EXPLORING WORK-LIFE BALANCE

IN PETROLEUM SURVEYING:

A QUALITATIVE APPROACH

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of Masters in Business Administration at the
Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy
University of Malta.

June, 2012

The Abstract

This research project examined the perceptions, emotions and feelings encountered by petroleum surveyors in respect to the construct of work-life balance. The aim of the study was to primarily discern whether a work-life balance exists and if not, to explicate the social and psychological implications that emanate from this phenomenon.

A phenomenological approach has been adopted for this study and eleven (11) semi-structured face to face interviews have been conducted. A purposeful sampling procedure has been applied and participants have been chosen from three different companies. Interview transcripts were analysed using thematic coding to develop the relevant constructs and themes.

The findings unequivocally demonstrate that petroleum surveyors encounter a degree of work-life conflict on a daily basis with respect to their personal commitments, hobbies and vacation leave. In addition, relevant concerns emerged related to occupational, health and safety, staffing and psychological well-being of employees.

The research suggests that managers need to adopt an approach that provides for more flexible, linear and less bureaucratic structures and processes. Managers are urged to allow their employees a higher degree of freedom, to involve them in the decision making process and to encourage the support of co-workers to enable them to satisfy their personal requirements. In addition, the research recommends that surveying companies should adopt

a culture of two way communication. Moreover, management should take a firm stand and take the necessary corrective actions where employees' health and safety is concerned.

The aim of the study was to increase awareness in general and to act as an eye opener to managers to realise the importance they should bestow to the issue of work-life balance if they truly aim to improve their work social environment and increase employees' commitment.

Statement of Authenticity

I hereby attest that the here below dissertation is my own personal and authentic work and am the sole proprietor. Scrupulous attention has been devoted to make certain that all citations have been appropriately and accurately referenced. Moreover, I affirm that this dissertation has not been previously submitted to any academic institution. I hereby declare that this research project was conducted in accordance with the standard academic ethics.

Franco Schembri   29th July, 2012

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to those who have somehow been of support and guidance to the successful completion of this dissertation. Undoubtedly, without the support, patience and understanding of my beloved wife, Pauline, this project would not have been possible. She has always been present to provide me with the necessary impetus that maintained me focused and determined till the end of this project. I would also like to show my appreciation to my son, Alessio for showing, in his own and unique way, a degree of understanding for my period of absence during which I could not dedicate him the attention he deserved. I want to thank my mum, Maria Dolores for her consistent encouragement and her belief in my potential and talents.

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Joseph Azzopardi, for his guidance and enthusiasm towards my research work. His guidance has consistently been provided with his unique Gozitan smile which decidedly made it easier for me to complete the project.

I am also indebted to my colleague and friend Mr. Peter Cain for his vital efforts during the dissertation period when he had to take over most of my duties and responsibilities.

Finally, I wish to remember my departed father Gaetano for instilling in me the philosophy that human development is the key to an interesting and challenging life. Definitely, he would have been delighted and pleased with the completion of this research project.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

The concept of work-life balance primarily developed as a consequence of the development of a more diverse workplace with the dramatic increase in women participating in the economy. Initially, academic researchers tended to adopt the term work-life conflict in their approaches. As more researchers explored and studied the area the new term of work-life balance emerged. 'The term "work-life balance" was coined in 1986, although its usage in everyday language was sporadic for a number of years' (Lockwood, 2003: 2).

However, work-life related issues should not be concerned with working mothers and/or married individuals only, but should be broadened to the individual employee irrespective of his status. Undoubtedly people's ideals and life expectations have changed considerably in the recent decades. According to the European Commission Industrial Relations dictionary:

> Work–life balance is a term used to describe a state of equilibrium between an individual's work and personal life. A satisfactory work–life balance is achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm, to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society (Work-Life Balance, 2009).

The work-life balance debate is of concern to any profession or occupation but 'the work-life boundary may be especially significant in the management of highly skilled knowledge workers, such as technical professionals, whose commitment and loyalty present a challenge to employers' (Scholarios et al., 2006 in Rani, Kamalanabhan and Selvarani, 2011:85).

Accordingly, the continuous increase in importance of the knowledge worker is expected to generate justified pressure on organisations to increasingly consider the notion of work-life balance as strategically relevant.

1.2 The Researcher

The researcher's interest in the topic of work-life balance in petroleum surveying developed as a consequence of twenty years' experience in the field. Moreover, being the Chief Executive Officer of one of the leading surveying companies in Malta developed an interest and concern in the author on work-life balance in this particular field. The researcher worked for a considerable number of years as a petroleum surveyor, during which the researcher personally experienced the nature of petroleum surveying. So, the researcher developed his own perceptions on the issue of work-life balance in petroleum surveying. Nevertheless, during the execution of this study, the researcher was on guard so as to avoid influencing the participants and tried to distance himself as much as is humanely possible. Holding different managerial posts in recent years has helped the researcher to witness on a daily basis the different reactions and attitudes of surveyors to work and how they try to manage the two domains.

During the academic studies, the researcher developed an interest in Organisational Behaviour and Human Resource Management as the prominent academic disciplines which are directly concerned with human beings or the human capital. Dealing on a daily basis with human beings is undoubtedly fascinating and to say the least challenging.

It is quite common to listen to accounts wherein surveyors lament that they had to either postpone or abandon a particular commitment because of work engagements. Through the researcher's experience, it can be confirmed that surveyors might be involved in operations with irregular hours which commonly may take prolonged hours to complete. Petroleum surveys are regularly performed during weekends, nights and even on public holidays, including the most celebrated feasts. Moreover, it is considered as acceptable in this business to receive nominations with short pre-notice, meaning that the surveyor might have been planning something for the evening which he has to forfeit because of the unforeseen work which came in unexpectedly. Admittedly, it is rarely possible for the surveyors to plan vacation leave in advance, unless it is a holiday overseas or in case of health issues, as the nature of the work does not permit much flexibility. It might be argued that such circumstances might have adverse effects on the surveyors' perceptions, emotions and attitudes towards their work.

Moreover, since the petroleum surveying business is relatively small in size, the researcher is persuaded that up to the date of submission of this dissertation, no studies related to work-life balance in petroleum surveying have ever been published. The researcher is convinced that even though the business line is arguably small the challenges faced in petroleum surveying deserve the attention of researchers as a better understanding of the surveyors' perceptions and emotions will surely guide organisations in their endeavours.

1.3 Job Description

Investigating and exploring the construct of work-life balance is undoubtedly subject to the nature of work. The challenges experienced by employees vary extensively and thus, it is imperative that a brief description of the nature of petroleum surveying is provided to enable the reader to comprehend certain aspects which are unique to petroleum surveying.

Petroleum surveying involves the quantity determination on petroleum tankers, bunker barges, shore tanks of petroleum cargoes being delivered, received or transferred. The methodology used consists of the individual determination of the level of product within the individual cargo tanks by either an electronic device or a manual sounding tape, temperature readings are also recorded, then this data is converted into volume be means of calibration tables provided by either the terminal or the vessel. In accordance with the normally accepted standards of the 'American Society for Testing and Materials International – ASTM' the volume observed is adjusted to obtain a standard volume at a temperature of 15 Degrees Celsius using standard conversion tables. Densities and weight correction factors are used to convert the volume into weight. The general practice is to use the weight for comparison purposes for possible discrepancies. In most cases, surveyors make use of electronic devices and laptops as to enable them to issue the relevant surveying field documents such as ullage reports and time logs on board the vessels which are signed by all parties concerned.

In most cases, the surveying task may also include sampling of the petroleum product being delivered or received. Various sampling procedures are applied in order to ensure that the

sample represents the consignment or the contents of a specific cargo tank. For instance, 'volumetrical' and stratified sampling procedures are commonly used on board vessels. In other circumstances, certain techniques might be adopted such as the withdrawal of spot samples e.g. top/middle/bottom, which would represent the three major layers of the cargo. Sampling is definitely an important area in surveying as the eventual analyses performed on the submitted samples can either satisfy the buyer if the quality meets the desired specifications or a dispute is generated because of quality characteristics which resulted to be out-of-spec.

However, petroleum surveying involves much more than measurement, sampling and calculations. The surveyor has the extremely challenging task of dealing and discussing with the Masters of vessels and chief engineers in order to arrive at the desired quantities. Quantity differences are fundamentally important to the petroleum surveying as buyers or sellers settle their payments on the figures determined and ascertained by surveyors. Petroleum operations can take place inside port and outside harbour. Offshore operations may take two to three days to be completed and the surveyor has to remain on board the vessel throughout the whole operation. The current economic turmoil and fluctuating price of petroleum has dramatically increased the relevance of surveying.

It is evident that it is the responsibility of inspecting companies to safeguard the surveyors' health and safety. Ensuring that the surveyors are in mental and physical good shape should be pursued for ethical considerations and to avoid physical accidents. Surveyors might have to drive back home say after a prolonged operation in the middle of the night. There is no

doubt that such conditions might increase the possibility of a mishap. Besides, surveyors on board vessels commonly make use of pilot ladders in order to embark or disembark a vessel. Using a pilot ladder requires careful attention and adequate physical strength.

Generally, most of the surveyors' work consists in outside office activities on board vessels or in terminals. Most of the time spent in the office by surveyors is used to recharge their energies and to prepare the survey reports. Moreover, a substantial amount of time spent in the office is allocated for the preparation for a subsequent operation. Despite of these work related activities, a considerable amount of time is spent in unproductive activities not strictly related to surveying.

1.4 Surveyors as Knowledge Workers

Undoubtedly, managerial experience shows that petroleum surveyors' turnover is a real concern which companies have to face on a daily basis. Yigitcanlar, Baum and Horton, (2007:7) argue that 'knowledge workers are not only highly mobile in theory, they are also highly mobile in practice. That is to say, knowledge workers expect to change jobs, if not occupation, relatively frequently'.

Indisputably, the occupation of a surveyor involves a high degree of knowledge management. A surveyor is a carrier and transferor of knowledge obtained through formal and informal training received at work which might have strategic implications to

organisations. Moreover, during the surveying experience, the surveyor accumulates commercially sensitive information and knowledge on multinationals and traders.

Surveyors have the propensity to move from one company to another and in addition, it is also common for surveyors to resign from their posts as surveyors in order to seek another profession, which might not entail certain challenges, including potential conflicts with personal commitments.

Having high employees' turnover rate is not only damaging for the organisation's reputation and the cost involved in recruiting and retraining new employees but may also have adverse consequences on the remaining employees. Inspecting companies tend to be small in capacity, thus, when a surveyor resigns the work volume would have to be shared between a smaller number of surveyors resulting in increased pressure and arguably creating more challenges to balance between work and life. Therefore, in order to retain the best talents, it is inevitable for organisations to consider the relevance of the issue of work-life balance.

1.5 Personality Factors

Surveyors ought to learn to value and appreciate diversity as they have to work with people originating from differing cultures and countries. Companies have to make sure that the engaged surveyors possess a degree of 'intellectual openness' in order to avoid possible conflicts during the survey's execution.

Additionally, a surveyor is expected to possess a degree of emotional intelligence, including empathy and social skills as often he will have to act as an intermediary between two parties. Suppliers and ship owners could have their own bad intentions thus subjecting the surveyor to stress and pressures. Consequently, the surveyor should ideally be in a good physical and mental shape, as such challenges might occur either during the night or at the end of say, a bunkering operation which could have taken longer than 15 hours. Undoubtedly, the surveying profession requires resilience and on the other hand, the least preferable personality trait of a surveyor is arguably 'agreeableness'.

Unfortunately, in the bunkering business surveyors may also be subject to physical and verbal threats. The surveyor has to adopt a philosophy that sustains that 'out there is a jungle' whereby all parties might be interested in tricking you. This increases the importance of having surveyors in good shape, committed and motivated to excel in their performance as to achieve the organizational goals and to focus on customers' requirements. It might be argued that a high degree of 'conscientiousness' is a desirable personality trait for a petroleum surveyor.

Moreover, Bartone et al., (2009: 500) argue that people who posess a high degree of 'hardiness', 'have a high sense of life and work commitment, a greater feeling of control over what happens to them, and are more open to change and challenges in life. In addition, Bartone et al., (2009: 500) sustain that individuals high on hardiness 'tend to interpret stressful and difficult experiences as normal features of an existence which is overall interesting and worthwhile'. It might be argued that 'hardiness' is the most desirable

personality trait for petroleum surveyors. It is recognized that ideally surveyors should possess a high degree of self-regulation and ability to handle stress.

Arguably, surveyors have to endure the pressure compelled by their employers to ensure that they achieve the desired results in protection of customers' financial interests. This might increase their stress as their field performance can easily be appraised against their colleagues' performances. In fact, when a shortage is incurred, a committed surveyor might feel frustrated and even demoralized for not managing to resolve the resulted discrepancy. Besides, they have to provide a detailed explanation of the shortage incurred to their superiors and to clients who tend to be quite demanding, for obvious reasons. A loss of say 10 Metric Tons of Gasoil could amount to the equivalent of USD 10,000.

Therefore, a surveyor has to endure the long working hours together with the awkward timing of operations and the pressure to obtain the desired results. It might be argued that this accumulated pressure can lead the surveyor to, intentionally or unintentionally, develop a degree of resentment towards the organisation. This is even enhanced when surveyors feel the need to rest or have a planned vacation leave, which might have to be postponed because of work commitments.

However, research and experience show that certain people have the necessary personal resources to adjust to different and demanding situations whereas others might lack the necessary resources and may feel easily frustrated with demanding and challenging conditions. It might be suggested that this can be influenced by the individual's degree of self-regulation, self-efficacy and self-esteem. Surveying involves a high degree of self-

regulation. 'Self-regulatory tasks require them to alter their default thoughts, feelings, and behaviors so as to inhibit the forbidden reactions and encourage the desirable responses' (Muraven and Baumeister, 2000 in Wa Chan and Wen Wan, 2012: 120). On the other hand, 'self-efficacy is defined as one's judgment of [one's] capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance with the expectation that one has the ability to adjust to what needs to be done in a specific situation' (Bandura, 1986 in Byunghwa , Youngchan and G. McFarland, 2011: 372). In view of this, it might be argued that individuals possessing a high degree of self-regulation and self-efficacy are more fitting for petroleum surveying. In contrast, individuals with low self-esteem are more susceptible to stress and negative emotions than those high on this personality trait. Undoubtedly, having a challenging job and irregular working hours requires a high degree of adaptability and flexibility. Petroleum surveys can be carried out at any time of the day and during public holidays. Therefore, the surveyor has to learn to distribute his energies adequately as to be able to use his free time effectively.

1.6 Gender and Work-life balance

The reaseacher recognizes the importance that gender construct might have in respect to work-lifebalance. Since to date, no females have ever been engaged as petroleum surveyors in Malta, this research project will not be delving further into gender issues as it would not be consisitent with the purpose of the research project. It interesting to note that petroleum surveying is dominated by males world wide except in Russia.

1.7 Union Representation

To the knowledge of the researcher and to date of submission of this dissertation, engaged surveyors in the existing companies are not members of any trade union. 'From a union perspective, declines in membership, recognition and authority have left both employees and unions exposed to organisational decisions that could undermine security and employment conditions' (Hyman and Summers, 2007: 369).

The researcher has learned of two particular intriguing accounts in which according to the information obtained through a third party, a particular inspecting company behaved in an unacceptable manner. Apparently, a surveyor encouraged his colleagues to join a union but when the management got to know about this interest, he had been dismissed immediately, under another premise. In another instance, a surveyor had been informed that he had been assigned on a job an hour before he was supposed to leave the office, when he informed his superiors that he had a personal commitment which he did not wish to miss he was given the consent to go ahead with his plans. Unfortunately, the day after he was handed an official warning stating that such behaviour is not acceptable and cannot be tolerated. Eventually, he was dismissed.

The researcher adheres to the line of thought that a collaborative union representation in line with the neo-unitary approach can produce the desired outcomes and can assist the organisations to achieve their goals. Definitely, the petroleum surveying business cannot afford a confrontational attitude by the union. The ideal union representation should consist in collaborating with the organisation in a participative management style to ensure that the

goals are attained but at the same time ensure that the employees' interests, job security are protected and properly maintained.

1.8 HR Policies and Practices

The concern of work-life balance has triggered various organisations including the Maltese public sector to take initiatives with the intention of assisting employees to find a balance between the two domains. There exist various types of family friendly working practices such as teleworking and flexible working hours.

The researcher is informed that a particular local company has adopted a shift working system as to help the surveyors take at least one week end free every four weeks. Others have adopted a flexible arrangement, occasionally allowing the surveyors to go home to rest and recharge themselves in order to be in good shape. However, this arrangement is based on the benevolence and sensitivity of the supervisor and does not oblige the companies in any way to conform to this arrangement and thus, it may be argued that such arrangement leaves the surveyors at the mercy of their managers. Generally, surveyors do not have much office work to execute during the office hours; most of the work would have been completed on board. Consequently, this precious time can be used by companies to assist the surveyors to create a degree of balance between the two domains.

1.9 Corporate Culture

The researcher's experience in the field of petroleum surveying led him to develop a conviction that in working environments where employees may be subjected to stressful conditions, the corporate culture can play a key role in alleviating the stress.

> Corporate culture consists of values, norms, feelings, aspirations and hopes that are subtly hidden from view, but distinctly recognizable to a discerning manager. It is a powerful force that gives meaning to people's lives, reduces uncertainty and creates stability (Gorman, 1993).

A corporate culture which incorporates work-life balance as one of its predominant values could undoubtedly result in improved working conditions, enhanced by employees' job satisfaction that could lead to improved performance. It might be contended that a corporate culture that values their employees as unique individuals with different needs and aspirations can aid employees to handle stressful circumstances better. Besides, an achieved work-life balance could increase the possibilities of retaining talented staff. It might be argued that considering the employees as partners and involving them in important decisions can help organisations and employees to reduce their differences. Indisputably, when employees feel that they were involved in a particular decision, they will find it easier to cope with certain conditions and remain committed to the organisation.

1.9.1 Supportive Environment

Nowadays, it is increasingly important that management let go the old management styles of downward communication and should move towards a two way communication arrangement. Two way communication entails that the management listens constantly to the

employees' suggestions and concerns. Through direct listening, organisations can prevent certain problems from escalating and where possible can take actions to improve certain working conditions which might be conflicting with the employees' personal commitments. Surveyors are knowledge workers whose job performance is exceptionally valuable to clients and thus they expect to be respected for their talents.

'Based on social exchange relationships, perceived supervisor support refers to the perception of employees regarding their relationship with their supervisor to care for their individual concerns' (Hsu, 2011: 235). Supervisory support can play a crucial role in aiding surveyors to cope better with their work and personal life commitments through assisting them to cope with particular situations or discussing solutions which are beneficial to both the organisation and the surveyor. A supervisor who shows genuine interest in the employee's personal commitments might help to create a working environment based on mutual collaboration and respect. According to Lauzun et al., 2010: 186 in Ford et al., 2007., 'a recent meta-analysis demonstrated that work support significantly predicts work-life conflict, such that having more support in the work domain leads to lessened work interference with life'.

The researcher has learned that supervisory support is practiced by certain local companies but it is worth investigating deeper in order to understand better how surveyors regard this communication tool and to what extent they believe is important for them to cope with the two domains.

An issue, which undeniably deserves particular attention when analyzing work-life balance is the support or otherwise, obtained by surveyors by their family members or partners. Having a partner which supports the uniqueness of the work-life situation of a surveyor will arguably alleviate certain stress and might be a source of encouragement and recharge. In contrast, it might be contended that lack of support by family members or partners can intensify possible frustrations.

1.9.2 The Formulated Research Questions

The research was intended to develop a better understanding of the issues related to work-life balance in petroleum surveying in the Maltese context. The formulation of research questions is 'usually an iterative process to get a stable view of what one is trying to find out' (Punch, 2005: 35). Research questions were developed based on the literature review, the researcher's direct experience and through discussions with colleagues and other managers. This research focused on:

- Exploring the perceptions, emotions and concerns encountered by individual surveyors vis-a-vis work-life balance and possible human resource strategies adopted by surveying companies to deal with the surveyors' commitments in both work and life domains.

- Investigating whether work-life imbalance does really exist and if it really exists whether it has an effect on the surveyors' performance, job satisfaction and job commitment and how it impacts on their personal life and social relationships.

- Exploring whether the surveyors' response to work-life challenges are subject to individual differences and personality traits.

The study projected to produce insights and a better understanding of these concerns:

1. Whether and how 'supervisory support' might play a key role to the surveyors in managing work-life balance.

2. Whether and how teamwork and co-workers support can lessen the pressure of work.

3. What role do supportive partners play in the two domains?

4. How might long working hours impact on health and safety and performance?

5. Which personality traits, if any, might support individual surveyors to positively respond to the commitments of both domains?

6. Which working conditions surveyors consider justify their efforts.

7. Which demographic conditions are most likely to produce work-life conflict.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction to the Literature

'Workplaces today differ greatly from those of 10 or 20 years ago' (Dunne and Teg, 2007: 28). Increasingly businesses are being subjected to varying pressures including local and global competition. 'Work-Life balance has become a more topical issue since many institutions are demanding from their employees a kind of time commitment which in the past was only expected from a small number of core workers' (Rizzo, n.d.). Increasingly business organisations are being constrained to 'raise efficiency and become more responsive to customers and stakeholders' (Dunne and Teg, 2007: 28). Consequently, companies achieving 'flexibility to maintain competitiveness may be forcing a number of workers into an irregular time schedule' (Rizzo, n.d.).

Until a decade ago or so, the petroleum surveying market in Malta was shared between two companies. Both companies were locally founded companies but had tight business relationships with world renowned organizations. They were both operating in a relatively safe and stable business environment, contrary to the current situation wherein new entrants made competition rampant, with obvious business consequences on their business models. Competition is predominantly concentrated on pricing strategies. Thus 'for a business to thrive, it needs to get the most from its workforce' (Dunne and Teg, 2007: 29).

Unquestionably, employees have their own personal needs and aspirations, thus, goal oriented organisations should understand that 'employees need to feel their companies are

in touch with their needs in and of work' (Dunne and Teg, 2007: 29). Brett & Stroh; Jacobs & Gerson (in Greenhaus, Allen and Spector, 2006: 62) affirm that 'because work hours have risen substantially in recent years', the work domain increasingly intrudes on family and personal life' Milliken & Dunn-Jensen (in Greenhaus, Allen and Spector, 2006: 62).

Perry Smith et al., (in Shankar and Bhatnagar, 2010: 81) mention that 'research has found Work-Life Balance to be positively related to both organizational and individual outcomes such as giving the employees flexibility, information, and financial assistance can improve the organization's financial performance and raise employee satisfaction and labor productivity'. Conversely, Grawitch and Barber, (2010: 129), suggest that we should move from this idea that work is a necessary evil and rather shift to 'a broader understanding of how the work role may actaully enrich the broader life domain'.

As competition increases, organizations have to either reduce their tariffs or to face important strategic challenges to reduce operational costs to remain competitive. In fact, Shankar and Bhatnagar (2010: 74) argue that 'the current context of globalization and the changing nature of work scenario is marked by a fast pace of change, intense pressure, constant deadlines, changing demographics, increased use of technology and the co-existing virtual workplace'. In view of this, Shankar and Bhatnagar (2010: 74) propose that 'the current context of globalization and the changing nature of work have provided the impetus for this topic'. Moreover, it may be suggested that such economic pressures could have influenced the organizations to stretch their workforce capability in order to keep the costs low in order to be in a better position to compete effectively. On the other hand, according

to Dunne and Teg, (2007: 28), organisations are experiencing 'internal pressures... on employees who are placing even more pressures on employers by seeking rewarding employment that allows for skills utilization, rewarding careers and a *life outside the office*'.

The current economic downturn continues to intensify the pressure on petroleum surveying companies as shippers and ship owners are increasingly intensifying their loss controls' prevention methods and have become more demanding, thus, enhancing the surveyors' responsibilities and challenges. On the other hand, the increase in price of petroleum increased the importance of petroleum surveying as traders and ship owners want to protect their interest against possible pilferages and/or losses. Although this factor may be regarded as a positive aspect for organization as the demand for inspection services has increased, on the other hand, petroleum surveyors are being subjected to more challenging tasks as the third parties involved have all the interest in the world to engage in foul play activities. Therefore, it may be argued that such a demanding business environment creates or enhances a situation of conflict between work and private life.

To the knowledge of the researcher, no academic studies have ever been performed on work life balance in respect to petroleum surveying. Thus, the literature review was based on studies that have been performed on various fields which differ considerably from petroleum surveying and what it actually entails.

2.2 The Paradigm of Work-Life Balance

The definition of work-life balance provided in Chapter 1 suffices to accurately define the concept. It may be argued that the term work-life balance developed as a consequence to other terms which outrightly conclude that there exists a conflict between work and life. A work-life balance approach aims at creating awareness but does not stop there, it attempts to provide practical HR solutions.

'Research on the work-life interface has primarily focused on documenting the antecedents and consequences of work-family conflict, in which aspects of participating in the work role and the family role are incompatible in some way' (Eby et al., 2005 in Lauzun et al., 2010: 185) .In a different approach to the issue, De Villiers and Kotze, (2003: 18) argue that there is agreement between the researchers that the concept of work-life balance should entail the possibility for the individual employee to have control over his personal life and time and such balance 'gives equal importance to all life roles'.

Certain scholars sustain 'that the notion of the "family" sphere should be broadened to include other important non-work aspects of life (e.g., community roles, non-familial relationships)' and is generally broadened to suggest 'that individuals might strive for all aspects of life to be in balance, such that personal resources are devoted across all important life domains' (Kirchmeyer, 2000 in Lauzun et al., 2010: 185, 186).

Kossek and Ozeki (in Shankar and Bhatnagar, 2010: 76), draw attention to the fact that the construct of work-life balance should not be connected to married women only as evidently men 'are equally burdened by the work and family responsibilities'. In fact Grawitch and Barber, (2010: 135) sustain that 'this is often missed in the work-life balance literature, where work demands (work responsibilities) are often stacked against family demands (family reponsibilities), while ignoring other actual demands on people's personal resources (e.g. social life, personal life pursuits, religious requirements, exercise, sleep)'.

Proponents of work-life balance suggest when an organization adopts the philosophy of attempting to provide the necessary working conditions to assist the employees find a balance between work and life, both the organization and employees will benefit considerably and should increase employees' commitment and engagement. On the other hand, Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton; Bellavia & Frone, Eby et al.; Frone; Kossek & Ozeki; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, (in Greenhaus et al, 2006: 63) sustain that 'literature has consistently revealed that employees who experience extensive work-family conflict suffer a wide variety of negative consequences including diminished *satisfaction and performance in the work and family domains* and deteriorated physical health emotional well being'.

2.3 The Benefits of Work-life Balance and a Broader Perspective

As discussed above, promoters of work-life balance sustain that organisations that take initiatives to safeguard a sustainable balance between their employees' work and life domains are expected to benefit from lower turnover rate to improved competitiveness. The list below was obtained from Putting Balance into Business (Dunne and Teg, 2007: 30):-

a) Business Benefits:

- Greater cost-effectiveness and efficiency, such as savings on overheads when employees work from home or less downtime for machinery when 24-hour shift are worked.
- Ability to attract a higher level of skills because the business is able to attract and retain a skilled and more diverse workforce. Also, reduced recruitment costs.
- More job satisfaction and better staff morale.
- Greater continuity as staff that might otherwise have left is offered solutions they can manage. Many employers find that a better WLB has a positive impact on staff retention and on employee relations, motivation and commitment.
- Increased customer satisfaction and loyalty as a result of the above
- Improved competitiveness – with motivated staff the driving force behind a company, it will be able to react quicker to changes in the market place.
- Increased staff efficiency through better motivation and reduced stress and absenteeism through sickness.
- Improved employee relations

b) Employee Benefits

- More flexibility to fit in with lifestyle demands or needs.
- Increased control over working day.
- Ability to choose hours to suit efficiency – e.g., those able to work more effectively early in the morning can leave earlier in the evening.
- Reduced stress levels.
- Increased motivation and passion of work.
- Opportunity for skilled workers to return to work while balancing social and domestic needs.
- Empowerment of staff

The researcher adheres to the line of thought that Work-Life Balance 'is a much broader concept requiring attention not just married couples with children or working mothers but of working individuals at large, whether or not they are married, and whether or not they have family obligations' (Shankar and Bhatnagar, 2010: 75). Brummelhuis and Van Der Lippe, (2010: 174) sustain that unfortunately most of the research conducted on work-life balance was primarily focused on the nuclear family and 'largely ignored other household structures'. Brummelhuis and Van Der Lippe, (2010: 174) criticize those organisations which introduce or implement work-life policies directed towards the nuclear families,

creating a sense of frustration and injustice among single employees. 'Moreover, singles and employees without children may face other demands in their personal lives than dual earner couples with children, including volunteer work or an active involvement in leisure pursuits' (Brummelhuis and Va Der Lippe, 2010: 174). Casper et al., (in Brummelhuis and Van Der Lippe, 2010: 146) argue that 'singles receive less support from their family domain than employees with a nuclear family, as singles lack emotional support from a partner or children'.

Contrary to certain proponents that work-life balance is the result of modern times hedonism, Ryan & Deci in (Westman, Brough and Kalliath, 2001) contend that 'achieving a balance should lead to experience of of eudemonic wellbeing (or gratification and meaning) because work-life balance is likely associated with the fulfillment of three fundumental psychological needs of relatedness, competence, and autonomy which are necessary for people to thrive and grow psychologically'.

Regrettably, most of the research papers tend to focus on traditional families and pay no attention to singles, individuals in a steady relationship or the emerging and existent forms of families. Since the majority of surveyors are either singles or individuals in a steady relationship where reference is made to the family it will mean to include all forms of relationships or stutuses. This does not mean in any way that this research project is not concerned with traditional married individuals but it is preferred to regard the individual first and how demographic conditions might impact on the individual surveyor in both the domains.

2.4 The Domains of Work and Life

According to Edwards & Rothbard; Parasuraman & Greenhaus (in Brummelhuis and Van Der Lippe, 2010) 'the conflict theory proposes that using human time and energy in one role (e.g., family) decreases the time and energy remaining for other roles (e.g. work), thereby undermining the performance in the role'. Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985 (in Greenhaus, Allen and Spector, 2006: 64) 'identified three forms or types of work-family conflict: *time-based conflict*, *strain-based conflict*, and *behaviour-based conflict*.

Time-based conflict occurs when the time demands associated with one role restrict the amount of time that can be devoted to the other role, inhibiting one's performance in the latter role' Greenhaus, Allen and Spector, (2006: 64). Elloy and Smith, (2003: 59) refer to 'organizational sources of time-based conflict' as situations where 'excessive number of hours, having an inflexible work schedule, or having to work shift work'. Interestingly, Roberts, (2008: 431), suggest that 'individuals may be able to improve their work-life balance by either gaining greater control over the time they spend working, or changing the way in which they view the temporal standards of their employer'. On the other hand, further research indicates that 'work temporality is perhaps not as dominant for a new generation of young adults in the way that it was for their parents' (Roberts, 2008: 436). Nevertheless, Oechsle and Gesseler (in Roberts, 2008: 436), sustain that 'occupational time constraint are by no means negated, but neither are they accepted as the dominant structuring factor'. In addition to this, De Villiers and Kotze, (2003: 21) maintained that 'time-based role problem was the predominant underlying conflict'.

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The second and the third types are quite similar to the cross-over concept, which will be dealt with in more detail below.The second type consists in '*strain based conflict*' which'occurs when stress arising in one role is carried or transferred to the other role, with the consequent strain symptoms (e.g. anxiety, irritability) reducing effectiveness in the second role. In *behaviour* that is effective in one role (e.g., an authoritarian interaction style) is inappropriately applied to the other role reducing one's effectiveness in the role'(Greenhaus, Allen and Spector, 2006: 64).

'Sources of strain-based conflict tend to centre on the work rather than on the organisational environment, and are linked to role ambiguity, low levels of social support from organisational sources and career development problems' (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985 in Elloy and Smith, 2003: 59).

Recent academic research has provided us with arguably a better understanding of work-life conflict by distinguishing between 'work interference with family life (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW)' (Greenhaus et al., 2006: 64). In simpler terms, the concept is extended to mean that interference or intrusion can come from both sides not just from the work domain. Regrettably, previous researchers have not explored sufficiently the effect of parents' and partners' support or otherwise on employees engaged in challenging jobs.

However, 'using a 4-year time lag, Frone et al. (in Greenhaus et al., 2006: 68) found that FIW (Family interference with work) related to depression at follow-up but that WIF did not' (Work Intereference with family). This argument may be appropriate to unmarried surveyors who have a stable relationship.

'Work/Family Enrichment refers to the extent to which experiences in one role improve effectiveness and [are] positive in the other role'(Shankar and Bhatnagar, 2010: 78). Similarly to the Work/Family Conflict and the Work/Family Interference theory, the concept work/family enrichment proposes that the affect results in both domains. Practically, Shankar and Bhatnagar, (2010: 78), suggest that 'Work-Family enrichment is a facilitator because when work enriches family, satisfaction or effectiveness in family life is enhanced, and when family enriches work, satisfaction or effectiveness at work is enhanced'. On the other hand, Grawitch and Barber, (2010: 129) argue that certain literature although it refers to "enrichment" is more focused and highlights work-life conflict and consequently, 'this overriding emphasis on conflict implies that research and organisations should be focused on reducing the negative consequences of conflict rather than promoting the positive consequences of "enrichment"'.

The concept of WIF and FIW suggests that 'both directions of conflict produce negative emotions and role dissatisfaction, and these effects are exacerbated when the role that is interfered with is highly salient to the individual' (Greenhaus, Allen and Spector, 2006: 72).

Whereas the Work/Family conflict examines the interferences of one domain to another the cross over argument somehow enforces the argument as it suggests that emotions are transmitted from one domain to the other. 'Crossover relates to stress experienced by the individual leading to stress or strain being experienced by the individual's spouse or team member' (Westman et al., 2009: 588). Besides, Westman, Brough and Kalliath, (2009: 588) explain that 'spillover occurs from home to work and from work to home, for the same

individual, whereas crossover is conceptualized as a process occurring from one individual to his/her spouse at home'. Practically, the difference between the two concepts is whereas crossover affects the others (family members or non-living together partners), spillover affects only the individual. Westman et al., (2009: 590) produced an intriguing implication that 'both positive and negative crossover in the workplace has crucial practical implications for organisational atmosphere and performance'. For instance, 'burnout climate might transmit from one team to another infecting the entire organistaion' (Westman, Brough and Kalliath, 2009: 590). In addition, Emmerik and Peeters, (2009: 264) argue that 'it is possible that for team members plagued by high emotional job demands, supportive interactions between employees alleviate stress and strain in such a way that these interactions between employees prevent stress and strain to spilling over to the home situation'. On the other hand, whereas one employee's behavior may be a source of stress to many team members, their stress may in turn not only boomerang back, but also start "ping-pong" reactions' (Westman and Etzion, 1999 in Emmerik and Peeters, 2009: 265).

2.5 Personal Resources

Although the concept of work life balance is currently being given the deserved importance by many researchers, certain academics criticise or doubt the whole concept. In fact, it may be argued that the work-life balance concept is short of varied critical arguments. Admittedly, it was hard for the researcher to find relevant academic papers that put forward critical arguments against the concept of Work-Life Balance. The mainstream literature is arguably more interested in refining and perfecting the concept than totally objecting to it.

In contrast to the mainstream line of thought, whereby work and life are regarded as two segregated domains, Eikhof et al., (2007: 325, 326) refer to the 'individual and collective research over the years [that] has revealed that only some workers experience work and life as separate'. 'The notion of balance implies that there is some ideal and fairly stable recipe which involves certain measures or quantities of work and life' (Roberts, 2008: 434). However, Eikhof at al., (2007: 326) sustain that 'for other workers, work and life are intertwined, even amalgamated, so that they cannot or do not want to distinguish and disentangle work and life'.

Grawitch and Barber, (2010: 128) produced an intriguing argument to criticise and challenge the concept of work-life balance. They argued that rather than creating a temporal division between the work and life domains, the researchers should explore the individual employees' 'personal resource allocation'. The concept of 'personal resource allocation' perspective is based on individuals' allocation to the respective domains. 'Thus, positive outcomes are achieved when people (1) perceive themselves to have the resources necessary to effectively respond to the demands in their life, (2) believe they have sufficient control to allocate resources in a way that fits their perspectives, and (3) feel satisfied with the way they have managed their resources'(Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 131).

'Energy can be defined as the perceived sufficiency of physical, mental, and emotional reosurces for responding to life demands'(Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 134). They suggest that 'people are more motivated to expend energy pursuing activities that they find meaningful or worthwile while mimimising the amount of energy they expend pusuing

activites they perceive lack value'. Undoubtedly, individuals'interpretations of their particular environment is based on perceptions, which may not necessarily be based on factual reality. 'People are more likely to respond favourably to a demand when they perceive that they possess the needed resources to respond to the demand and when they appraise the demand as being worth the resources required to meet it' (Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 131).

2.6 Person-Organisation Job Fit and Employees' Turnover

Literature leads us to assume that the 'person-organisation job fit' plays a crucial role as certain people may experience imbalance between the two domains because of their individual percieved resourcesincluding self-regulation particularly in challenging jobs. This might suggest that even the person selection and eventual recruitment are of fundamental importance to organisations in order to avoid possible employee dissatisfaction and to control employee turnover.

Therefore, engaging the right employees for the right job is essential. 'Person organisation fit is defined by Chatman (in Backaus, 2003: 21) as a match between patterns of individual and organisational values' and/or 'as the compatibility that occurs when personal and situational characteristics are well matched (Schneider in Van Vianen, De Pater and Van Dijk, 2007: 188). 'Person-organisation (P-O fit) fit has been associated with decreased levels of employee turnover, and higher levels of job satisfaction, organisation commitment, and interpersonal attraction' (Boxx et al.; Chatman; O'Reilly et al.; Posner; Schnieder, (in Backaus, 2003: 21).

Importantly, Backaus, 2003: 24 argues that his study shows that 'despite the strength of the data suggesting the positive outcomes of strong P-O fit, not all job seekers perceive of fit as an important job search criterion'. Consequently, organisations should take the person organisation fit criterion seriosuly and study prospective applicants thoroughly in order to avoid subsequent problems. A research conducted by Amy et al., (2008: 194), demonstrated that 'supervisory support' is an important predictor of work engagement and employee retention but the job fit criterion may be more salient.

Certainly, organisations engaging trainee petroleum surveyors should ensure that the working conditions in which the surveyor will be working should be properly and clearly explained to prospective applicants in order to facilitate individual applicants to determine whether they fit within the organisation's working environment. Consequently, the recruitment interview plays a vital role in selecting the right individuals that are more likely to fit in the environment and the conditions, especially in an employment market whereby turnover is an ongoing challenge for organisations.

Organisations may dedicate considerable financial and temporal resources to invest in the development of employees and to then realise that the individual employee does not fit with the organisation's culture and environment.In a recent research, Gregarus and Diefendorff (in Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 146) 'found that person-organisation fit was most important when people had a high need for autonomy'. Moreover, Grawitch and Barber, (2010: 146)

argue that people are more likely to experience fit when what they are getting from work role (i.e. financial, achievement, or self actualisation benefits) matches what they prefer to get from the wok role'.

Organizations can also adopt various strategies to increase 'personal resource allocation', including monetary compensation such as bonuses, salary increases. Moreover, organizations can allocate financial resources to enhance their human resources development. Aguinis & Kraiger (in Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 145) contend that 'training and development can influence both an employee's current resource levels (i.e. energy, financial) and employee resource allocation decisions, largely by increasing mastery of some competency'. Undeniably, an employee that possesses the necessary resources and competencies to perform a particular job, especially where knowledge work is involved, should increase his control and mastery of the situation.

When the financial resources earned by employees are perceived as sufficient to engage and pursue desired lifestyles, 'demands requiring financial resources are less likely to produce stress and anxiety' and employees tend to engage in challenging jobs and work longer hours to acquire more financial resources (Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 132, 133). However, they sustain that in the long run motivation to work long hours and overtime to increase financial resources will lessen.

Fredeick Herzberg (1923) theory of motivation is based on the two-factor theory of motivation referred to as 'Motivators' and 'Hygiene' factors. If the 'hygiene', such as the financial resources are lacking in a particular working relationship, in the long run demotivation might be created whereas the 'motivators' which include the job itself and autonomy are more likely to keep employees motivated. This is consistent with the Equity theory whereby, 'an employee compares his/her outcome/input ratio with referent others, and pay satisfaction is dependent on the comparison of the person's ratio with a comparison other' (Till and Karren, 2011: 43). Kinman and Jones, (2008: 239) stress that 'it is also likely that employees who believe that their efforts and achievements at work are not counterbalanced by the rewards they receive may be less likely to tolerate intrusion into their home lives than those who work under more equitable conditions'. According to Kinman and Jones, (2008: 244) the 'Effort Reward Imbalance' is a perfect predicator of perceived work-life conflict and quoted a study that showed that those employees who felt that they were not being justly compensated remarked a lesser work-life balance.

Besides, safeguarding a fair and just environment between employees at the work place will faciliate *co-workers support* which according to Boles and Babin (in Hsu, 2011: 235) 'could reduce work stress and enhance job satisfaction among employees'.

2.7 Personality and Individual Differences

De Villiers and Kotze, (2003: 18), mention that during the research it was evident that individual differences play a key role as to how work-life balance is regarded and a typical answer was 'Work life balance impacts on the individual - each individual will experience

it and deal with it *differently*' or Work life balance 'is a function of individual personality and individual response to the company environment'. However, qualitative research indicates 'that most significant work-life conflict experienced (both time and strain-based) arises from the work place' (De Villiers and Kotze, 2003: 21).

'In the work–life balance literature, (1) extraversion tends to be associated with increased facilitation; (2) conscientiousness tends to be associated with decreased conflict and increased facilitation; and (3) neuroticism tends to be associated with increased conflict, decreased facilitation, and decreased satisfaction with work–life balance' (Grzywacz & Marks, Wayne et al., (in Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 141). Similarly, Hsu, (2011: 245), refers to a previous study performed by Bruck and Allen (2003) in which they found that 'of the five personality variables, neuroticism and agreeableness are significantly correlated with the overall work-family conflict, unlike extraversion, openness to experience, and conscientiousness'. Moreover, Meadows, Shreffler and Mullins-Sweatt, (2011: 50) assert that 'neuroticism was negatively correlated to problem solving and seeking support, and positively related to escape and self-blame'.

Rosenberg, (in Leung, Cheung and Liu, 2011: 158) defined Self-esteem 'as an individual's overall self-appraisal of his/her value or worth'. Branden (in Leung, Cheung and Liu, 2011: 158) 'describes it as the experience of being competent at coping with different life challenges, and as the key indicator of adjustment to life demands'. 'These functions of self-esteem are similar to self-regulation, which leads individuals towards better control over unexpected events. Moreover, high self-esteem individuals are more likely to take

responsibility for their own lives by developing healthy behaviours and/or mannerisms. Lodi-Smith and Roberts, 2007 (in Leung, Cheung and Liu, 2011: 158). In contrast, 'low self-esteem is associated with depression and low perceived personal control' Reitzes and Mutran (in Leung et al., 2011: 158).

The concept of '*Locus of Control*' was developed by Rotter (1954). Individuals who possess a high degree of internal locus of control have a propensity to believe that their successes or otherwise are dependent on themselves, whereas those who possess a high degree of external locus of control are more likely to consider happenings dependent on their external environment. Interestingly, Andreassi and Thompson (in Hsu, 2011: 237) performed a study showing that there was a 'negative relationship' between external locus of control and work-life balance. According Howard 1996, (in Hsu, 2011: 243), 'evidence suggests that individuals with internal locus of control are more cognitively able, predisposed to learning, motivated, and able to constructively deal with conflict, as compared to individuals who tend to have external locus of control'.

Grawitch and Barber, (2010: 140) refer to *demographic* diversity as to those circumstances that depend on life situations. 'In terms of demographic differences, research has well documented how socio-economic status (Pinquart& Sorensen), sex (Voydanoff), number of children (Voydanoff), education level (Voydanoff), type of work (Frone, Russell, & Cooper), health status (Fox), and even the distance people live from their workplace (Jansen, Kant, Kristensen, & Nijhuis), can influence various individual outcomes'(Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 140).

For instance, it is generally recognized that families or individuals with children are more subject to face life challenges in respect to time constraints and might necessitate more physical and mental energies to cope with life demands. (Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 140). Interestingly Grawitch and Barber, (2010: 140) make a reference to individuals or families living in 'lower socio-economic conditions' who have the propensity to possess limited financial resources to pursue family and personal goals and therefore they are more likely to pursue means by which they can increase their financial resources through say overtime or long working hours at the expense of other personal demands to be able to cope with life demands (Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 140). Undeniably, people working and living in such conditions are more subject to frustration and stress.

2.8 Excessive Working Hours & Well-Being

Demetriades & Pedersini; Kuhn & Lozano; Kodz et al., (in Nachreiner and Wirtz, 2010: 1124) remark that 'after a long-term decline in the number of working hours/week in Europe, there seems to be a recent reversal of this trend in a number of countries'. 'The common argument for extending working hours is the aim to achieve an increase in productivity or services' (Nachreiner and Wirtz, 2010: 1124).

Undoubtedly, long working hours are a challenging concern in petroleum surveying. Surveyors' working conditions are likely to include the normal office hours, say from 08.00 hours to 17.00 hours, but then daily work may be extended depending on the time at which

an operation takes place. Most operations are carried out on a 24 hours 7 day basis and working hours may vary from 5 hours to say 15 hours and occasionally more. For instance, there may be situations whereby the surveyor commences his normal office day say at 08.00 hrs and then a job comes in and until the whole job is completed it can even take till late morning of the day after. So the surveyor would have worked about 22 to 24 hours straight.

Various academic studies have been performed exploring the effects of long working hours on employee life. Barbara et al.,(2003) 'picks up on the moodiness at home that results from working excessively long hours, the guilt that parents feel for not attending their children's "significant events" at school and the fraying of community fabric as workers' time to run to local clubs disappears. In fact, during the recruitment process of prospective and interested interviewees for surveying posts, applicants are commonly asked whether they have certain fixed commitments, such as, playing football with a club on regular basis. Such commitments are considered as possibly conflicting with the organisation's requirements and the nature of petroleum surveying.

'A number of studies examined relationships between work-family conflict and depression, and most, but not all, of these studies assessed depressive mood or symptoms rather than a clinical depressive disorder' (Greenhaus et al., 2006: 67). In contrast, Hammer et al. (in press) and Reifman et al. (in Greenhaus et al., 2006: 68) 'found no relationship between work-family conflict and depression'.

Undoubtedly, researchers have given due importance to psychological health in relation to work-life balance. 'As with depressive symptoms, studies that included measures of WIF and FIW have generally found that both directions of interference are associated with these other forms of psychological strain' Grandey & Cropanzano; Grzywacz & Bass; Jex & Elacqua; Kelloway et al.,; Leiter & Durup; MacEwen & Barling; Matsui et al; Noor; O'Driscoll, Ilgen, & Hildreth; O'Driscoll et al.,; Parasuraman et al.,; Schieman et al.,(in Greenhaus et al, 2006: 68).

According to Dembe, (2009: 196), *employees who are subjected to irregular working hours and excessive working hours can have spillover effects in their performance, judgement and may also make mistakes during their working activities.* Undoubtedly, such arguments should be given due attention by organisations in order to avoid possible mistakes as a result of exhaustion, especially, in current times where knowledge workers have increasingly became more strategically important particularly to the western economies. 'Employees long working hours can create other kinds of problems with diverse indirect effects far from the workplace' Dembe, (2009: 201). 'Fatigue related human errors in job performance can result in product safety and production mishaps'Japan Press; Pfesser (in Dembe 2009: 201). Moreover, Dembe, (2009:196) sustains that 'studies have confirmed that long working hours and shift work raises the odds for workers to be injured, to be fatigued, stressed, and to suffer from medical ailments, such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer and heart disease.Consistently with the above viewpoint, Nachreiner and Wirtz, (2010: 1125) sustain that excessively long working hours can raise the possibility of accidents, hazardous situations and errors.

The diagram below (Figure 2:1) was reproduced from Nachreiner and Wirtz, (2010: 1130) in order to simplify the arguments sustained on the possible effects of long working hours on health and work-life balance. Nachreiner and Wirtz, (2010: 1129), suggest that 'the more hours one works and the more often working time is located at favourable times, e.g., on weekends, nights, in shifwork, the more work-life balance deteriorates'. Moreover, Nachreiner and Wirtz, argue that when there is an inbalance of work-life in favour of work, the likely of psychovegetative impairments increase. According to the findings of Nachreiner and Wirtz, (2010: 1133), 'work scheduling should be handled with due regard to the health and social well-being of the employees'.

'Most evidence indicates that working long shifts without sufficient recovery time increases the risk of traumatic injuries and workers' compensation claims'(Dembe, 2009: 198). Moreover, according to Dembe, (2009: 198), 'research has shown that demanding work schedules, and particularly unconventional shift work, can have a substantial effect on workers' moods, behaviours, and social relationships'.

Figure 2:1 Structural model of working time, work-life balance and psychovegetative impairments
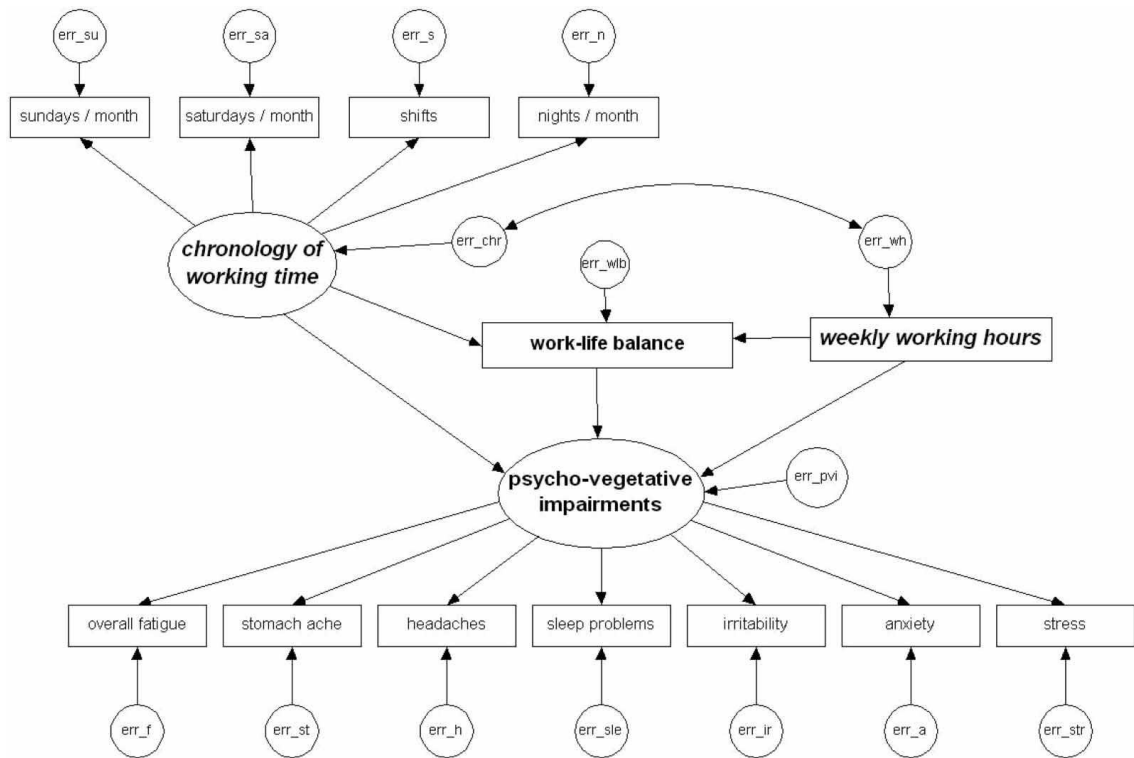
Justifiably, Dembe, (2009: 199), questions whether it is ethically acceptable that employers compel employees to work overtime knowing the possibility of illnesses caused by long working hours and possible harmful errors. Although, this argument is undoubtedly interesting and challenging, unless petroleum surveyors are prepared to work long hours, during weekend and nights, their work would cease to exist as the nature of petroleum surveying consists in such conditions which are unavoidable, especially where movement of commodities is involved.

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2.9 Occupational Health & Safety

Certain consideration should also be considered including health & safety issues and the effects on society in general. According to Braver et al; Horne and Reyner in Dembe, (2009: 201), 'substantial research has documented the dangers of motor vehicle crashes for people working long hours, and the consequent dangers created for pedestrians and other motorists'. For instance, according to Barger et al., 2005 in Dembe, (2009: 201), a study conducted in 2005 highlights 'the increased likelihood for motor vehicle accidents among medical interns returning home after long hospital shifts'.

The United Nations' Declaration states that 'everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay'.(United Nations, n.d.). Interestingly, Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi (in Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 129) suggest that 'there has been substantially more research focused on reducing negative outcomes than on promoting positive outcomes, but overall well-being is not achieved by simply reducing our exposure to health risks'. 'It is also achieved by identifying aspects of the person, the environment, and the fit between the two that promote growth and personal enhancement' (Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 129).

2.9.1 Staffing

Having the adequate human resources is an indisputably important component to create the necessary capacity and to ensure business continuity and flexibility, especially in the service sector in order to match demand and distributing work equitably. Besides the number of

employees required to ascertain that clients demands are satisfied properly and in time, organisations have to attract the necessary human resources possessing the right qualifications and technical expertise and experience. Failing to do this can easily increase the possibility of overload on existent engaged employees and thus enhancing the possibility of creating an imbalance between the work and employees' personal lives. In fact, De Villiers and Kotze, (2003: 20, 22) showed that 'not having a sufficient number of employees and employees not having the required competencies were viewed as key workplace contributors to work-life imbalance' and 'impacted on staff morale'.

2.9.2 HR Policies and Practices

It is generally acknowledged that work life balance is an issue of concern to organisations. In the circumstances, researchers should also substantiate their research papers with practical solutions which are adequate and beneficial for both the organisations and the employees. Ultimately, if the right conditions are in place, the probablity of creating a positive environment at the place of work, is undoubtedly more plausible. Throughout the recent decades various types of family friendly measures were put forward, including flexi hours, reduced hours, teleworking and so on. Ezra & Deckman (in Jang, 2009: 94) mention that previous studies have shown that job flexibility and other family friendly measures 'to be associated with some aspects of family life. The researcher feels that the term 'family friendly measures' should be extended to 'personal life friendly measures' because as it is, the term discriminates against singles or unmarried couples. The temporal activity of petroleum surveying is quite irregular. Therefore, it may be argued that it is much harder to find a temporal practical solution, when, and if necessary. For instance, 'teleworking' and

'reduced hours' are to be excluded as the nature of work does not allow fixed timing arrangements. However, flexible working hours may be an option for consideration. A study conducted by Lang (in De Villiers and Kotze, 2003: 16) showed that certain particular jobs that involve long hours, 'irregular hours, irregular starting times, frequent and uncontrollable overtime work and physically or psychologically demanding work' are more susceptible to work-life conflict.

Jang, (2009: 94) refers to the 'supportive culture' within organisation. Supportive culture means that organisation would show emotional and practical response to employees' personal needs. 'Based on social exchange relationships, perceived supervisor support refers to the perception of employees regarding their relationship with their supervisor to care for their individual concerns' (Hsu, 2011: 235). According to Hsu, (2011: 243), his study showed that 'perceived supervisor support has a significant effect on job satisfaction'. Herriot and Pemberton (in Hsu, 2011: 235), suggest that supervisors are those individuals in the organisation that sustain and actually maintain the psycological contract. Clutterbuck, (2005: 360) refers to the 'psychological contract' as the 'unwritten assumptions by employers and employees about the appropriateness and value of the social exchange between them'.

'A high supervisory support climate produces a reciprocal relationship in which employees feel emotionally connected and obliged to "repay" their supervisor and/or organisation by staying in the company' Eisenberger et al., (in Hsu, 2011: 235). Undoubtedly, emotional intelligence plays a crucial role here. In fact, Rosete and Ciarrochi (in Suliman and Al-

Shaikh, 2007: 208) sustained that 'executives higher on understanding their own feelings and that of their subordinates are more likely to achieve business outcomes and be considered as effective leaders by their employees and direct manage'. Moreover, Jang, (2009: 102) contends that research shows that 'a good organisational culture helps create a more positive perception of workplace flexibility, which may help individuals balance work' and other responsibilities. Importantly, Jang, (2009:102) mentions that employees who are engaged with *small and medium enterprises* '*may benefit more from informal policies* such as flexible schedules and *supervisory support'*.An empirical study conducted by Hsu, (2011: 244), confirms that perceived support reduced the impact of work-life conflict and maintains job satisfaction.Interestingly, Brummelhuis and Va Der Lippe, (2010: 188) sustain that their research confirms that those employees who lack support at home, such as singles, 'benefit most from additional support at work'. In addition, 'leaders that are succesful in creating high-quality leader-member exchanges (partnerships) *minimize employee turn-over*, increase positive performance evaluations, increase frequency in promotions, increase employee commitment, increase positive job attitudes, increase employee participation, provide more desirable work assignments, and provide more support and attention to their followers' Dansereau et al., Graen and Uhl-Bien; Liden and Graen, Liden et al., (in Stringer, 2006: 128). In addition, Wang, (2011: 169) suggests that those employees who engage in long working hours will benefit from participating in decision making which can help them cope better with the two domains and job stress. Moreover, he sustains that allowing employees to participate in the decision making will help them increase the 'perceived control' over the work domain. 'Perceived control,' defined as the 'belief that one can influence the environment' by Ganster (in Wang, 2011: 156) 'can result in decreased stress and improved health' Israel et al (in Wang, 2011: 156).

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Stringer, (2006: 137) argues that supervisors should not be content with providing employees opportunities for promotions and development but should also build a relationship with employees based on mutual respect and effective communication and 'instill confidence in their employees'.

2.9.3 Summary of Literature Review

The literature review produced valid arguments that lead the researcher to appreciate more the importance that organisations should bestow to strategic human resource practices and policies that ensure a sustained balance between the two domains. As according to Dembe, (2009: 196), 'employees who are subjected to irregular working hours and excessive working hours can have spillover effects in their performance, judgement and may also make mistakes during their working activities'.

Moreover, the literature directs us to adopt an approach to business that regards employees strategically in the sense that the well-being of employees can lead to the achievement of organisational goals, lower employees' turnover and increase commitment and engagement. It is also evident that employees expect their employers to give due importance to their well-being and personal life commitments. Unless organisations take the necessary initiatives to implement working conditions that are fair and equitable, employees' adverse reactions may lead to undesired consequences in respect to the organisations' costs and competitiveness.

The widely held view to the construct of work-life balance is directed to the organisation's social responsibility to implement human resource practices and policies in attempt to create a degree of balance between the two domains. The predominant line of thought is that irregular and excessive working hours appear to produce undesirable consequences on the psychological and physiological health of employees. In contrast, certain literature sustains that lack of individual personal resources and specific personality traits such as neuroticism might be the reason behind certain objectionable perceptions and reactions to work. In simpler terms, those who adhere to this line of thought argue that work should not be regarded as a necessary evil. Moreover, the work-life experience is likely to be subjective to the person's assessments of self in terms of efficacy, regulation, locus of control, esteem and neuroticism.

Consequently, person-organisation fit is a notion that should be thoroughly considered when analysing the issue of work-life balance. It is recognized that certain individuals may not be fit for certain occupations which might require a high degree of flexibility and resilience. Additionally, having the necessary human resource capacity to match work demand, especially in the services industry, is an operational strategy that cannot be disregarded.

In an organisational culture whereby employees' personal commitments are valued, appreciated and given due importance there appears to be a production of positive organisational results. In addition, the absence of supervisory support, co-workers support and support of members of the family may lead to increased frustration and stress. On the

other hand, the existence of support can help employees to absorb the stress better and may contribute to a faster recovery from work pressures.

It is interesting to note, that to the knowledge of the researcher, the literature does not provide any relevant arguments that disapprove the introduction of initiatives that might aid employees to create a balance between their life and work domains. Time constrained conflicts seem to be of utmost importance in dealing with work-life considerations. Evidently, employees working excessive hours may not have the necessary temporal resources to allocate for their personal and family life commitments. This might lead to undesirable organisational behaviour. Obviously, highly demanding working environments are more likely to generate employee frustration and dissatisfaction. Moreover, it is acknowledged that demographic conditions might also have an effect on the challenges faced by employees to effectively create a balance between the life and work domain.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The research design is subject to the research questions at hand and entails deciding on the course of action to be undertaken to ensure that the needed data is empirically collected. It consists in establishing the researcher's philosophical stance and adopting the relative techniques including the sampling procedure, data collection method and the eventual data analysis technique.

3.2 Philosophical Stance

Adopting the appropriate philosophical stance to undertake a particular research project is dependent on the objectives of consequential research concerns and on the researcher's perception of the social world. The issue is not which of the two philosophical approaches is best but rather which approach fits the purpose of the research concern in question, in the sense that it provides for the appropriate techniques to enable the researcher to attempt to reach the objectives.

The purpose of this research was to investigate and explore the petroleum surveyors' perceptions in respect to their working life conditions and whether these perceptions might have a bearing on their behaviour towards the organisation and to generate a deeper understanding and to tentatively produce realistic concepts *inductively*. Consequently, the researcher felt that a phenomenological stance is more appropriate for the purpose of this

study than a positivist stance. Each individual human being perceives and interprets the social environment differently.

'Phenomenology refers to the way in which we as humans make sense of the world around us' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007: 107). In most cases, when a phenomenological stance is undertaken and the intention is to inductively generate insights or hypotheses for future testing a qualitative approach is adopted. Consistently with the above, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, (2007: 119) sustain that 'researchers in this tradition are more likely to work with qualitative data and to use a variety of methods to collect these data in order to establish different views of phenomena (Easterby-Smith et al., 2002).

The researcher's intention was not to determine how many surveyors possess the same ideas or opinions but to understand the *'whys'* behind certain perceptions and interpretations vis-a-vis work-life balance. In simpler terms, the researcher aimed to understand and explore whether the work-life conflict issue is subjective to the individual surveyor's unique characteristics and/ or to situational factors, including a supportive environment. Phenomenology is concerned with the everyday social challenges faced by human beings and how they go about managing these challenges (Denscombe, 2007:77). A positivist or as is commonly termed quantitative methodology would not have produced the desired results as it is more suitable when data 'can be expressed numerically or classified by some numerical value' (Lancister, 2005: 66).

Denzin and Lincoln, (1998:09), argue that 'quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and causal relationships between variables, not processes'. Likewise, Denscombe, (2007:77)

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argues that contrary to the positivist approach which is primarily based on quantification and categorization, phenomenology depends on obtaining a 'clear picture of the 'things in themselves' – the things as directly experienced by people'.

Denzin and Lincoln, (1998:9), maintain that 'qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape enquiry'. In addition, 'Qualitative data relates to data that cannot be subjected to quantitative or numerical analysis. It is therefore associated with phenomena that cannot be, or [are] difficult to quantify' (Lancister, 2005: 66). Qualitative data is primarily textual data. 'Textual data encompasses "any text which constitutes a relevant and necessary source material for answering the questions one is interested in" (Melina, 1998 in Sinkovics, Elfriede and Pervez, 2005: 15).

Nonetheless, phenomenology has its limitations as well. Academic researchers have the tendency to adopt a phenomenological stance when the study is relatively small and is generally agreed upon that is not suitable for generalizations.

3.2.1 Subjectivity vs Objectivity

It is quite common to come across academic arguments produced by positivist scholars criticizing qualitative research for being highly subjective and lacking objectivity. In simpler terms, their point of view is based on the fact that qualitative methodologies might produce assumptions on their social environments derived from human interpretation which might be erroneous, rather than using quantitative techniques. Moreover, in truth the

researcher might possess his own subjectivity, involvement and perceptions in respect to the subject being investigated, whereas a quantitative approach is considered as high on objectivity as the researcher remains detached from the subject of the study and is solely interested in producing generalisations and to prove or disprove a hypothesis.

On the other hand, Ratner, (2002: 01) affirms that :-

> 'Qualitative methodology recognizes that the subjectivity of the researcher is intimately involved in scientific research. Subjectivity guides everything from the choice of topic that one studies, to formulating hypotheses, to selecting methodologies, and interpreting data. In qualitative methodology, the researcher is encouraged to reflect on the values and objectives he brings to his research and how these affect the research project' (Ratner, 2002: 01).

Practically, subjectivity is seen as the driving force that guides the researcher to investigate a particular subject for the benefit of society or as in this case for the business community. However, according to Shenton, (2004: 72) 'the concept of confirmability is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity. Here attention must be taken to help ensure, as far as possible, that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants, rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher'.

3.2.2 Validity & Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of the results obtained through the various researches performed overtime on the same subject matter. Qualitative research is not interested in producing consistent results as such but to delve deeper into subjects, which might be of interest to the researcher at a certain period in time in a particular social context. For instance, in case of this research project, surveyors might not be the same people in a set

period of time and thus, a degree of difference in outcome would be plausible. At the end of the day, this research is concerned with perceptions and emotions and undeniably human beings differ considerably in the way they perceive their relationships and social environment.

In view of the subjective nature of qualitative research, reliability is neither an issue nor a concern to the researcher. Qualitative research is underpinned by the phenomenological stance which regards the social environment as socially diverse and thus, every element in the study might be subject to different perceptions, emotions and situational constraints. The researcher is of the opinion that if this same research is performed in future or in a slightly different context there would probably be differing outcomes.

Stenbacka, 2001(in Golafshani, 2003: 601) 'argues that since reliability issue concerns measurements then it has no relevance in qualitative research. She adds the issue of reliability is an irrelevant matter in the judgement of quality of qualitative research'.

'*Validity* means the extent to which an instrument measures what is claimed to measure; an indicator is valid to the extent that it empirically represents the concept it purports to measure' (Punch, 2005: 97). A number of researchers consider validity as not relevant to qualitative research; on the other hand, others have come up with terms which might be termed applicable to qualitative methodology such as trustworthiness (Golafshani, 2003).

Aiming for *Credibility* in qualitative research might be argued is the replacement paradigm to validity in the quantitative research. Credibility refers to the concern of ensuring that the conclusions of the qualitative research are congruent with reality in a particular social context. In fact, Lincoln and Guba (in Shenton, 2004: 64) 'argue that ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness'.

3.2.3 Inductive Methods in Qualitative Research

Generally, there exist two research methods that might be considered by the researcher for the acquisition of data in respect to a particular subject. Qualitative research is primarily based on inductive processes aiming at gathering insights emanating from the research in order to generate theories (Hyde, 2000: 83). In contrast, 'deductive reasoning is a theory testing process which commences with an established theory or generalisation, and seeks to see if the theory applies to specific instances' (Hyde, 2000: 83). Deductive methods are more associated with a quantitative or a positivist approach to research.

'Inductive approaches are intended to aid an understanding of meaning in complex data through the development of summary themes or categories from... raw data' (Thomas, 2003: 02). In accordance with qualitative methodology, this research project adopted a deductive approach for the interpretation and analysis of the primary data.

Although the researcher had his own subjective perceptions, the aim was not to test a particular hypothesis but to understand better certain situations and perceptions to give more in-depth attention to the subject studied. Moreover, the inductive approach allowed the researcher to read between the lines with regard to the participants' reactions, perceptions,

emotions and experiences. Besides, this approach aided the researcher to analyse responses line by line, including single words or phrases.

3.3. The Relevance of Literature Review

In normal circumstances, a research project is initiated by the collection of previously produced academic researches and data to enable the researcher to familiarise and learn more on the topic in question. 'Secondary data is information which already exists in some form or other but which was not primarily collected, at least initially, for the purpose of the consultancy exercise at hand'(Lancister, 2005: 66). 'Secondary data is often used, for example, to identify and isolate key variables so that the most appropriate research design can be used to investigate these variables further' (Lancister, 2005: 82). The accurate analysis of secondary data generates insights to the researcher that enable him to develop relevant research concerns or questions. Besides, the analysis of secondary data will enable the researcher to make comparisons against the primary data as to determine whether any new insights or 'surprises' resulted.

The secondary data was primarily derived from academic journals retrieved from electronic databases. The research on the concept of Work-life Balance is quite extensive and it was relatively easy to find research papers which studied the concept. The majority of articles approached the issue from a psychological perspective at the workplace. Other academic articles adopted a managerial perspective to the issue. Regrettably, most of the studies consider the issue of work-life conflict as a social fact and few papers demonstrated concern to investigate whether the issue is a 'myth' or is dependent on the employees' individual perceptions. To the knowledge of the researcher no studies have ever been performed on

work-life balance in respect to petroleum surveying. The literature available either approaches the issue from a generic viewpoint or is focused on areas which have no connection with petroleum surveying. Admittedly, the petroleum surveying sector is quite small consequently, it may not have attracted the interest of researchers to conduct similar studies. The researcher resorted to other sources of secondary data including the worldwide web but no studies or sites were found that could be considered as relevant for the purpose of the study.

3.4. Primary Data

Contrary to secondary data, primary data is a set of information collected for the research project in question and in which the researcher undertakes the research methods that suit the research objectives. The aim of primary data is to generate fresh, contemporary and up-to-date information through research. When researchers decide on the method to adopt for the collection of data, 'rather than trying to look for a method that is superior to all others in any absolute sense, they should look for the most appropriate method in practice' (Denscombe 2007: 134).

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Consistently with the phenomenological approach, for the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted as the researcher required investigating qualitative processes which are fundamentally important for the study and needed a degree of flexibility and freedom to probe the respondent to develop arguments. Denscombe, (2007:82), sustains that in most cases phenomenologists have the propensity to collect data

by means of interviews. In addition, 'when the researcher needs to gain insights into things like people's opinions, feelings, emotions and experiences, then interviews will almost certainly provide a more suitable method – a method that is attuned to the intricacy of the subject matter' (Denscombe, 2007: 174).

Furthermore, 'interviewees may use words or ideas in a particular way, and the opportunity to probe these meanings will add significance and depth to the data you obtain' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007: 315). Semi-structured interviews involve a 'degree of structure' to enable all interviewees, 'at least in part' to be subjected to similar questions and then it is up to the researcher 'to make maximum use of the opportunities offered to enrich the data' (Carruthers, 1993: 66). Obviously, this enabled the researcher to delve deeper into certain issues which he felt are of importance to the study. Certain participants were reluctant to produce certain feelings and emotions and thus needed prompting from the researcher.

Qu and Dumay(2011:246) suggest that 'semi-structured interview involves prepared questioning guided by identified themes in a consistent and systematic manner interposed with probes designed to elicit more elaborate responses. Moreover, Qu and Dumay (2011:246) sustain that 'the semi-structured interview enjoys its popularity because it is flexible, accessible and intelligible and, more important, capable of disclosing important and often hidden facets of human and organisational behaviour'.

The researcher required a degree of consistency in the set of criteria to be explored but on the other hand the research necessitated a degree of flexibility. In fact, the questions

formulated are all open ended questions as to permit the respondent to develop his own and unique interpretations of his work-life experiences.

The open-ended questions were formulated in such a way that allowed the participants to develop their arguments or responses as they deemed necessary. Grummitt, 1980 in Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, (2007:329) sustain that 'an open question is designed to encourage the interviewee to provide an extensive and developmental answer, and may be used to reveal attitudes or obtain facts'. This allows the researcher to identify issues or concerns which were not anticipated. Moreover, a number of questions were formulated in such a way as to allow the participants to project their inner feelings and emotions onto third parties. The aim was to increase the participants' easiness to answer the questions truthfully.

During the interviews the researcher did his utmost to ensure that the participants were in a setting where they could answer the questions frankly and without hesitation. All interviews were performed by face to face technique which according to Carruthers, (1993: 65), 'person-to-person interview is best for obtaining in-depth opinions'. Besides, face to face interviews provide an opportunity for the researcher to interact with the respondent and to observe possible facial expressions.

Undoubtedly, in qualitative research interaction can play a vital role in enabling the reseracher to probe for certain themes and issues as deemed relevant to the research concern. In fact, the researcher explained the aim of the research to all participants before

the commencement of each interview by informing them that the information collected during the interview will remain confidential and will be used only for the purpose of this research. The interviews were quite free flowing and distractions were strictly avoided.

The researcher decided not to use an audio recorder as he adheres to the line of thought that such audio device may create more pressure on the participants. The researcher made his utmost to ensure that the participants could answer the questions liberally. The answers provided by the interviewees were jotted down on a notebook and later on the same day developed accordingly as to avoid the possibility of missing certain vital points. The interviewer made his utmost to avoid bias by allowing the participantst he necessary time to answer the questions at their convenience and pace.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

The population of currently engaged petroleum surveyors in Malta is in the region of 30 surveyors spread in primarily four companies. However, the researcher also included in his sampling plan previously engaged surveyors who are no longer employed in the surveying business.

The researcher opted for the Purposive sampling technique. This sampling technique belongs to the non-probability sampling methodology and is not suitable for generalizations. A purposive sampling technique involves the selection of sampling units based on certain criteria which the researcher may deem relevant to the study. According to Punch, (2005:187) qualitative research 'would use some sort of deliberate sampling'. This sampling

technique is not intended to produce a representative sample but is commonly adopted when the researcher has a degree of experience or knowledge on the research topic and thus based on judgement chooses a number of sampling units that the research feels should contribute to the research.

In fact, the researcher chose 11 (eleven) surveyors from three different companies based on previously obtained information. Only one player rejected the researcher's request to interview a number of surveyors.

> 'Research using an inductive approach is likely to be particularly concerned with the context in which such events were taking place. Therefore the study of a small sample of subjects might be more appropriate than a large number as with the deductive approach' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2007).

The aim was to obtain sampling units that possess as far as possible different personalities and approach to work. For instance, the sampling units consisted of individuals who give the impression that they are extremely motivated and proud of being petroleum surveyors whereas others seem to be less enthusiastic. Obviously, these observations were based either on the researcher's interpretation of the social environment or on the interpretation of those who provided the feedback, including the managers of the respective companies. Arguably, this method may also be termed as 'Stratified Purposive sampling'. Patton, 2001 (in Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2006) 'describes these as samples within samples and suggests that purposeful samples can be stratified or nested by selecting particular units or cases that vary according to a key dimension'.

3.6 Pilot Study – Interview Pre-Testing

Essentially, a pilot study involves the pre-testing of the designed method of data collection. It is aimed to test whether the semi-structured questions and the wording are formulated effectively and efficiently to collect the intended information and produce the planned research objectives. A pilot study is usually performed on a small scale before the actual study is performed in order to prevent or minimize hitches to occur during the study.

The researcher conducted an interview with a petroleum surveyor in order to pre-test the suitability of the questions and whether they allowed the respondent to produce interesting insights and a deeper understanding of the research problem. The outcome was quite satisfactory and produced the desired results; in fact only minor changes were required to the original set of formulated questions. Practically, a number of questions were found to produce data not relevant to the research questions and thus were removed from the set of questions.

3.7 Analysis of Data

'Once data are gathered, reading and interpretation is the starting point for meaningful analysis' (Bazeley, 2009: 7). Undoubtedly, the accurate reading of qualitative data is the foundation of effective analysis. Language is made up of symbols by which human beings communicate. Consequently, analyses require diligent attention to phrases even a single word might indicate valuable perceptions and interpretations. The researcher should

approach this procedure with patience and diligence as to identify possible themes and concepts which might emerge.

'Textual data encompasses any text which constitutes a relevant and necessary source material for answering the questions one is interested in.' (Melina, 1998 in Sinkovics, Elfriede and Pervez, 2005:15).

3.7.1 Topic Coding

The researcher adopted the topic coding analytical technique as it involves the interpretaion of descriptive data provided by the participants. In topic coding, the researcher has to read carefully the interview line by line to develop categories, themes and concepts. Miles and Huberman, (1984: 68) sustain that the 'researcher needs to reduce and channel the stimuli with which he or she is being bombarded into a smaller number of chunks that can be mentally coded, stored, and readily retrieved'.The process of coding the data involves screening, identifying concepts and themes in the course of collecting data. 'These entail converting the text-based string-variables into useful, codified information. The code-base can be achieved by "coding by hand" or the use of computers' (Sinkovics et al, 2005: 15).

> 'Codes are tags, names or labels, and coding is therefore the process of putting tags, names or labels against pieces of the data. The pieces may be individual words, or small or large chucks of the data. The point of assigning labels is to attach meaning to the pieces of the data, and these labels serve a number of functions' (Punch, 2005: 199).

Eventually, the researcher constructed themes through the identification of categories and patterns. The themes developed through each individual response were compared and studied appropriately.

Increasingly, researchers are making use of computer software such as CAQDAS and Nvivoto analyse the data qualitatively but for the purpose of this project, the researcher decided to analyse and code the data manually and no computer software was utilized. Admittedly, the researcher is not familiar and proficient with the computer software and resolutely believes that at this stage it could jeopardize and complicate the undertaking rather than contributing to it. In addition, the researcher adheres to the line of thought produced by (Punch, 2005:229) wherebyit is argued that computer software can help the qualitative researcher but ultimately the analysis requires the researcher's 'input and creativity'.

Coding involved crafting two columns, one for the interwiew transcripts and another for the the codes and eventually the categories and themes, which ensued through the screening of the transcripts line by line. The phrases which were considered for further analyses were highlighted and specifics code consisting of words were listed along the same line in the adjacent column. Eventually, the main themes were listed and developed accordingly.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Since the subjects of this research project are human beings, meticulous care must be taken to ensure avoiding any harm or undesirable consequences (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 70). Undoubtedly, 'qualitative research deals with the most sensitive, intimate and innermost matters in people's lives, and ethical issues inevitably accompany the collection of such information' (Punch, 2005: 276, 277). As explained earlier, in spite of the fact that the researcher is directly involved in the business he made ethical considerations central to the undertaking of the research project.

The researcher ascertained that all participants in the research had the consent and authorization of their respective managers and that they contributed voluntarily. The participants were selected through discussions with their managers or owners of the business. In fact, the researcher introduced the research subject to the managers and jointly with the researcher decided on which participants suited the research. Moreover, the interview questions were submitted to the managers for their perusal and consent. The researcher's main concern was that 'those who contribute to research as informants or as research subjects should be no worse off at the end of their participation than they were when they started' (Denscombe 2007: 143).

The selected participants were individually presented with the consent form which includes a number of conditions to which the researcher has to abide. The conditions consist in ensuring that their real names will not be used in the study and that only the supervisor will have access to the collected data.

The researcher avoided certain questions which could have directed the participants to divulge information which might have strategic business implications.

3.9 Limitations of this Research Project

The researcher insistently explained to the participants that the aim of the study is not intended to judge or assess the individual participants' performance or skills. Nevertheless, the fact that the researcher is in charge of one of the leading inspecting companies and is well known by all players in the business might have had an effect on the responses of the participants. Possibly but not necessarily the participants might have avoided divulging certain information related to the research topic, for their own personal reasons.

Due to the smallness of the sample and the research approach and techniques undertaken, this research project is not intended for generalization purposes but to provide a better understanding and to generate insights on the research subject. However, the conclusions derived from this project might trigger future academics to delve more in the area.

As discussed above, it might be suggested that the findings pertaining to this research project might not be suitable over a period of time as evidently various variables and circumstances might change that will lead eventual researchers to obtain differing results.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The results and the analysis of data is probably one of the most important and vital chapters in the whole dissertation. It represents the culmination of the research undertaken upon which the researcher will base the conclusive remarks and suggestions in the concluding chapter. The presentation of qualitative data may differ considerably depending on the researcher's approach and on the research topic. The presented results primarily consisted of two types of data, namely, interpretive and descriptive data. Interpretive data consist of information and insights derived from reading between the lines and through the participants' gestures and facial expressions. On the other hand, descriptive data is information provided as collected including quotes 'ad verbatim'.

4.2 Potential Work-Life Conflicts in Petroleum Surveying

The data collected during the interviews consistently revealed that surveyors experience a degree of work-life conflict in their daily working lives. The participants, particularly those in a stable relationship, shared their apprehensions in respect to maintaining *personal commitments* with their respective partners or child bearing responsibilities. Evidently, the nature of petroleum surveying might create undesirable and unpredictable situations which could conflict with the surveyors' personal needs, including recreation and even recharging.

The findings also demonstrate the concerns experienced by surveyors in order to maintain their *hobbies*. In fact, a number of those interviewed stated that they had to abandon their hobbies. Moreover, all interviewees confirmed that they experience recurrent work during weekends and important challenges where planning of vacation leave is concerned.

There is no doubt that employees should be able to have a degree of freedom to plan and organise their lives. Employees should be able to recharge themselves through personal activities, including socializing with friends, families and partners. During the interviews it was also evident that when a *personal commitment* had to be cancelled or postponed because of work commitments and/or because of work which came in unexpectedly, the surveyors feel a degree of frustration. For instance, a particular respondent, who has resigned from his post of petroleum surveyor after only one year has mentioned a bad experience he had while he was on a camping holiday with his partner and friends.

> P1:*"I remember once we were on a camping activity with friends for the weekend and I was called in for an urgent job. Obviously, I had to dismantle the camp before planned and my partner could not accept it. She got really angry".*

The participants unanimously agreed upon that it is hard for petroleum surveyors to organise their *personal commitments* due to the nature of work and they seem to concur that the issue is how to learn to fit *personal commitments* around work. The results might indicate that those possessing Time Management skills might be more capable to effectively manage both domains.

Practically, most participants mentioned that where *vacation leave* is concerned there exists a degree of restrictive conditions in the sense that the nature of work does not allow the management to consent vacation leave in advance as the nature of work can easily disrupt the plans. Certain participants mentioned how their managers adopt certain Human Resource practices in order to help them organise their personal commitments around their work. This issue shall be dealt with in more depth later on in this chapter. In contrast, one surveyor mentioned how due to a personal commitment which he did not which to miss, ended up in being dismissed. On the other hand, regarding overseas holidays, according to the majority of the participants there are no apparent restrictions, as such.

> P6: *"Unfortunately, I had a bad experience with a previous employer. I was dismissed because I wished not to miss an important personal commitment I had in the evening. Ironically, they permitted me not to work overtime but the day after they gave me a written warning and eventually I got dismissed".*

Another surveyor referred to a previous employment in which he never took any *vacations* or *sick leave*. The interviews confirmed that surveyors frequently work or are called in during weekends, without pre-notice. It is interesting to note that the majority of the surveyors interviewed literally laughed sarcastically when asked whether they have ever been called in during *weekends*. Interestingly, a particular respondent preferred to answer the question by rephrasing the actual question put to him.

> P11: *"You should have asked me whether I had ever had a weekend free".*

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During the interviews and the actual analysis of the data, it appears that is quite challenging for surveyors to keep a *hobby*, especially if the hobby requires a high degree of commitment and engagement. A number of the interviewees mentioned how they had to abandon their hobbies because they could not manage to keep their commitments due to the nature of work. On the other hand, it appears that those having a *hobby* which requires less fixed timing can somehow maintain their hobbies, such as, stamp collection. Two surveyors had these interesting experiences to convey.

> P2: *"I was the singer of a local rock band but I had to stop because of my work commitments. Admittedly, I cannot keep my commitments with the band members".*

And

> P6: *"I am a stamp collector which I can fit in. However, I had to stop practicing rugby as it requires regular commitments".*

In contrast to the above mentioned work-life challenges, a participant who is not in a relationship made interesting comments claiming that certain restrictions to balance work and life do not bother him much. It may be argued that the fact that he has no relational commitments and parental responsibilities enable him to adjust his live around work more freely with no interference.

> P4: *"In other less important personal matters, you might not be allowed to take leave. Sincerely, when leave is not consented I just don't mind. I have been called in during weekends on several occasions. I don't mind, it doesn't affect me".*

However, it is interesting to note that the same participant showed justifiable concerns about the future.

> *P4: "I realize that if in future I will commit myself to a partner; it is going to be hard for me to satisfy the demands of work and personal life. I don't have a personal life, as such. For me, my career comes first. However, I recognize that if a surveyor has a relationship or is married with children he might face conflict and the job becomes more stressful.*

4.3 Physical and Psychological Constructs

A number of issues related to the well-being of the surveyors emerged from the analysis. It is evident that various aspects of the nature of petroleum surveying have an undesirable effect on the psychological and physiological well-being of surveyors. The resulting constructs include *guilt feeling, frustration, uncertainty, stress and fatigue*.

Interestingly, one of the undesirable feelings experienced by surveyors is *guilt feeling*. A number of surveyors stated that when they do not manage to keep a commitment which is of importance to their partner, they feel guilty for their respective partners. However, this phenomenon does not seem to bother all the surveyors in the same way.

The data collected provides the researcher with enough evidence that all surveyors experience frustration to a varying degree. The frustration can be as a result to the delays and re-scheduling of operations, being called in during the nights, evenings and weekends. Most of the participants shared their frustration in respect to their difficulties to maintain

their personal commitments due to work commitments. As mentioned earlier, the frustration might also develop into guilt feelings. Even the nature of the work itself might generate frustration. For instance, a number of surveyors mentioned how they feel anxious until they manage to obtain the desired results. Interestingly, certain participants stated that in surveying you are always uncertain as to what is going to happen. This argument might be applied to both the irregular and unsociable hours involved and to the work itself whereby during an operation unexpected events might and tend to occur. During the interviews, it was evident that *uncertainty* is a phenomenon experienced by most participants on a daily basis, including when it comes to maintaining personal commitments or when planning a vacation leave.

Moreover, it appears that surveyors tend to feel a degree of *frustration* in fear that their mobile phone might ring during the weekend or in the evening knowing that this could mean that they have to return to work. This is what one of the youngest participants had to say in this respect.

> P1: *"Admittedly, I am always worried, especially during the weekend and when I am on leave, that the mobile phone might ring, which could mean that I have to go to work".*

Undoubtedly, the above mentioned constructs and experiences might increase the *stress* levels experienced by surveyors. However, it is interesting to note that the data analysis shows that a number of surveyors who possess a degree of *resilience* and *self-regulation* tend to arguably handle the stress more than those low on such traits. On the other hand,

those individuals high on *external locus of control* might be more susceptible to *stress*. Since the interviews were conducted in a very informal and warm environment the majority of the participants did not bother to show their emotions. In fact, certain interpretations made by the researcher are as a result of the participants' facial expressions and body language.

Fatigue is another important construct that emerged from the data analysis. It is understandable that when a surveyor who has just returned from a two day offshore operation is assigned to another job might experience undesirable levels of *fatigue*. The long and unsociable working hours contribute to the generation of physical and psychological *fatigue*. Participants mentioned how occasionally they work excessively long hours. *Fatigue* seems to be experienced by nearly all surveyors irrespective of their individual differences. Two surveyors described their personal experiences as follows:-

> P1: "I think that working excessive hours can easily lead to mistakes and nervousness during the surveys. I remember once I could not even keep my eyes open. So the tendency is that you start rushing things to go home, especially when you have to wake up early the day after".

And

> P11: "When you work say 36 hours at a stretch you start to underperform in your work. I become more nervous and mentally tired. I find it hard to keep my eyes open and then I have to drive back home in these conditions".

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The above quotes show that surveyors might be subjected to situational conditions which might put their health at risk. Besides, it might be argued that *fatigue* might lead certain surveyors; especially those low in *resilience* and *self-regulation* to underperform, thus leading to undesirable organisational results. Moreover, this might raise our concerns to legal aspects related to occupational health and safety and the European Working Time Directive which might be conflicting with the existing surveyors' working conditions.

4.4 Time Constraints

It is apparent that timing is an important issue in surveying. Time constraints might consist in delays, *re-scheduling of operations, long working hours* and *time wastage*. A number of participants mentioned how the surveyor has to endure the recurrent *rescheduling of operations* whereby a surveyor might spend a whole day waiting for the vessel to come in or the bunker barge to go alongside the vessel. *Time wastage* is one of the issues that appear to bother most of the participants.

> P9: *"Surveyors are literally confined in a cage waiting for vessels to come in or delays/rescheduling of operations. It is really frustrating. You might spend a whole day waiting time".*

The surveying job involves *long working hours* which might range from eight hours to thirty five hours. Besides, the work is frequently conducted at night, on public holidays and weekends. A surveyor mentioned how he had finished from a two day operation and when he returned back ashore had to go straight to another operation.

As mentioned earlier, in petroleum surveying it is considered as normal for nominations to come in unexpectedly and without pre-notice. Obviously, such business activity and environment creates undesirable consequences on the working life of those involved in this type of business. In fact, these conditions make it harder for surveyors to plan their personal life as one of the surveyors stated *"in petroleum surveying you don't know where you stand".*

Undoubtedly, these challenging working conditions experienced on daily basis by both management and surveyors require a high degree of flexibility from both parties. In fact, practically all participants confirmed that they are quite flexible to their approach to work and life. Flexibility involves the ability of the individual surveyor to learn to fit his personal commitments around the work. From the management point of view, flexibility means that management should adopt a management style in respect to surveyors' vacation leave planning and working time conditions that are less bureaucratic in nature. However, we shall be discussing the issues of flexibility in greater detail below.

4.5 Supportive Environment

All the participants, with the exception of two, stated that their respective managers are quite supportive, accommodating and understanding. Interestingly, a number of surveyors seem to appreciate the fact that their managers had previous field experience as a petroleum surveyor. Participants sustained that managers who had field experience are in a better position to understand and comprehend the surveyors' daily difficulties in respect to work and life related issues. A number of participants explained how their managers support

them in an informal way to organise and manage their personal commitments. The data show that surveyors appear to appreciate when their managers' show empathy and consideration for their personal needs. The following are remarkable quotations whereby participants show their appreciation for their managers' support.

> P1: *"The manager is very supportive, considerate and even helps me in personal matters. For instance, recently I needed to take the car for repairs and he took it over on himself to ensure that I managed to keep the appointment".*

And

> P2: *"The manager recognizes my situation and in most cases takes care of my health more than I do. He tries to distribute the work as equitably as possible".*

It is evident that such *supervisory support* can alleviate the extent of frustration and the resentment of the surveyors towards the organisation, especially during periods of high pressure of work. Consequently, it might be suggested that effective two way communication can help organisations to improve and be able to manage challenging situations for the benefit of both the organisation and the employee, especially where knowledge workers are involved.

In contrast, two participants shared their disappointment for the lack of *supervisory support* received or the empathy shown by their respective managers. It is interesting to note that these two individuals seem to possess traits of introversion in their personality. It might be

argued that individuals that possess traits of introversion might find it harder to share their concerns and annoyances with their respective managers and thus, cannot receive the attention they deserve.

Moreover, two participants, who no longer work as surveyors, claimed that they had received considerable support from their managers during their period of employment but sustained that their respective companies were short of staff and the work had to be distributed between limited resources. This might indicate that although *supervisory support* is recommendable and crucial in such working environments, it might not suffice to prevent a surveyor from experiencing frustration and ultimately resign from the organisation.

The analyses of the data might lead us to contend that *partner's support* is more likely to create a supportive environment for the surveyors. One of the participants who no longer work as a surveyor admitted that when he used to work on Sundays and in the evenings, his partner had the tendency to get angry and irritated. It is quite thought-provoking the contrast emerging from two participants both having non supportive partners but different self-esteem levels. The respondent that resigned showed signs of low self-esteem whereas the other showed a high degree of job commitment and is high on self-esteem. It might be interpreted that those individuals high on self-esteem are less susceptible to stress even though they might not receive the necessary support at home.

Distinguishing between the different reactions of two partners, one participant commented as follows.

P6: "The previous partner used to give me hell because she could not understand that operations get delayed easily .However, the existent partner is very supportive and understands the nature of my work. Unless, the partner is very understanding, the relationship will go down quickly.

This participant seems to have endured the unpleasant circumstances during his relationship with the previous partner. It is interesting to note that consistently with the example mentioned above this individual possesses a high degree of self-esteem and self-regulation. However, during the interview it was evident that he was concerned about the future when he hopes to build a family with his current partner.

A supportive partner might be of great encouragement to any employee including the surveyor. The youngest respondent had this to say with regards to the support he received from his partner.

P1: "When I cannot maintain a commitment with my girlfriend, I feel sorry for her but fortunately she supports me a lot. In fact, if it was not for her insistence and encouragement I have given my resignation to the manager after just three months".

Co-workers support is undoubtedly another important aspect in the daily life of any employee but is arguably more vital to challenging jobs and teamwork settings. The majority of the participants claimed that good teamwork exists at their place of work.

During the interviews, the participants showed a high degree of appreciation for the support they receive from their respective colleagues. The support mainly consists in swapping and substituting each other on the different jobs. Such arrangements and cooperation might assist the surveyors to be able to manage certain personal commitments. Generally, it seems that these arrangements and teamwork cooperation are consented by the management. Nevertheless, it might be argued that *co-workers support* might not suffice to alleviate the pressure on the surveyors' working life. In fact, both previously employed surveyors claimed that they were very satisfied with their colleagues support and yet they resigned from their post. Only one participant claimed that his colleagues were not supportive and stated that:-

> *P7: "Admittedly, I don't approach them much for help. To be honest I
> don't feel they are very cooperative and supportive".*

The quote pertains to the same participant who during the actual interview admitted to possess a low self-esteem and prefers not to bother anyone. Consequently, it might be argued that individuals with low self-esteem might not be the ideal personalities for team work settings for the simple reason that they might experience more difficulty in obtaining the necessary support from management and colleagues to enable them to balance between the two domains.

4.6 Personality, Personal Resources and Work-Life Balance

One of the researcher's concerns was whether the personality traits and the personal resources of the individual surveyor influenced their perception of work-life related issues, as claimed by certain academic researchers. The findings seem to indicate that irrespective from the personality traits of the individual participant, participants experience a degree of frustration and annoyance when their work commitments, for a reason or another, conflict with their personal commitments or necessities. Even those individuals who give the impression to possess important personality traits, such as, *internal locus of control*, *conscientiousness*, *self-esteem*, *self-regulation* and *resilience* experience frustration with the long, irregular and unsociable hours involved in petroleum surveying and the time wastage incurred due to the rescheduling and delays of operations.

Nonetheless, personality traits and personal resources seem to have a bearing on the way the surveyors perceive the encountered work-life conflicts and the way participants manage and adjust to these challenging and demanding circumstances. It appears that, *internal locus of control, self-esteem, self-regulation and resilience* are arguably the most desirable personal resources that aid the surveyor to adjust and effectively control the pressures of the working life of a petroleum surveyor. During the interviews, it was obvious that these personalities are more likely to make their utmost to fight back and resist frustration rather than allowing their emotions to take over.

Most of the participants showed a degree of *intellectual openness* but this personality trait seems not to produce any relevant implications in the participants' perceptions in respect to

work-life balance. Additionally, *sociability* and *emotional instability* do not seem to point out anything relevant to the research project. It is interesting to note that two participants that indicated to possess a *low self-esteem* have been employed as surveyors for more than seventeen years. It might be suggested that these individuals *low on self-esteem* might not have the necessary confidence to move to a new challenging job, fearing that they might not be competent enough. Therefore, they might have chosen to remain in their existent profession not because they wish to but because they lack the confidence to make the change. Evidently, having a certain age with a *low self-esteem* increases the difficulties in respect to learning new skills or professions. It is also worth considering that one of the participants who has worked as petroleum surveyor for more than seventeen years shared his job dissatisfaction arguing that nowadays he finds petroleum surveying as boring and monotonous.

4.7 Time Management & Flexibility - Key Factors

Flexibility seems to be a key factor for both employees and Management in dealing with the work-life conflicts and matching demand. From the employees' perspective, *flexibility* is certainly a desirable personal resource that a petroleum surveyor must possess. One participant shared the following:-

> *P3: "A surveyor has to be extremely flexible and spontaneous; alternatively, he will get frustrated easily as in surveying, fixed working hours simply does not exist. You cannot plan, say, a week ahead; the nature of surveying does not allow it".*

It is interesting to consider that most of the participants claimed to be very flexible and a number of them answered certain questions in such a way that clearly demonstrated their *flexibility*.

A number of participants mentioned their managers' flexible approach to job distribution by allowing surveyors to swap jobs and to substitute each other in order to help the surveyors keep up with their personal commitments. The management's flexibility was also mentioned in respect to vacation leave whereby managers do not expect surveyors' to ask for leave in writing and leave might be consented even an hour before. However, vacation leave is always subject to the work exigencies of the organisation. A respondent commented how he plans his vacation leave through informal discussions with his Manager. However, the participants claimed that although in most cases their respective managers try to accommodate their leave requests; this is not always possible due to the nature of work. The work volume can change unexpectedly making it more challenging for the Management to match the demand. One respondent had this to say in respect to flexibility and vacation leave which shows that Management's flexibility might not be enough.

> P3: *"Where secondary commitments are involved, you have to find a day or time discussed and agreed upon with the manager and occasionally with colleagues. Admittedly, when I do not manage to keep a personal commitment, I feel really disappointed and frustrated, however, now I learned to adjust myself to the nature of work.*

Another key issue which developed through the analysis was the construct of *Time Management*. The results might indicate that those individuals possessing important *Time*

Management skills can arguably be in a better position to deal with work-life related constraints. Certain participants mentioned that *time management* skills are a prerequisite in petroleum surveying. According to these participants, *time management* skills should help the individual employee to be able to organise his life around work. Consequently, it might be argued that *conscientiousness* can be one of the desirable traits for surveyors and therefore food for thought for organisation to take such aspects in consideration during the selection and recruitment process.

4.8 Unanticipated Results

The data analysis provided interesting and unanticipated issues. Surprisingly, ten of the eleven participants showed a degree of job satisfaction. They all practically concurred that petroleum surveying involves important intrinsic factors that have the propensity to create job satisfaction. Most participants agreed that generally surveying is very interesting, challenging and provides opportunities to learn new things and socialize with people coming from different cultures. It is interesting to note that most surveyors enjoy socializing with people originating from foreign countries. Participants seem to appreciate the fact that surveying involves a high degree of *autonomy* and *responsibility*.

> P4: *"I love this job, it keeps me busy, gets me out of my house. It gives you the opportunity to meet new people, practically, every day. It is not a routine job and not an office job".*

The interviews provided enough data that point toward those *demographic factors* that are relevant to the issue of work-life balance. The results show that those individuals in a stable relationship or who are married with children are more susceptible to experience work-life conflict than those who do not have any commitments. Interestingly, one surveyor who is single to date of the interview and whom the work load does not seem to affect him much shared his concern that if in future he will get engaged he anticipates that it will be more challenging to maintain a work-life balance. In contrast, those individuals who are in the early stage of building a family might require more financial resources which might motivate them to work more and accept certain unpleasant circumstances due to the responsibility of the family. Another unexpected issue which the analysis produced was the fact that surveyors value their relatively high salaries and rewards.

Another relevant issue which emerged through the analysis was the issue of *Occupational, Health and Safety*. A number of surveyors shared their concerns in respect to the long working hours involved in certain operations which might lead to undesirable consequences on their *health and safety*. There is no doubt that surveying involves important challenges for organisation in respect to the workers' *Health and Safety*. Working on board vessels inside and outside port could easily create circumstances which might lead to undesirable consequences, especially when excessive long working hours are involved.

> *P11: "When you work say 36 hours at a stretch you start to underperform in your work. I become more nervous and mentally tired. I find it hard to keep my eyes open and then I have to drive back home in these conditions".*

Staffing or having the necessary human resource capacity to adequately match the fluctuating demand is apparently one of the challenging issues in petroleum surveying in respect to work-life balance that emerged during the analysis of the transcript. Two participants, who no longer work as petroleum surveyors, remarked how during their engagement, the lack of staff, made it extremely challenging for them to create a balance between the two domains.

Inevitably, organisations short of staff will increase the plausibility of creating excessive demands on their employees, which may lead to undesirable behaviour as a result to the frustration experienced at work.

> P9: *"At the time we were only two surveyors so we had quite a considerable work load. In fact, I used to complete one vessel and go straight on another. It is hard you know. The manager was very reasonable but he could not do much unless more people were engaged so that work could be distributed between more people".*

And

> P7: *"Until some years ago I didn't even consider to take leave. Nowadays, we are four surveyors so at least we can somehow take some leave.*

It might be maintained that organisations are reluctant to recruit more personnel because of the uncertainty in the petroleum business environment and instability of demand. On the

other hand, the results seem to point to the fact that organisations should be on the guard as to avoid having employees experience frustration because of lack of staff possibly leading to resentment towards the organisations. Besides, the interviews confirmed the propensity of surveyors to switch to competitors, which could have adverse competitive repercussions. Therefore, lack of adequate human resource capacity could lead organisations to lose their talented staff to competitors.

In addition, a high turnover rate is neither desirable for the operational hitches that it might create nor for the reputation of the organisation within the market it operates. Ultimately, if organisations truly want to attract the best talents on the labour market they have to be perceived positively and should possess a respectable reputation in respect to the employees' turnover rate and working conditions.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this research project was to examine and explore the emotions, feelings and perceptions of petroleum surveyors in respect to their working life and whether the work domain conflicts with the life domain. Before the commencement of the study and the collection of data, the researcher had his own pre-conceived notions on the subject, some of which have been confirmed whereas others have been disproved. The researcher feels that the study is an important contribution to management studies, especially in a sector which is generally ignored by academics.   As mentioned earlier, the research project was subject to certain limitations due to the human element involved in the research undertaking and therefore a degree of human bias is not to be excluded.

Figure 4.1 shows the linkages between the various constructs and phenomena that led the researcher to come up with the below suggestions and conclusions. The figure also provides a clear understanding of the relevant research outcomes and the potential relationships between the various constructs or themes.

Figure 4:1 Linking the Phenomena
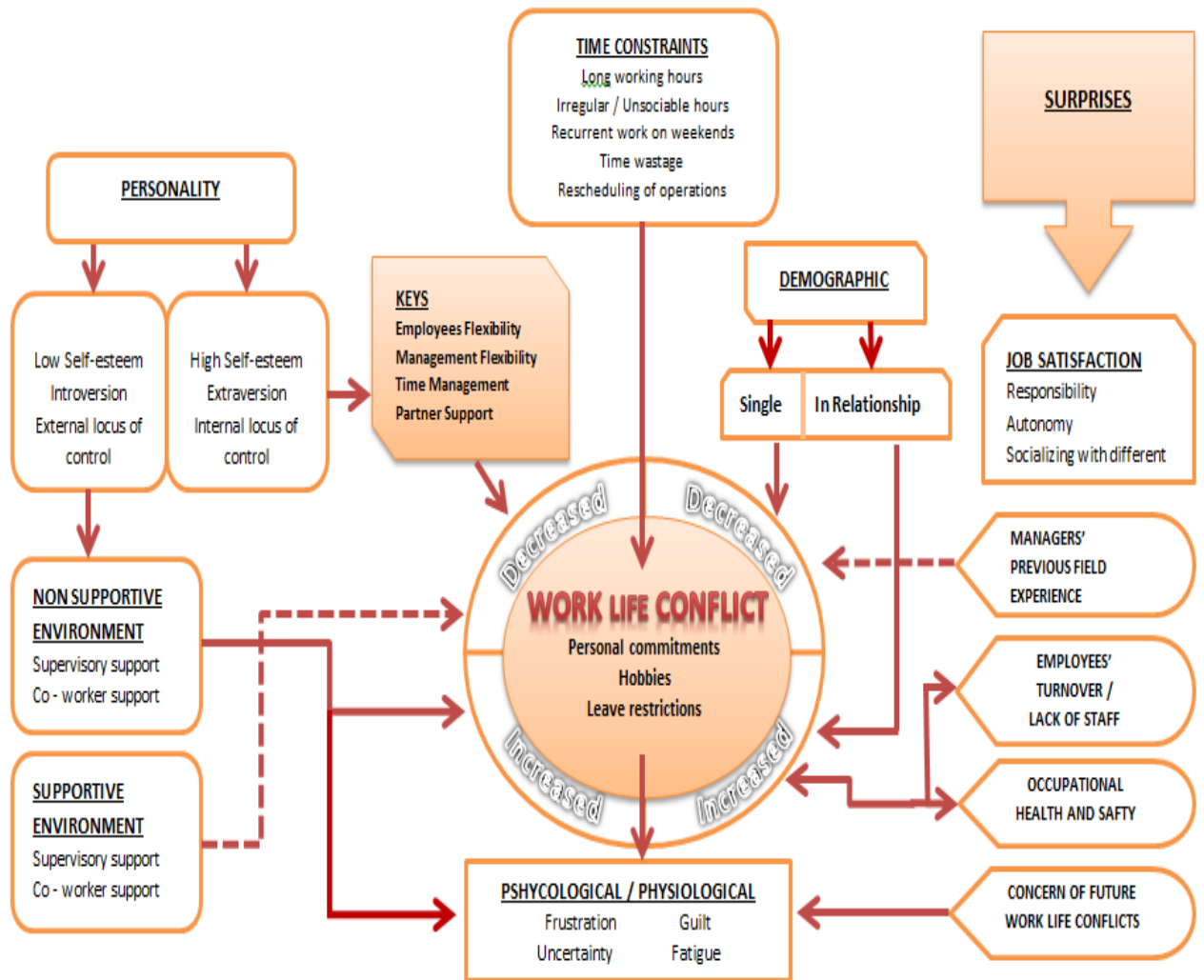
5.2 Discussion

As mentioned in the literature review, to date of this research project, the researcher could not find any academic literature related to work-life balance in petroleum surveying. Consequently, the discussion was done in addition to academic papers produced either for particular sectors or with papers that approached the issues related to work-life balance from a broader perspective.

5.3 Integrating the Two domains

Eikhof, Warhurst and Haunschild, (2007: 326) argued that the majority of workers tend to incorporate both the work and life domains and have the propensity to avoid separating the two domains. The research seems to point toward the above claim, however, participants also showed their interest and commitment in keeping a significant personal life, preserved and protected. However, it is interesting to note that the participant, who to date of issue of the study was still single, showed more easiness with integrating the two domains. Participants whose partners are not sufficiently supportive might arguably aim to retain a more distinct separation between the two domains. However, this issue can also be influenced by the degree of employees' commitment and engagement towards the organisation. It might be suggested that the higher the degree of employees' commitment the more the acceptance with which employees integrate the two domains. In fact, participants who showed a higher job commitment seemed to be more willing to integrate both domains.

5.4 Long and Irregular Working Hours

Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985 (in Greenhaus, Allen and Spector, 2006: 64) suggested that work-life conflicts might result due to time restrictions in one domain resulting in the decreased amount of time allocated to the other domain. Evidently, the long and unsociable working hours involved in petroelum surveying can restrict the surveyors amount of time needed for their personal commitments. Interestingly, the study conducted by Lang (in De Villiers and Kotze, 2003: 16) showed that jobs that involve long hours, 'irregular hours, irregular starting times, frequent and uncontrollable overtime work and physically or psychologically demanding work' are more susceptible to work-life conflict. Consisitently, with the mentioned study, petroleum surveying is characterized by irregular, recurrent overtime and work during weekends. In fact, all participants showed their dismay in respect to the re-scheduling of operations and the irregular and long hours involved.

Clearly, the research corroborates that a degree of work-life conflict in petroleum surveying exists. The conflict primarily results due to irregular, unsociable hours and rescheduling of operations involved in the petroleum industry which conflict with the surveyors' personal commitments, hobbies and restrictions on vacation leave.

5.5 Personality and Personal Resources

The research findings appear to contest certain assertions made by academic researchers that specific personality traits might be associated with certain regularities in relation to work-life balance. For instance, according to Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Wayne et al., (in

Grawitch and Barber, 2010: 141), individuals possessing a high degree of conscientiousness, extraversion and others might experience reduced work-life conflict, whereas neuroticism or emotional instability is more 'associated with increased conflict'. In contrast, the primary data indicates that all participants irrespective of their personality traits experience a degree of work-life conflict that leads them to psychological and emotional stress, including guilt feeling.

On the other hand, De Villiers and Kotze, (2003: 18), claim that their studies on work-life conflict show that 'each individual will experience it and deal with it *differently*'. The research project seems to concur with this reasoning. In fact, the findings point out that individuals possessing traits such as resilience and conscientousness are more capable to effectively organise their personal lives around the work demands. Moreover, participants with external locus of control and low self-esteem appear to be more to prone to experience increased frustrations as they lack the social skills necessary to obtain important guidance and assistance from their co-workers and supervisors.

5.6 Supportive Environement

As anticipated, the research findings concur with the literature review that a supportive environment should be pursued by organisations in order to alleviate frustraions and work-life conflicts. Acoording to Jang, (2009: 94) supportive culture means that the organisation would show emotional and practical response to employees' personal needs. Supervisory support entails 'social exchange relationships' between the employee and the manager and the employee's perception as to the manager's empathy for their perosonal needs (Hsu,

2011: 235). According to Eisenberger et al., (in Hsu, 2011: 235), having a high supervisory support within the organisation will increase employees' commitment and reduce employees' turnover. Undeniably, having a manager that possesses a high degree of social skills and empathy will assit employees to deal with their work-life issues better. It is evident that supervisory support is valued and appreciated by participants but on the other hand does not seem to suffice to eliminate work-life conflict as such but to reduce its effect on employees' personal life.

Another important aspect to be considered by management is the fact that participants seem to appreciate when they are involved in the decision making including, vacation leave planning and when they are consented to organize the work on their own or with their co-workers without the management's intervention. Consistent with the data interpretation, Ganster (in Wang, 2011: 156) argues that allowing employees to participate in the decision making will help them increase the 'perceived control' over the work domain and 'can result in decreased stress and improved health' Israel et al (in Wang, 2011: 156).

According to the Literature review, even co-workers support can alleviate employees' stress and work-life conflicts. Altough co-workers support should be encouraged and organisations should not prevent teamwork cooperation between employees, it appears that co-workers support can only assist and help employees reduce the effect of work-life conflict.

In contrast, partner support seem to be of fundamental importance in the working life of employees including petroleum surveyors. Frone et al. (in Greenhaus et al., 2006: 68) argued that when family issues conflict with the working life of the employee it might have undesirable psycological effects on the individual employee.

In addition, Greenhaus et al., (2006: 72) refers to the concept of work Interference with Family and/or Family Interference with Work which suggests that work-life conflict might produce undesirable outcomes and performances in both directions of the two domains. The results confirm that there may be instances where the work domain could negatively effect the life domain. On the other hand, the results neither disprove nor approve that the life domain can have a negative affect on the working perfomance of the individual. However, the findings indicate that when a high degree of partner support exists the individual employee might be more psycologically prepared to withstand certain unpleasant circumstances. In contrast, when the individual employee lacks the necessary partner's support it is evident that more frustration and guilt feelings are generated. Moreover, it is to be expected that a degree of stress or frustration experienced by surveyors or their partners will 'crossover' and 'spill over' from one domain to another and in both directions. However, these concepts might have their positives as well. For instance, having a partner that is very optimistic in her/his approach to life might positively affect the employee's perception of particular working circumstances.

5.7 Well Being and Health and Safety

Another issue which deserves attention and serious consideration by surveying companies is the employees' health and safety. Evidently, the nature of petroleum surveying involves important health and safety risks which should be constantly assessed and addressed accurately by the Management. Obviously, an accident at the place of work can be devastating for a company. An accident at the place of work might result in increased financial costs and create a bad reputation within the labour market and for the industry in general.

The academic literature is vast where occupational health and safety issues are involved. The literature presented is quite consistent in the sense that there seems to be an agreement upon the fact that long and irregular working hours might have undesirable psychological and physiological effects on employees. Besides, the nature of petroleum surveying involves considerable re-scheduling and delays of operations, which the research findings show increase participants' frustration. It is evident from the outset that long working hours on board vessels increase the chance of accidents.

It is also interesting to note that literature makes a reference to the risks involved when an employee has to drive back home after a long working day. In fact, this is one of the points that unexpectedly resulted through the research findings. Such issues should be taken seriously by organisations and should relentlessly remember that it is the employers' responsibility to safeguard the health and safety of their employees.

5.8 Turnover, Staffing and Job Fit

It is obvious from the outset that unless an organisation possesses the necessary human resource capacity to match demand, it might experience undesirable buisness consequences, including employee frustration and turnover rate. In fact, De Villiers and Kotze, (2003: 20, 22) demonstrated that having lack of staff and relevant competencies can be one of the contributors towards a work-life imbalance and it is more plausible that frustration and demotivation are generated. Consistent with what De Villiers and Kotze claim, the research project shows that certain respondents felt that they have been subjected to excessive workloads due to lack of staff. It might be argued that lack of staff can instigate employees to leave their respective companies. Ideally, companies should make their utmost to prevent such unproductive circumstances to occur as they might lose their best talents to competition.

The research shows the importance companies should give to the recruitment and selection process. It might be suggetsed that surveying organisations should engage employees that possess a high degree of time management skills so as to enable them to deal more effectively with the work-life conflicts which they might face in their daily working lives. The research also provides us with relevant information in respect to certain desirable personality traits. In fact, the findings indicate that those individuals low on self-esteem find it more challenging and frustrating to comminicate and obtain relevant support from their suppriors and colleagues.

5.9 Recommendations

The recommended managerial approaches discussed below have been developed as a result of the research project undertaken and the interpretations made by the researcher. It is evident that there exist no simple solutions to the work-life conflicts experienced by petroleum surveyors and the challenges faced by Management on a daily basis. Consequently, the recommendations are intended, if possible, to limit or reduce the effect of work-life conflict on the working lives of petroleum surveyors. Obviously, achieving an improved work-life balance will increase the likeliness of employees' job commitment and engagement.

6.0 Knowledge Workers & Employee Involvement

It is imperative for management to abandon old habits of excessive control, rigid rules and a culture of one way top-down communication and move to a more linear and organic style of management. Since local surveying companies are all micro organisations they should benefit from such practices. Managers have to understand that petroleum surveyors are knowledge workers and should be regarded as the human capital of the organisation, on whom competitive strategy is built.

This leads us to suggest that there exists room for improvement in respect to management styles. Although it appears that a degree of communication exists within the local organisations, it is evident that there is still room for improvement. Besides, employees' empowerment and involvement still seem to be lacking. Consequently, the researcher

recommends that more effective methods of communication should be implemented. For instance, it would be advisable for these companies, considering that their employees are not unionized, to allow and encourage their employees to organise for themselves a workers' committee that represents the employees during regular meetings held with the management wherein issues related to the employees' working conditions are openly and freely discussed. This should establish a two way communication that could result in improved working conditions for the employees. Besides, it would create an opportunity for the management to understand and comprehend better their employees' feelings and emotions. Such open discussions could lead to the management to adopt human resources practices that may reduce the effect of work-life conflict.

It is also advisable that employees should be consulted and involved in the daily management of operations, especially where scheduling and distributions of jobs are involved. Evidently, involving the surveyors in the distribution of jobs would enable both parties to arrive at decisions which might be more accommodating to the surveyors' personal needs. Obviously, this would have to be subject to the organisations' working exigencies.

6.1 Management Flexibility

Consistent with the above line of thought management should avoid rigidity and adopt a more flexible approach to management and control. The research showed that surveyors have to be extremely flexible to match the demanding life of petroleum surveying. Consequently, it is recommended that management should reciprocate in their style of

management. As mentioned earlier, in most cases the surveyors' job is more concentrated on board vessels and the tendency is that the office time is either spent in preparation for upcoming jobs or doing unproductive activities. Therefore, management should adopt a culture that encourages employees to benefit from the idle time without too much questioning and formality. In line with the philosophical approach mentioned above, management should work hard in order to improve mutual trust. If management succeeds in creating mutual trust, it will be easier to create an environment of flexibility and minimal control. In fact, Perry Smith et al (in Shankar and Bhatnagar, 2010: 81) 'mention that research has found Work Life Balance to be positively related to both organizational and individual outcomes such as giving the employees flexibility' and 'raise employee satisfaction and labor productivity'. Moreover, it should enable the surveyors to deal better with their personal needs. Having said this, these recommendations are not intended to solve the problem of work-life conflicts as certain problems will remain for sure due to the nature of work, but it will alleviate certain inconveniences and frustrations experienced by surveyors on a daily basis.

6.2 Occupational, Health and Safety

Concerning the issues regarding health and safety, Management should adopt a philosophy of no tolerance where risks are identified. Obviously, the management should ensure that the necessary personal protective equipment is adequately provided. Admittedly, Management cannot do much in order to avoid or reduce the long working hours involved in the business, however, the researcher feels that Management should make it a company policy that when surveyors work excessively long hours, they should not be allowed to

drive themselves back home but should be provided with company transport. Moreover, the research showed that certain companies have the habit to assign jobs to surveyors who have just returned from a long working assignment. Management should make an effort as to avoid such circumstances which are undoubtedly increasing the likelihood of an accident to occur. At the end of the day, if Management does not take the necessary actions to ensure the health and safety of their employees, they will face undesirable legal consequences.

Moreover, surveyors who have worked for excessively long hours, especially at night, should be allowed to go home to rest in order to recover. This approach should not be adopted as if the company is making a favour to the individual surveyors but this should be a clearly communicated company policy. Letting the surveyors have a decent rest during the traditional office hours might increase the possibility that surveyors will be able to conduct a more effective personal life.

6.3 Talent Management and Staffing

The recommendations mentioned above seem to indicate that companies will only be in a position to adopt certain approaches and effective policies only if they manage their talents effectively. The primary aim of talent management should be the nurturing and developing of employees to fit more with the organisational culture. Obviously, in order to achieve the desired results companies have to constantly monitor the well-being of their employees. Undoubtedly, surveying companies allocate considerable financial resources to train their employees into effective surveyors. Therefore, they should be astute enough to make their utmost efforts to retain their best performance through measures which could improve their

work-life balance. Besides from the recommendations mentioned above, management should also thoroughly examine the issue of having adequate staff to match demand.

The research might be indicating that local surveying companies tend to keep their human resource capacities to the minimum. This approach to business could be due to the fact that work volume is extremely unpredictable and very difficult to forecast. It might also be contended that Management would prefer to have less capacity to cover the demand than having to put people on redundancy when and if demand decreases. On the other hand, companies might be adopting such strategies in order to keep their costs as low as possible.

Companies have to be on guard as lack of capacity can lead to existent employees' frustration and extreme fatigue because of too much work pressure being distributed on a relatively small number of surveyors. In addition, subjecting employees to such working conditions might increase the likelihood of an accident at the place of work due to fatigue and tiredness. Therefore, it is imperative that such considerations are made if Management truly desires to retain their best talents on which competitive strategies are built.

6.4 Conclusion

The study brought about to the attention of academics and management practitioners, a business subject area, which to the knowledge of the researcher, has never been addressed, studied or analysed before. The petroleum industry has been growing at a fast pace for the last decades creating business opportunities and challenges to surveying companies.

Increasingly, modern businesses are being subjected to competitive pressures that until some decades ago operated in a much safer and stable business environment. Nowadays, the business environment is undoubtedly fast changing. In fact, Dunne and Teg, (2007: 28), suggest that increasingly business organisations are being forced to raise their efficiency to be able to compete effectively. In such working conditions, the construct of work-life balance has grown in importance.

Rizzo (n.d.) suggested that the concept of Work-Life balance is becoming more and more important as companies are consistently demanding improved performances from their employees. Furthermore, Rizzo, n.d. contended that companies have to be more flexible 'to maintain competitiveness and thus, 'may be forcing a number of workers into an irregular time schedule'.

The findings clearly demonstrated that petroleum surveying is an area with unique characteristics where a high degree of flexibility and resilience from the employees is expected. Moreover, it appears that the nature of petroleum surveying and the existent rampant competition between the existent rivals is making it more challenging for companies to compete, which could arguably have an undesirable effect on the working life conditions of petroleum surveyors.

The study demonstrated that the unique nature of petroleum surveying makes it very difficult to create a work-life balance at the place of work. Moreover, the study suggests that rather than aiming to solve the work-life conflicts, which appears to be relatively remote, companies should be more appreciative of their employees' personal commitments by consenting them more empowerment to manage their time. Besides, management should adopt a supportive corporate culture that in truth gives due importance to the personal needs of employees. The construct of personal needs should also include the occasional recreational period which any human being deserves to be able to lead a healthy lifestyle.

The study also showed that the current family friendly measures such as flexitime and tele-working are not adequate to the particular and unique nature of petroleum surveying. Contrary to other employments, surveying requires organisations to allocate their human resources in accordance with the work demands. The demand is unpredictable and difficult to predict and to structure. Nominations might be received late in the evening, during the weekend and at other inconvenient times.

The researcher hopes that the insights provided through this research project will be an eye opener to those companies which to date might not fully understand the need to aim at reducing, where possible, the work-life conflicts experienced by petroleum surveyors on a daily basis. In addition, the findings show that management should possess important social and human skills particularly empathy. There is no doubt that unless management tries to empathize with their employees there is no possibility of improving the working conditions

of employees or perhaps reducing work-life conflicts. Obviously, lack of empathy would surely increase the probability of employee resentment and turnover rate.

This research project has been conducted in a particular business and labour scenario and consequently the arguments, conclusions and recommendations put forward by the researcher have to be interpreted and applied with caution since, given the qualitative and phenomenological nature of this research, universal applicability or generalization cannot be claimed.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interview

The aim of this research project is to explore the perceptions, emotions and experiences of petroleum surveyors in respect to work-life balance related issues. Your consent to participate in this interview is greatly appreciated and the information derived from the interview will remain strictly confidential and used solely for the purpose of this research.

1. How would you describe your personality? Probing by interviewer

2. How would you describe the working life of a petroleum surveyor? What do you think surveyors like/dislike most of their work?

3. How much freedom would you say you have in planning your work and personal time? Do you feel any frustration in respect to scheduling your personal commitments? How does your partner react when you work long hours and/or cannot maintain a particular personal commitment?

4. Are you allowed to take leave without restrictions? Have you ever been called in during a weekend?

5. Do you think your colleagues are supportive in any way to help you balance your work and personal life?

6. How do you think supervisors react to the surveyors' personal commitments?

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 2: Consent Form

University of Malta

Faculty of Economics, Management and Accountancy

RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

Name of Researcher	**Franco Schembri**
Address	**Edera 125, Triq Il- Hida, Kappara, San Gwann**
Telephone Number	27383030 / 99498132

Purpose of the Study

Work-Life Balance in Petroleum Surveying

Methods of Data Collection

Semi-Structured Interview

Use made of the Information

MBA (EXECUTIVE) - DISSERTATION

Guarantees:

I will abide by the following conditions:

1. Your real name will not be used in the study.
2. Only the supervisor and examiners will have access to the data.
3. You will remain free to quit the study at any point and for whatever reason. In the case that you withdraw, all the records and information collected will be destroyed.
4. No deception in the data collection will be used.

I agree to the conditions.
Name of participant: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

I agree to the conditions.
Researcher: _____ Date:_____

Appendix 3: Selected Excerpts of Coded Transcripts by Theme/Construct

1. Personality Factors

Codes	Transcript
Insecurity Lack of Personal Resources Low Self-Esteem External Locus of Control Flexibility	I am a bit of a ==perfectionist== but on the other hand, admittedly, ==I am quite lazy==. I am ==moderately shy== but positive at the same time. I like punctuality but I am not the type that ==wants a structured day and== I am not capable of keeping time management as such. When I face a new challenging job, ==initially I get distressed and nervous== but once I learn the procedure I ==adapt== myself accordingly.
Self-Esteem Conscientiousness Intellectual Openness Self-Esteem Flexibility	==I am an easy going kind of person and relatively calm. On the other hand, I hate being cheated or taken for a ride==. I am the type of person who can complicate matters, having said this I feel reasonably satisfied with my ways. Others might argue that I am disorganized. ==I look after my things one at a time and like to set priorities==. When faced with new challenges, initially I become a bit nervous but eventually I adapt easily. ==I like challenges as I want to grow and develop my skills more and more.==
Emotional Instability Introversion External Locus of Control Insecurity Low Self-Esteem	However, occasionally I tend to ==panic== but on the other hand, ==I try to hide my emotions==. I am the type of person that likes to start and finish a job on his own, without interference. Building good relations with people is something I really enjoy. ==I prefer structured job assignments with clearly defined procedures and sequential steps==. I consider myself to be a good listener. Obviously, it also means that I appreciate when people listen to my concerns. I like to do my things discretely and am not the type that looks for attention. ==When I am assigned a new job, I prefer to be given some time to learn and to understand better certain difficulties, which I might have==. I feel much better when I am properly prepared. Practically, ==being properly prepared helps me to be more relaxed on the job. I hate mistakes==.

2. Physical & Psychological Constructs

Codes	Transcript
Frustration Long Working Hours Fatigue Health and Safety Insecurity	Surveying would not be a problem if you are single with no commitments. The work itself can be very frustrating, especially when there is substantial work load. Surveying involves long working hours without little sleep and rest, which might lead the surveyor to make mistakes. Unfortunately, people who do not know what surveying involves would not appreciate the difficulties and problems which we face on a daily basis.
Flexibility Uncertainty Stress	You have to be very flexible as you are, practically, always on call (You cannot switch the mobile phone). If let say, you have a survey in the morning, you cannot afford to stay late out at night as you have to be in good shape for the job. The work itself is very challenging but sometimes can be very stressful.
Time Constraint Uncertainty Flexibility Leave restrictions Frustration	In truth you cannot plan your life in advance. You have to be very flexible as there are times when the work can be very demanding. If it is an important commitment, you would normally get your leave, however, in other less important personal matters, you might not be allowed to take leave. Sincerely, when leave is not consented I just don't mind. I get a bit disappointed but a little bit.
Fatigue	In reality most of the time spent on vessels is idle. Having said this, after a say 20 hours I get tired and sleepy but I don't think it affects my performance.
Long Working Hours Frustration	For instance, after you return from a 25 hour survey, you are assigned another job which might take longer. I hate it when I go home with the intention of spending the evening resting and say after 2 hours I am called in for a job which came in unexpectedly
Guilt Feeling	When I cannot maintain a commitment with my girlfriend, I feel sorry for her but fortunately she supports me a lot.
Guilt Feeling	In certain situations my partner supports me and in other I console her, especially when we have to cancel something important to her. Admittedly, I feel guilty for her when it happens.

3. Work-Life Conflicts

Codes	Transcript
Leave Restrictions Recurrent work on Weekends Conflict with Hobbies Conflict with Hobbies	Not really, leave was subject to the workload. I was called in during weekends on considerable number of occasions. For instance, I remember once we were on a camping activity with friends for the weekend and I was called in for an urgent job. Obviously, I had to dismantle the camp before planned and my partner could not accept it. She got really angry. Hobbies ? – I couldn't. For instance, I had to stop football due to the nature of work, ideally, you should find a hobby that fits with your work life.
Concerns of Work/Family Conflict	In truth you cannot plan your life in advance. You have to be very flexible as there are times when the work can be very demanding. I realize that if in future I will commit myself to a partner; it is going to be hard for me to satisfy the demands of work and personal life.
Conflict with Hobbies	When you work say 36 hours at a stretch you start to underperform in your work. I become more nervous and mentally tired.
Leave restrictions	You cannot plan your life and your leave.
Recurrent work on Weekends	Unfortunately, I have been called in from leave or on weekends on more than one occasion.
Conflict with personal commitment	For instance, yesterday, my fiancée asked me to pick her up but I could not promise her that I would because of an expected vessel that had to come in.

4. Time Constraints

Codes	Transcript
Leave Restrictions	I do not think I am free to plan my life as in most cases you do not know when you start and when you finish
Re-scheduling of operations Frustration	Unfortunately, the life of a petroleum surveyor is characterized by continuous rescheduling of operation. For instance, you might spend an entire day waiting for the vessel to arrive and then you will spend the night on the vessel.
Long Working Hours	About 70 hours a week. Sometimes more on other occasions less. When I work long hours at stretch, admittedly, I need to rest at home to recover my energies.
Re-scheduling of operations	Undoubtedly, the worst condition in petroleum surveying is time scheduling of operations.
Leave restrictions	Not really, leave was subject to the workload. I was called in during weekends on considerable number of occasions.

5. Support

Codes	Transcript
Frustration Partner's Support	When I don't manage to keep a commitment I feel really sad. Fortunately, my partner is very supportive and in most cases she tries to calm me down.
Co-workers support Management's Flexibility	Very good team. They are very supportive. We frequently swap jobs to accommodate each other. This is permitted by the management.
Co-workers support	Fortunately, we have a good team and we try to accommodate each other's personal needs as much as possible, in the sense that we replace each other on jobs
Supervisory support	The manager makes his utmost to let us have the leave.
Partner's support	If it was not for her insistence and encouragement I have given my resignation to the manager after just three months.
Lack of Partner's support	My partner could not understand my working life and admittedly was not very supportive. Ideally, you should meet the partner when you are already engaged as a surveyor.
Lack of co-workers' support	you will find colleagues who might let you down

Lack of co-workers' support	Admittedly, I don't approach them much for help. To be honest <mark>I don't feel they are very cooperative and supportive</mark>.
Lack of partner's support	You cannot keep your commitments, in fact, a particular <mark>partner used to doubt my loyalty to her</mark>, whether I was truly at work or somewhere else. <mark>We used to quarrel a lot because of work commitments.</mark>

6. Keys

Codes	**Transcript**
Management Flexibility Employee's flexibility	<mark>I either ask the Manager in the evening of the day proceeding the day or early morning on the day</mark>
Employee's flexibility	Obviously, when I have to cancel a personal commitment <mark>I become really angry</mark>. On the other hand, <mark>I reason that this is my work and I have to do it</mark>.
Employee's flexibility	You have to constantly change friends and you have to <mark>fit your personal commitments around work</mark>
Employee's flexibility	A surveyor has to be <mark>extremely flexible and spontaneous; alternatively, he will get frustrated easily as in surveying,</mark> fixed working hours simply does not exist. <mark>You cannot plan say a week ahead, the nature of surveying does not allow it.</mark>
Management's flexibility	We have a <mark>good team based on sincere friendship</mark> and we try our best to accommodate each other's personal needs <mark>by substituting each other on different jobs.</mark>
Management's flexibility	We frequently swap jobs to accommodate each other. <mark>This is permitted by the management</mark>.
Time Management	Others might argue that I am disorganized. <mark>I look after my things one at a time and like to set priorities</mark>.

7. Surprises

Codes	Transcript
Health & Safety	When you work say 36 hours at a stretch you start to underperform in your work. I become more nervous and mentally tired. I find it hard to keep my eyes open and then I have to drive back home in these conditions.
Job Satisfaction	However, the job involves a high degree of responsibility and problem solving skills.
Job Satisfaction	Personally, I like the fact that I have a degree of autonomy and significance on board vessels. Besides, petroleum surveying gives you the opportunity to meet people from different cultures and is quite adventurous. Obviously, when you manage to obtain a good result you feel extremely satisfied and the fact that you are considered as an authority on board vessel is also quite nice.
Health and Safety	I think that working excessive hours can easily lead to short cuts and nervousness during the surveys. Admittedly, your mind starts to think differently.
Manager's Field Experience	The fact that the supervisor was a surveyor himself helps him to comprehend better our difficulties.
Employee Turnover	This is my fourth employment as a petroleum surveyor.
Understaffing	Until some years ago I didn't even consider to take leave. Nowadays, we are four surveyors so at least we can somehow take some leave.
Understaffing	At the time we were only two surveyors so had quite a considerable work load. In fact, I used to complete one vessel and go straight on another.
Understaffing	The Manager was very reasonable but he could not do much unless more people were engaged so that work could be distributed between more people.