquartile range being 1.5.
• The skewness coefficient is very close to zero (-0.21), indicating that the distribution is negatively skewed.
• The kurtosis is positive, indicating that the distribution is leptokurtic (more peaked) (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2005).

6.2.4 Anderson-Darling Tests for Normality

Tests for normality had to be conducted prior to any statistical tests of location, variance, correlation and multiple regressions being done. The results of the normality tests have been used to guide the choice of statistical tests. The Anderson-Darling test for normality was chosen over the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2005) due to the smaller sample size.

Normality Tests to test the hypotheses below were conducted on the data set of each of the five variables with a confidence level of 95%.

Null hypothesis: \( H_0: \) The distribution is normal

Alternative Hypothesis: \( H_1: \) The distribution is not normal.
The results of the tests are presented in graphical form and then discussed below.

a) Work Life Satisfaction

N.B. Observations for a normal distribution should closely follow the straight blue line.

Graph 9: Plot of distribution of Work Life Satisfaction
The test statistics are as follows:

- **n:** 66
- **95% CI:** 1.73-2.06
- **SD:** 0.67
- **Mean:** 1.89
- **Variance:** 0.45
- **SE:** 0.082
- **CV:** 0.35
- **Anderson Darling Coefficient:** 1.19
- **p value:** 0.00417
- **Skewness:** 0.47
- **Kurtosis:** 2.59

For statistical significance, the 2-tailed p value (for an exploratory hypothesis) must be less than 0.05/2, that is, 0.025. The p-value obtained with the Anderson-Darling test (0.00417) is significant; therefore we can support the alternative hypothesis that the distribution is not normal.

The distribution of Work Life Satisfaction is therefore not normal.

**b) Push Factors**
Graph 10: Distribution plot for Push Factors

n: 66  
95% CI: 2.28-2.49  
SD:0.42  
Mean: 2.39  
Variance:0.18  
SE:0.052  
CV:0.18  
Anderson Darling Coefficient: 0.39  
p value: 0.38  
Skewness: 0.48  
Kurtosis:4.25

For statistical significance, the 2-tailed p value must be less than 0.025. The p-value obtained with the Anderson-Darling test (0.38) is not significant; therefore we cannot reject the null hypothesis that the distribution is normal.
The distribution of Push Factors is therefore normal.

c) Pull Factors
Graph 11: Distribution Plot of Pull Factors

n: 65  
95% CI: 2.53-2.83  SD: 0.59  
Mean: 2.68  
Variance: 0.35  SE: 0.05  
CV: 0.22  
Anderson Darling Coefficient: 0.57  
p value: 0.143  
Skewness: 0.1  
Kurtosis: 2.36

For statistical significance, the 2-tailed p value must be less than 0.025. The p-value obtained with the Anderson-Darling test (0.143) is not significant; therefore we cannot reject the null hypothesis that the distribution is normal.

The distribution of Pull Factors is therefore normal.

d) Retention
Graph 12: Distribution Plot of Retention

n: 55  
95% CI: 2.27-2.69  
SD:0.78  
Mean: 2.48  
Variance:  
SE:0.105  
CV:0.31  
Skewness: -0.21  
Kurtosis:2.63  
Anderson Darling Coefficient: 1.31  
p value:0.0021

For statistical significance, the p value must be less than 0.025. The p-value obtained with the Anderson-Darling test (0.0021) is significant; therefore we can reject the null hypothesis and support the alternative hypothesis that the distribution is not normal.

The distribution of Retention is therefore not normal.

e) Desire to leave
The distribution of Desire to Leave is therefore not normal.

6.2.4 Comparison of Key Variables across Genders

The sample was split into two sub-samples, separating the results for males and females. A computation of the mean of each variable for both males and females was carried out and the results compared to each other and to the mean of the combined sample. It is important to note that higher values have a negative meaning. The outcome is presented in Table 13 below.
Table 13: Comparison of means of variables between males and females

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Combined Sample Mean</th>
<th>Mean - Males</th>
<th>Mean-Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Life Satisfaction</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>1.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push Factors</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull Factors</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>3.11</td>
<td>2.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>2.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to Leave</td>
<td>3.081</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>3.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean of retention for females is higher than that of the males and the combined sample, indicating that for females, retention is lower than for males. Desire to leave is significantly high for both males and females. The results for the other variables are fairly similar for both males and females.

6.2.5 Test for the Retention of Women

This test is used to discover whether the Mean of Retention for Females is > 2.

A mean of greater than two (2) for retention indicates a low value for retention, and that companies are not doing enough to retain their female staff. The distribution for Retention is not normal as was shown in 6.2.4 (d). Since the sample size is reasonable (>30), the 1 sample T-test can be used to test the hypothesis, even though the distribution is not normal.

The hypotheses are:

- **Null Hypothesis:** $H_0: \mu \leq 2$
- **Alternative Hypothesis:** $H_1: \mu > 2$

The test result for the 1-tailed p value was used since a directional hypothesis is being tested. A 95% confidence interval was used.

The results are presented in Table 14 below:

Table 14: T-test of the Hypothesized Mean for Retention
The direction of the mean difference confirms that the correct tail/region is being referred to. Since the p-value is significant (<0.05), the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis is supported. The conclusion is that the Mean of Retention for Females is greater than 2. The implication is that South African Organizations are not doing enough to retain their Female professional and management staff.

### 6.2.6 Correlations between Key Variables

The five key variables are Work Life Satisfaction, Push Factors, Pull Factors, Retention and Desire to Leave for Males and Females.

Multivariate analysis techniques were used to determine correlations between the five key variables for Males and for Females. A correlation matrix that correlates all the listed variables with each other was utilized. If all the distributions were normal, then the Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation test would have been used to create the correlation matrix.

However, in this case, with ordinal level variables, and with the distributions of Push and Pull Factors being Normal and that of Work Life Satisfaction, Retention and Desire to Leave being decidedly not normal, another test has to be selected. It is for this reason that the Spearman’s
Rank Order Correlation was used to construct the correlation matrix in Table 15 below. Only the significant coefficients have been shown.

The complete correlation table is shown in Appendix Four.

Table 15: Correlation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Work Life Satisfaction-Males</th>
<th>Push Factors-Male</th>
<th>Pull Factors-Male</th>
<th>Desire to Leave-Male</th>
<th>Work Life Satisfaction-Female</th>
<th>Push Factors-Female</th>
<th>Pull Factors-Female</th>
<th>Desire to Leave-Female</th>
<th>Retention-Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Life Satisfaction-Males</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push Factors-Male</td>
<td>-0.44</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+0.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull Factors-Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to Leave-Male</td>
<td>+0.29</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Life Satisfaction-Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+0.47</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push Factors-Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>+0.47</td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pull Factors-Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+0.47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire to Leave-Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.47</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retention-Female</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-0.31</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The key relationships that can be extracted from the matrix are:

- Push Factors and Pull Factors are positively correlated for Females
- Female Retention is negatively correlated with Push Factors in Females
- Desire to Leave in Females is negatively correlated with Work Life Satisfaction
- Work Life Satisfaction is negatively correlated with Push Factors for Males
- Desire to Leave in Males is positively correlated with Push Factors
- Desire to Leave in Males is negatively correlated with Pull Factors

The relationships show that for women, push factors result in low levels of retention and when work life satisfaction is low, the desire to leave is high. There is also a close link between push and pull factors for females indicating that women view both as having the same impact on them. What has not come through in the correlation is the relationship between desire to leave and pull factors for women.

For men, push factors reduce their work life satisfaction and increase their desire to leave work. An interesting relationship is the negative correlation between pull factors and desire to leave, which shows that as pull factors (from home) increase, the desire to leave decreases. This could mean that men are influenced by work related factors and not by home-related factors.
6.2.7 Multiple Regression Model

A multiple regression was carried out on the female sub-sample. This model uses Desire to Leave, as the dependent variable and Work Life Satisfaction and Push Factors as the Independent Variables. The purpose is to analyse the relationship between the dependent variable and the two independent variables.

The t-statistic is used to test the hypothesis with a confidence level of 95%, that a population regression coefficient is zero, that is, no relationship exists.

Null Hypothesis: $H_0$: $B (i) = 0$
Alternative Hypothesis: $H_1$: $B (i) \neq 0$

The p-values indicate whether a variable has statically predictive capability in the presence of other variables. Non-significant values can be used to determine whether to remove a variable from the equation (Diamantopoulos & Schlegelmilch, 2005). The results are shown in Table 16 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 16: Multiple Regression Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coefficient B (i)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push Factors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Intercept and Work Life Satisfaction coefficients can therefore be used and the coefficient for Push Factors has to be ignored when developing the regression equation. The equation is:
**Desire to Leave = 4.53 – 0.47*Work Life Satisfaction.**

This equation can be interpreted as: As Work Life Satisfaction increases, desire to leave work decreases. This confirms the results of the correlation test in 6.2.6 above.

### 6.2.8 Reasons for Working

In order to understand what motivates professional men and women in the corporate world, to assist in the development of retention strategies, participants were asked to select options from a list of reasons why people work.

The list of reasons and the percentage that chose each option are presented in Table 17 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Having my own independent source of income</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am highly qualified and experienced and would like to utilize my skills effectively</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>20.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoyment and satisfaction in my work</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My household income is insufficient</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving something back to society.</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power and status in profession</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is evident from these results is that having financial independence and their skills properly utilized is very important to most of the female participants. They also seem to take a lot of pride in their work and enjoy what they do. An interesting finding is that power and status is of very little importance to both men and women. The majority of the male participants chose having their own independent source of income as well as insufficient household income as their
main reasons for working. A relatively small percentage of women chose the “insufficient household income” option, as compared to the male participants.

### 6.2.9 Work Related Factors

In addition to understanding the reasons why professional and management level people work, there is a need to understand what work related factors are important to them and what the level of importance of each factor is. Participants were therefore asked to rate a list of work-related factors as Very Important, Important or Not Important. The Very Important ratings have been extracted for discussion. The percentage of participants that rated them is also included and the list has been sorted from the highest to lowest level of importance. These results are presented in Table 18 below. For simplicity, the sample has been analysed in aggregate and has not been split into male and female samples for this analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Work-related factor</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self actualisation</td>
<td>86.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being appropriately remunerated for the work I do</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The freedom to be myself at work</td>
<td>83.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition from my company</td>
<td>73.21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to associate with people I respect</td>
<td>67.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunity to be flexible with my schedule</td>
<td>66.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunity to collaborate with others and work as a team</td>
<td>58.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being part of a diverse team</td>
<td>42.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To give back to the community through my work</td>
<td>39.29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being in a powerful position</td>
<td>28.57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consistent with the findings in 6.2.8 above, the least popular choice was “being in a powerful position”. The most popular choice was “self-actualisation” followed by “appropriate remuneration” and “freedom to be myself at work.”
The respondents as a whole seem to be a group that operate at the highest level in the pyramid of needs. They are motivated by more than just money. A fairly large number chose “the opportunity to be flexible with my schedule” which means that people are possibly not quite satisfied with the typical 8:00-16:30 (or longer) work schedule and would like to be more responsible for the way their work day is managed. This information can be very useful when deciding on how to motivate and retain talented staff members, especially females.

6.2.10 Reasons for leaving Work

The respondents were asked to select from a list of options, the factors that would make them leave work. The results have been separated into the male and female responses and presented in Table 19.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work Not Fulfilling</td>
<td>(65.38%)</td>
<td>Work Not Fulfilling (65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace Inflexibility</td>
<td>(57.69%)</td>
<td>Work Place Inflexibility (65%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Careers</td>
<td>(48.08%)</td>
<td>Study Further (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caring for Young Children or Parents</td>
<td>(28.85%)</td>
<td>Changing Careers (45%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Further</td>
<td>(25%)</td>
<td>Caring for Young Children or Parents (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The largest percentage of men and women chose the options based on the work situation, indicating the importance of their jobs in their lives. A fairly significant percentage of women (28.85%) said that they would leave due to “caring for young children or parents”. In complete contrast, only 5% of men chose this option, indicating that this is not a reason that would make them leave work.

This finding is consistent with the findings from the correlation tests in 6.2.6 above, which showed that as the pull from home increases, men’s desire to leave is very low.
In addition, 50% of men chose the “study further” option versus 25% of women. For women this was the least favoured reason for leaving.

These results show that men and women have some similarities and some differences in the way they view their work lives and personal lives. Their priorities certainly differ, with women being not only work-focused, but family-focused as well. For men, the focus is mainly on work and their personal development (studying further).

This affirms research by Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) that showed that each career action made by a woman was evaluated in light of the impact it would have on her relationships with those around her, as opposed to its impact on her as a stand-alone entity. The women factored in the needs of their children, husbands, parents, clients, colleagues, as compared to the men who tend to keep their work and non-work lives separate.

6.2.11 The Effectiveness of Retention Strategies

One of the main objectives of this research project is to understand the issues around the retention of women in this country and to make recommendations to Corporates to implement better strategies.

One of the means of achieving this was to include a list of retention strategies, based on the literature review on retention, in the survey questionnaire. The respondents were asked to rate each option as “Very Effective”, “Effective” or “Not Effective”. The results for the “Very Effective” and “Effective” choices were combined and are presented in Table 20 below. For simplicity, the sample has been analysed in aggregate and has not been split into male and female samples.
Table 20: Rating of Retention Strategies as Very Effective or Effective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Retention Strategy</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market related remuneration</td>
<td>91.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Properly defined career path</td>
<td>86.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer networking</td>
<td>85.72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment from executive management to the growth and development of senior women</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing ambition</td>
<td>85.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Succession planning</td>
<td>81.13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work policies</td>
<td>80.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability by Executive Management in terms of the growth and development of senior women</td>
<td>80.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship</td>
<td>80.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of new roles</td>
<td>76.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removing the stigma associated with the utilization of flexible policies</td>
<td>75.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concierge services at work to make life easier for busy managers and professionals</td>
<td>74.55%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents have indicated that market related remuneration is very important in retaining staff, followed by a properly defined career path, peer networking and commitment from executive management to the growth and development of senior women. What can be concluded is that if you remunerate people appropriately and show commitment to their development and career growth, this will result in you retaining them.
6.3 Schematic Representation of Research Results

The overall research findings are presented in Schematic form in Figure 2 below.

![Schematic Diagram]

**Figure 2: Schematic Representation of Findings**

The diagram shows that female managers are affected by push factors from the organisational/societal context and pull factors from the family and personal context. These factors have been shown to be strong influences on women, leading to imbalance, and decreasing their work life satisfaction. This results in a strong desire to leave their jobs for a more balanced life. The organisations, due to their inhospitable, male-dominated culture and lack of family-friendly policies, are not able to retain these senior women.

These women who are very driven, competitive, and have a need to make a difference then resign after all other avenues seem closed. They take a career break and decide to focus on their families and then they have a choice – whether to re-enter the corporate world on a full-time or part-time basis, or whether to open their own business and do consulting work or whatever suits them.
The study has shown that organisations can focus on changing the organisational context, which includes the culture and policies and can actually change the net effect to a desire to stay, and not to leave. If the women do leave, they may consider returning if the organisational context is female friendly.

For men, a similar model can be constructed, with the key difference being that “pull factors” do not have much of an impact on his work life satisfaction. Push factors alone influence men’s work life satisfaction. Therein lies the main difference between men and women as far as this topic is concerned.
6.4 Summary of Research Results

In the first part of the research, eight women who had taken career breaks were interviewed and the reasons they cited for leaving are a combination of both push and pull factors. Their partners, children and work situation played a part in the decision to leave. They said that among other reasons, they had no support at work and huge demands at home. There was no flexibility in their schedules, leaving them tired, frustrated and stressed. They took a career break in order to achieve balance in life. They are still utilizing their skills, but on their terms. They are not interested in going back to the Corporate World.

They said that their companies do not have retention strategies – for men or women, and have not done much to retain women. They made recommendations to retain women and they include flexible schedules, day care facilities, training and development, an improved culture that welcomes women, mentorship and the elimination of corporate politics.

Sixty-five professionals/managers responded to the survey questionnaire. The profile of the average female participant is a woman over 30 years of age, with a post-graduate degree, over 10 years of experience, 2 children under 18 and an equal contributor to household income.

Analysis of the results shows that Work life Satisfaction is average, Push and Pull factors are high, Retention is low and Desire to Leave is high. 75.4% said that they would leave full-time work if they could.

Statistical analyses revealed that the Mean of Retention for Females was found to be greater than 2. This means that South African Organizations are not doing enough to retain their Female professional and management staff.

Correlation tests showed that for women, push factors result in low levels of retention and when work life satisfaction is low, the desire to leave is high. There
is also a close link between push and pull factors for females indicating that both are viewed as having the same impact on them by women.

For men, push factors reduce their work life satisfaction and increase their desire to leave work. An interesting relationship is the negative correlation between pull factors and desire to leave, which shows that as pull factors (from home) increase, the desire to leave decreases. This could mean that men are influenced by work related factors and not by home-related factors.

The multiple regression model revealed that: As Work Life Satisfaction increases, desire to leave work decreases.

**Desire to Leave = 4.53 – 0.47*Work Life Satisfaction.**

Respondents showed that having financial independence and their skills effectively utilized is more important than money. Self-actualisation was given a high priority and Power and status a low priority. Flexible work schedules are also considered important.

Women are not only work-focussed, but family focussed as well. For men, the focus is mainly on work and their personal development (studying further). A fairly significant percentage of women (28.85%) said that they would leave due to “caring for young children or parents”. In complete contrast, only 5% of men chose this option, indicating that this is not a reason that would make them leave work.

In terms of retention, the respondents revealed, *inter alia*, that if you remunerate people appropriately and show commitment to their development and career growth, you increase your chances of retaining them.
Chapter 7: Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

In Chapter Seven, a comprehensive discussion of the research findings is presented. These findings will be discussed against the backdrop of the literature review on women in management, the opt-out revolution and retention, covered in Chapters Three and Four. In addition, there will be cross-references to the underlying theoretical foundation in Chapter Two.

7.1 Discussion of Research Results

The research problem is to investigate what challenges are facing highly qualified senior level women that would make them leave/want to leave the corporate world and whether South African organizations are doing enough to retain these talented women. In order to address these problems, the findings of the research will be discussed and cross-referenced with the literature on women in management, and retention of women.

The talented women who have left work, and the talented women who have not, have shared their reasons for leaving and wanting to leave respectively, and these are discussed below.

7.1.1 Are South African Women Opting-Out?

The study has shown that highly qualified women are leaving the SA corporate world, similarly to that demonstrated in SA by Clark (2007) and Geber (2000), and in other parts of the world as shown by Belkin (2003) and Hewlett and Buck-Luce (2005). The actual numbers that are leaving are not known, but in the South African situation, where there is a shortage of skilled,
experienced, highly qualified women at senior level, every resignation is a 
cause for concern.

In addition, 75.4% of the highly qualified women sampled, who are still 
working, have expressed a strong desire to leave if they had the means and 
opportunity to do so.

The multiple regression model revealed that: As Work Life Satisfaction 
decreases, desire to leave work increases.

**Desire to Leave = 4.53 – 0.47*Work Life Satisfaction**

In addition, Correlation tests showed that when work life satisfaction is low, 
the desire to leave is high, affirming the multiple regression equation. The 
women interviewed in Clark (2007) and in this study are of extremely high 
calibre, and are influential women in South Africa. Their departure is certainly 
a huge loss to their organisations. The reasons why these women would give 
up successful careers and why women still in the workforce would willingly 
give up theirs are shared in the next section.

7.1.2 Challenges facing Women in the Corporate World

The challenges faced by women have been categorized into push and pull 
factors. The results show that there is a close link between push and pull 
factors for females indicating that both have the same impact on them. Most 
research studies, especially in SA, focus only on the workplace factors. In this 
study, a careful assessment of both push and pull factors was done, and the 
outcomes have justified this approach. Both factors contribute to the work life 
satisfaction (or lack of) of women. These factors are presented below.
7.1.2.1 Push Factors

For both men and women, the study found that push factors reduce their work life satisfaction and increase their desire to leave work.

The Gender-Organisation-System perspective (Terborg, 1981 in Fagenson, 1990) suggests that in trying to understand why women are having limited success in the corporate world, one should try to identify the characteristics of the organizational context, the social system and that of the individuals (that is their gender), which could possibly be affecting women’s attitudes, cognitions and behaviours. The push factors cited by all the women in the study encompass all these systems and are discussed below.

The top choice for both men and women were “Work not Fulfilling”, closely followed by “Workplace Inflexibility”, indicating that they are clearly very passionate about their jobs and expect flexibility. Further push factors are:

- No support in work environment
- Emphasis on delivery against all odds
- Long working hours or shift work
- Excessive business travel
- Lack of understanding by company, of the unique situation faced by managers who are also mothers
- Lack of mentorship
- Not enough flexibility in schedule
- Strained relationship with boss – clash of values
- No opportunities for growth – glass ceiling
- Old boy’s network
- Male-dominated, paternalistic culture – inhospitable to women
- Lack of political acumen by women

7.1.2.2 Pull Factors

An interesting relationship for men is the negative correlation between pull factors and desire to leave, which shows that as pull factors (from home) increase, the desire to leave decreases. This could mean that men are influenced by work related factors and not by home-related factors. Of all the reasons that would make them leave work, the least chosen option for men was “Caring for young children or parents”.

This finding is similar to that found for men by Hewlett and Buck-Luce (2005). When compared to women, who placed this factor significantly higher on their list of reasons, it becomes clear that women place a high value on both work and family, and would make sacrifices for their families.

In addition, the research of Mainiero and Sullivan (2005), which affirm these findings, showed that each career choice/action made by a woman was evaluated in light of the impact it would have on her relationships with those around her, as opposed to its impact on her as a stand-alone entity. The women factored in the needs of their children, husbands, parents, clients, colleagues, as compared to the men who tend to keep their work and non-work lives separate.

This clear difference in priorities between men and women can be explained by some of the work done by Bratton, et al, (2005) and Booysen
(1999) who presented the sex-role and managerial stereotypes and gender differences between men and women respectively. They showed that the sexes are vastly different with men being seen as competitive and performance orientated while women are seen as softer and focusing on the warmer, emotion related aspects of leadership.

Factors that draw women away from work were identified as:

- Need to spend time with younger children
- Husband’s hectic schedule
- Not enough support at home
- No balance between home and work
- Too much of stress trying to cope with everything.
- Not enough time for tertiary studies
- Not enough rest
- Nobody to pick up kids from school and take them to extra-murals
- Not happy leaving kids in day-care from early morning to late early evening (18:00)
- Need to study further – men rated this very high compared to women – showing where their priorities lie.

These pull factors are affirmed by the findings of Stone and Lovejoy (2004) and Hewlett and Buck-Luce (2005). Stone and Lovejoy (2004) also included one additional factor that was not considered a problem in this study. This was – “husbands not helping enough”.

Another issue that was found to be interesting is that in all the studies, the women interviewed indicated that income was not a huge concern when they decided to leave because they knew that they were capable of earning an income should they need to. This was despite the fact that the majority of them were equal contributors to the household income prior to resigning.
7.1.3 Retention

Statistical analyses revealed that the Mean of Retention for Females was found to be greater than 2. This means that South African Organizations are not doing enough to retain their Female professional and management staff. This is in line with the findings of the interview process, where the women said that their companies had no retention strategies, or if they did, they were not implemented.

Correlation tests showed that for women, push factors result in low levels of retention. The finding that 75.4% of women would leave if they could, is alarming and to be able to prevent this, organisations need to change their approach. The interviews done with the eight women who had left illustrate the stories of women who made the choice to leave and did so. Many women do not have this choice.

In order for Corporates to retain their highly-skilled women, they need to have a good understanding of why women work, the factors that are important to them at work and what retention strategies women consider effective. A huge issue highlighted by Still (2006) is that organisations assume that men and women are alike, and subsequently motivate them in the same way, with a male values system.

This came through clearly in the interviews when the women stated that a “one size fits all” approach is not appropriate when trying to retain women. Strategies must be developed after doing a “needs analysis” of the senior women within the organization and then tailoring these strategies to suit these women.

Respondents showed that having financial independence and their skills effectively utilized is more important than money. Self-actualisation was given a high priority and Power and Status a low priority. Flexible work schedules are also considered very important.
The participants indicated that their companies do not have retention strategies – for men or women, and have not done much to retain women.

They indicated that if you tailor the retention strategy to the needs of the women, remunerate them appropriately and show commitment to their development and career growth, then organisations could retain them.

In order to reverse the female ‘brain drain’ in South Africa, both women and organisations need to make an effort. Women can empower themselves in the workplace by focusing on their own academic and career development and should restructure managerial work to facilitate a work and family interface.

Many strategies for retention were recommended, based on work done around the world and on the outcome of this study. These include a commitment from Senior Management to diversity and the training and development of women, the need to change the Corporate Culture to one that is welcoming and conducive to the growth and development of women, and the need for coaching and mentoring of women. The need for accelerated growth and women’s networks was also emphasized.

To cater for women’s need to have balance in their lives, flexible work schedules and family-friendly policies need to be introduced as was also demonstrated by Belkin (2003), Mainiero and Sullivan (2005) and Still (2006).

Organisations must also factor into their strategy that women may take off-ramps and that they may return, and they should facilitate this process to make it as smooth as possible, so as not to lose the talent that they have helped to nurture.

Clark (2007) encapsulated the feeling of the respondents when she stated:
“Companies that realize they are letting a wealth of talent walk out of their doors, and start engaging in dialogue with these women, in an attempt at changing their organisations systemically, are the ones that will be most buoyant when the talent tsunami hits the Southern African shoreline”.

7.2 Conclusions

This study was designed with the aim of answering the questions: what are the challenges facing professional SA women, are they indeed leaving or wanting to leave, and what are their organizations doing about it? Triangulation was utilized by means of interviews and surveys, to achieve consistency.

The findings show that women are leaving the corporate world, although exact numbers are not known. They are leaving for a combination of reasons including work-related reasons like a male dominated organisational culture and inflexible schedules; and personal reasons like the need to care for a family and still achieve self-actualisation from work.

The findings also reveal that women and men approach career choices and career decisions differently, with women taking into account all aspects of their family lives and work lives, before deciding. In contrast, men only consider their work issues when making career decisions.

Many women, who are still working, are also keen to leave, if they had the opportunity. In addition, it was found that South African organisations are not doing much to retain their talented women.

Many of the women (on career breaks) who were interviewed said that they had really enjoyed participating in the study because it made them re-examine their reasons for leaving and affirmed their decision as the correct one. They also expressed an interest in seeing the findings of the entire study. This leads one to conclude that women need support groups where they can share their stories with women in similar situations.

The goals of this study have been achieved in that one now has a good understanding of the challenges that women face that lead to imbalance in their lives. The implications of the research results are that organisations are going to
continue losing brilliant senior level women, if they do not make changes immediately. This trend of leaving/wanting to leave work can be reversed if the recommendations are implemented.

The limitation of the study is the limited number of women that could be reached (n=52 for the survey and n=8 for the interviews)). However, the triangulation of the survey results with the interview results have helped achieve reliable results that can be very useful. The results cannot be generalized to the entire population of senior women, but can be very useful in understanding what many women are experiencing and what many organisations are doing or failing to do with respect to the retention of their talented women.
7.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings from Section 4.3, the literature on retention, and the research findings, the following retention strategies are recommended to assist organizations in retaining their senior women. These are practical recommendations, which, if implemented, can make a huge difference to the retention of women in the corporate world.

**Commitment from Senior Management to Diversity**

The enlightened CEO in the best companies build a strategic vision and business case for diversity, set concrete goals to meet those commitments, hold management accountable for achieving diversity goals, report on progress, participate visibly in diversity events and take every opportunity to communicate these commitments down through the ranks (Berens, 2006).

**Commitment from Senior Management to Training and Development**

The first step is to obtain strong commitment and support for the career development of women from top management. Executive management must create a climate that is more likely to assimilate differences, is holistic and is more conducive to the management styles of women. Line management must be trained to raise awareness and understanding of barriers to the advancement of women. Companies must stop treating women as “men in skirts”. This attitude must be changed from the top (Krishnan, Park & Kilbourne, 2006).

Organisations need to be in a better position to separate the serious career women from the women who want “just a job”. By doing this, they can select and recruit these serious career women and give them extra training and development opportunities in order to retain/re-recruit them.
after the career break. Women who meet the necessary requirements must be aggressively recruited and promoted (Geber, 2000). Organizations need to work towards an integrated attraction, development and retention strategy (Booysen, 2007).

Organizations need to design proper training and development programs, give women challenging assignments that utilize women’s special talents. Careful planning and creativity is needed from the organizations, but the benefits in terms of retained investment in training and development of professional women employees could be enormous (Helfat, Harris & Wolfson, 2006). Access to organizational resources and relevant opportunities to develop skills, as well as exposure to formal and informal mentorship and coaching programs will be invaluable to the female managers.

**Accelerated growth and women’s networks**

Organizations need to identify best practices that support the advancement of women, develop and utilize women’s networks inside and outside the organization, track the advancement of women in the organization and develop a list of women for succession planning in an effective talent management program (Helfat, Harris & Wolfson, 2006; Booysen, 2007).

**Changing of Corporate Culture**

A United States recruitment firm, Hudson and other researchers in Berens (2006) agreed that unless they change their corporate culture, many firms will lose out in the long run as a growing number of talented female professionals seek more flexible working arrangements.
Organizations that create working environments that are conducive to the growth of women who want to integrate work and family have a competitive edge in retaining their key employees.

**Coaching and Mentoring**

Deemer and Fredericks (2002) spoke about the importance of coaching and mentoring for women. The authors quoted University of Southern California Business School Professor and award winning author – Warren Bennis who said:

> “I know of no leader in any era who hasn't had at least one mentor: a teacher who found things in him he didn’t know were there, a parent, a senior associate who showed him the way to be, or in some cases, not to be, or demanded more from him than he knew he had to give” (Deemer & Fredericks, 2002).

The authors recommend the use of male and female mentors – the male will help women to understand the politics and success pathways of the organization, and the female can forewarn their protégé of specific gender-based challenges within the company and steer their protégé through them. One can then get the added knowledge and wisdom of their dual, different perspectives, which can help to achieve growth. Coaching is based on a formal relationship with an external individual with the coach’s main intention being to help one achieve fulfilment and success (Deemer & Fredericks, 2002).

**Flexible work schedules**

Organizations need to develop flexible, more innovative organizational policies with respect to flexible working hours and half time or part-time work. They should also create meaningful part-time opportunities in the professions that do not penalize workers who take advantage of them. These arrangements must then be institutionalised to shield them from arbitrary and individualized implementation. In a recent survey of senior
Fortune 500 male executives, 73% believe that it is possible to structure senior management jobs in ways that would both increase productivity and make more time available for life outside of work. The stigma of flexible hours must be removed (Schein, 2007).

**Family friendly policies**

Organizations need to determine how many workers in their workforce are members of dual career couples or families so that they can be more responsive to their workers’ needs (Geber, 2000). Corporates must ask themselves:

“What demands, activities and expectations are convenient in the old order of a gender-based division of labour, but are detrimental to women’s progress in today’s world of gender equality in the workforce?

Good examples of these are last minute meetings; urgent requests and unscheduled high priority business trips that appear to be a fact of corporate life. These can be hurdles in the race to the top that can trip up the women manager with family responsibilities. But perhaps these crisis situations are ‘corporate convenient’ – assumed and unexamined when there is a wife at home to take care of the children and adjust the family to the corporate demands” (Schein, 2007).

Basic assumptions about work requirements must be re-examined. Work activities that are ‘corporate convenient’ must be re-evaluated. Advance planning must become the norm and true corporate emergencies the exception. The manager who does last minute fire fighting and acting swiftly in an emergency and who usually gets praised should now be chastised for poor planning and lack of foresight. Workers who work very late should then be regarded as inefficient and poor performers (Schein, 2007).
Work-life benefits should be extended to beyond maternity leave into school going years of children. Work-family policies should be made gender neutral so that men can also have the choice of sharing the load with their professional wives (Stone & Lovejoy, 2004).

**Off-ramps and on-ramps**

Organizations need to take a step further and accept that talented workers will leave (off-ramps) and that they need to have mechanisms to help them return (on-ramps). More and more men are leaving too. E.g. 46% of the employees taking parental leave at Ernst and Young in 2002 were men. An attitude change is needed - a woman who chooses to leave the corporate world should not be viewed as someone who “can’t cut the mustard” or “does not have what it takes” to be a top executive (Schein, 2007).

It is recommended that further research on this subject be done on a very large sample size. The ideal situation would be if BWASA conducted surveys on the senior women within all the organisations that they survey as part of their Census on Women in Leadership, to test for desire to leave and retention. The Census covers over three hundred organisations and the number of women who can be reached will be phenomenal. These findings can give a much more accurate view of what is really happening within organisations in South Africa on the topics - the challenges facing women and Retention

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Measurement Instrument

The survey questionnaire is presented below. This is a copy of the survey from the Internet.

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Dear Participant

You are kindly invited to participate in this survey on Women in Management, and Retention in the Corporate World. In this survey, men and women in senior positions are requested to complete a survey that asks questions about the challenges faced by women in managerial and professional positions, as well as Retention in the workplace. The opinions of men and women will be sought in order to obtain a full understanding of these phenomena. It will take approximately 6 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Your survey responses will be strictly confidential and data from this research will be reported only in the aggregate. The information will be used for research purposes. Your information will be coded and will remain confidential. If you have questions at any time about the survey or the procedures, you may e-mail: krishni@mweb.co.za or call 082 4127106.

Thank you very much for your time and support. Please start with the survey now by clicking on the Continue button below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Demographics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td>Please select the correct option for each of the following questions:</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4</strong></td>
<td>What is your gender? Male / Female</td>
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<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td>What is your marital status? Married, Divorced, Single, Cohabiting</td>
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<td><strong>6</strong></td>
<td>Do you have children under the age of 18? Yes/No</td>
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<td><strong>7</strong></td>
<td>If yes, how many children under 18 do you have? 1,2,3,4,5</td>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>What is your highest formal qualification? Undergraduate/Postgraduate Degree</td>
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<td><strong>9</strong></td>
<td>What is your income status within your family unit? Primary/Equal/Secondary</td>
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<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td>How many years of work experience do you have?</td>
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<td><strong>11</strong></td>
<td>Which age group do you fall into? 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44, 45-49,50-54,55-59</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td>Work-Life Situation</td>
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<td><strong>13</strong></td>
<td>The following questions require you to make a selection based on how you feel about the topic. The scale ranges from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Choose one option for each question.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td>I am constantly stimulated and challenged at work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I love my job.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>I regularly work long hours.</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>Being able to work long hours is a major imperative for career growth.</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>I regularly go on overnight business trips.</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>The long hours I work have a detrimental effect on my family.</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>There is equal division of labour in my household.</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>I have a good support structure at home.</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>My spouse is comfortable with me being in a high powered job.</td>
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<td>23</td>
<td>There are considerable opportunities for growth in the company I work for.</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>The company I work for is supportive of women in the workplace.</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>Women can advance to senior positions even if they have family commitments.</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Gender stereotyping prevents women from reaching senior positions.</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>Women need to adopt male traits in order to become successful leaders.</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>Women are discriminated against in the workplace.</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>Male Managers are supportive of their female colleagues and subordinates.</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>Female Managers/Professionals are supportive of their female colleagues/subordinates in general.</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>The &quot;old boys network&quot; is a barrier to the progress of women in the workplace.</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>I would leave full-time work if I had the opportunity and means to do so.</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>My reasons for working are: (Select all the options that are applicable to you)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Having my own independent source of income</td>
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<td>My household income is insufficient</td>
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<td>Enjoyment and satisfaction in my work</td>
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<td>Power and status in profession</td>
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<td>I am highly qualified and experienced and would like to utilize my skills effectively.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Giving something back to society.</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>What would make you leave work? (Choose as many options as you want to)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Workplace inflexibility</td>
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<td>Work not fulfilling</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Changing careers</td>
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<td>Work too demanding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Caring for young children or parents</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Spouse not doing enough to help at home</td>
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<td>Deference to spouse's career</td>
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<td>Spouse's preference for you to stay at home to manage the household</td>
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<td>Study further</td>
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<td>35</td>
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<td><strong>Retention</strong></td>
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<td>36</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Please rate each of the following work related factors in terms of their importance to you. The rating scale ranges from Very Important to Important to Not Important.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being in a powerful position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability to associate with people I respect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The freedom to be myself at work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunity to be flexible with my schedule</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The opportunity to collaborate with others and work as a team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To give back to the community through my work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition from my company</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being appropriately remunerated for the work I do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being part of a diverse team</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self actualization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate the questions below on a scale ranging from &quot;Strongly Agree&quot; to &quot;Strongly Disagree&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I had to take a career break, and then return, I would gladly rejoin the company I currently work for.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The company I work for has flexible work policies for women.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The company I work for does a lot to retain its professional and management level women.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please rate the following retention strategies in terms of their effectiveness in retaining managers and professionals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work policies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removing the stigma associated with the utilization of flexible policies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing ambition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment from executive management to the growth and development of senior women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of new roles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer networking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentorship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability by Executive Management in terms of the growth and development of senior women</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Market related remuneration
Concierge services at work to make life easier for busy managers and professionals
Properly defined career path
Succession Planning

Appendix 2: Interview Schedule

2.1 Cover Letter to Participants

Dear Madam,

More and more women are leaving the workplace for various reasons. As business in South Africa, we cannot afford to lose the talented women who have worked so hard to reach the pinnacles of success. South Africa as a whole cannot sustain its competitive advantage if its resource base is depleted.

It is therefore becoming increasingly necessary for organizations to understand what challenges women face every day in attempting to achieve a work-life balance and to implement necessary strategies to retain their talented women.

It is also important for women to understand what challenges their colleagues are experiencing.

I am conducting a study to investigate these issues and would be very grateful if you would become a participant in this study.

All discussions will be kept confidential and anonymity will be maintained at all times. The information collected will be for
academic purposes only and the entire process will be handled with the highest level of integrity.

A copy of the Interview Guide is attached for your information.

I will be in touch shortly to arrange a suitable interview time and venue if you acquiesce.

Kind Regards
Krishni Reddy

2.2 Interview Questions

These questions were used to guide the interview.

**Section 1 – Biographical Data**

Age Group
Race Group
Marital Status
No. of Children, if any
Highest Qualification
Highest position reached
No. of years in that position
Income status in family – primary/secondary/equal

**Section 2 – Reasons for Leaving Work**

Why did you leave work?
Describe the decision making process involved in leaving.
What role did finances play in your decision?
What was your partner’s and/or children’s influence on this process?
What was the influence of your work situation on your decision?
Did you have a mentor at work?
Section 3 – Retention

How effective are the retention strategies of your company?  
What can they do differently?  
What have you done since you left?  
What are your plans for the future?

2.3 Interview Participants

1) Michelle – Finance Manager: Aviation Sector  
2) Edna – HR – FMCG  
3) Thembile – CEO – Municipal Zoo  
4) Yoshni – Project Manager – Aviation Sector  
5) Kate-Operations – Aviation Sector  
6) Jenny – Air Traffic Controller – Aviation Sector  
7) Beatrice – HR – FMCG  
8) Tracy – HR - FMCG

Appendix 3: Consistency Matrix

Table 21: Consistency Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem</th>
<th>Sub-Problems</th>
<th>Hypotheses</th>
<th>Measures</th>
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</table>
| Identify the workplace and personal challenges faced by professional women that may make them leave or consider leaving work, and the female retention strategies of organizations | Identify the workplace challenges faced by professional women that have an effect on their work lives | Hypothesis 1 | Push Factors  
Satisfaction with Work Life |
| Identify the personal challenges faced by professional women, that have an effect on their work lives | Hypothesis 1 | Pull Factors.  
Satisfaction with work life.  
Satisfaction with work-life balance. |
| Identify the influence of these challenges on their decision to leave or stay | Hypothesis 1 | Work life Satisfaction.  
Desire to Leave. |


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identify the actions of organizations to retain their talented women</th>
<th>Hypothesis 2</th>
<th>Retention. Desire to Leave.</th>
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**Appendix 4: Spearman’s Rank Order Correlation**

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<th>C8x</th>
<th>C9x</th>
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**Spearman Correlations Section (Row-Wise Deletion)**

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<th>C14x</th>
<th>C15x</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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C6x = Work Life Male  
C7x = Push Factors Male  
C8x = Work Life Female  
C9x = Push Factors Female  
C10x = Pull Factors Female  
C11x = Pull Factors Male  
C12x = Retention Male  
C13x = Desire to Leave Male  
C14x = Retention Female  
C15x = Desire to Leave Female