

[3]

**AN EVALUATION OF THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE
AMONG FEMALE EMPLOYEES WITHIN ESKOM
ROTEK INDUSTRIES**

Suvitha de Lange

Tshwane University of Technology
delanges@eskom.co.za

Prof. Vinessa Naidoo

Tshwane University of Technology
naidoov@tut.ac.za

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to assess the work-life balance among female employee, within predominantly male-dominated careers, using Eskom Rotek Industries as a case study. Despite having the required qualifications and experience, women may still face pressure between their personal and work roles. Therefore, the study seeks to determine whether they are experiencing a healthy work-life balance or not. The key factors driving their work-life issues as identified in the literature review, have also been investigated. A quantitative research approach was adopted and self-administered questionnaires were used for data collection. The target population of this survey was female employees of Eskom Rotek Industries. The statistical package STATA version 13, which is widely accepted by quantitative researchers, was chosen as the analytical software. The findings of this study indicate that there is a marginal difference between the percentages of the population reporting high and low levels of work-life balance. The biographical factors, as highlighted in the literature, were assessed against work-life balance. The only significant association based on the findings which correlates with the literature, is the relationship between work-life balance and field of work. Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that the company should consider a more flexible

working environment. Employees should be encouraged to use their annual leave and ensure a balanced family life. It is further recommended that employees contribute to the policy development and implementation regarding work-life balance programmes.

Keywords: Eskom Rotek Industries, gender differences, male-dominated environment, working mothers, work-life balance

1. INTRODUCTION

Work-life balance amongst women has become a critical factor that could make organisations vulnerable to skills shortages, staff turnover and an inability to meet gender equity targets. There is accumulating evidence that excessive time spent at work is adversely affecting relationships, family and personal life. It also has an effect on employees' health and could lead to conditions such as depression, diabetes and obesity.

Male and female employees have different perceptions of work-life balance. Men feel more satisfied when they achieve more at work even at the expense of family time. Research also found that 80% of men do not share in the household responsibilities even when their wives have full time jobs (Levy, 2012). Females are being pulled between their home and work roles. This might lead to a forced choice of where to invest more time.

1.1 Problem statement

The term 'work-life balance' is used to describe the achievement of a balance between the demands of family-life and work-life. The demands and pressures of work often make it difficult to live a balanced life. Work-life balance is about adjusting one's work patterns to achieve overall fulfilment. A good work-life balance enables the business to thrive while employees pursue other aspirations and fulfil personal responsibilities (Jyothi & Jyothi, 2012:35).

Eskom recently had to change some of its working schedules. With the current electricity demands in South Africa, many employees are required to work during odd hours of the day as well as weekends. This increase in workload led to employees being pressurised to demonstrate their

commitment by working longer hours, offering up the time they have at home (Doble & Supriya, 2010:332). Research showed that employees who work long hours have a lower degree of work-life balance. Since mid-level managers are often expected to be available for longer hours and take on more responsibilities, they are more likely to be adversely affected.

Technology makes it possible for employees to work virtually twenty-four hours a day, intensifying work demands. As employees become more engaged with work at odd times, the boundaries between work and home life become blurred. On the other hand, family life has become more complex, as extended family support is slowly disappearing. The current trend is small nuclear families where both spouses are employed. Single parent households are increasing, while female participation in the workplace also continues to grow (Doble & Supriya, 2010:332). Even though more women are joining the workforce, there has been little change in the patterns of household responsibilities. Many work-life balance studies either ignore gender or assume that men and women have very similar experiences (Emslie & Hunt, 2009:151). Determinants such as long working hours and a high workload are likely to influence the extent to which an individual is able to balance the demands of work and home (Levy, 2012). It is highlighted in research that the entry of women into the labour force has led to the extension of women's roles and not necessarily a redefinition of gender roles. Women seem to be re-organising work regularly to respond to the needs of their families. The literature further shows that the demands on employed women are higher compared to employed men.

1.2 Objectives of the study

- To determine if female employees have a sense of balance between their work and home roles and responsibilities, and
- To assess the key factors that affect their work-life balance.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

People will always be subject to change. The first democratic election in 1994 was one of the most significant changes to which South Africa and its people were subjected. Subsequent to this, the most prominent place of change was in the South African workforce. Due to gender equity and affirmative action initiatives, the previously disadvantaged now play a significant role in the composition of the South African workforce. Families with both partners working have replaced the traditional South African household where the man was the breadwinner while the woman was expected to look after the household tasks (Malan, 2008).

2.1 Work-life balance

The term ‘work-life balance’ does not necessarily imply an equal balance between one’s work and personal life. It simply means the capacity to schedule the hours of the two aspects in such a way that one leads a healthy and peaceful life (Paulose & Sudarshan, 2014:2). Work-life balance can also be defined as having a satisfactory or comfortable level of ‘fit’ between the multiple roles in one’s life, resulting in a sense of harmony in life.

Research shows that employees who work long hours have a lower degree of work-life balance, while managers specifically are more adversely affected. It must be noted that the level of work-life balance varies through the different stages of one’s life, depending on personal responsibilities. A satisfactory balance also varies from one individual to the next. For most people, it results from the following factors:

- The number of hours that an individual is required to work, and
- The level of control that the individual has about when and how the work is done (New Zealand Department of Labour, 2007).

2.2 Gender differences in the perception of work-life balance

Both men and women report that they are experiencing work-life imbalances. Both genders prefer working in organisations that promote and enhance a healthy work-life balance. Men feel more satisfied when they achieve more at work even at the expense of family time. However, women feel torn

between work and family. When work does not allow for family time, they feel unhappy and frustrated. Therefore, they try to maintain tight boundaries between work and family life without compromise (Doble & Supriya, 2010:334).

There is a strong belief amongst men and women that flexible working hours will improve their sense of work-life balance. Doble and Supriya (2010) found that 83% of men and 95% of women perceived that work-life balance would improve if they were able to work flexible hours. Working from home was favoured by 87% of men as well as women. Women felt more strongly that there should be opportunities to take care of emergencies at home and that childcare facilities should be available at the workplace.

2.3 Work-life balance among female employees

Women initially struggled to establish their identity in a competitive world. With the advancement in educational and training institutions, improvements are noted. Historical data from an employment survey in India, indicated that the employment rate of women has increased remarkably by 3.6% per year, from the year 1991 to 2001. Women in India have broken barriers and built bridges in professional platforms (Lakshmi & Gopinath, 2013).

While some women are stimulated by their careers and develop a positive sense of well-being, others find that time spent at work puts a strain on personal and leisure time (Malan, 2008). There is clearly not one perfect form of work-life balance. It varies from person to person depending on priorities and individual lifestyles. It not only changes in terms of priorities but also status, due to varying family responsibilities, career opportunities and personal circumstances, and it keeps changing until retirement. A woman who achieves a successful work-life balance also has job satisfaction, and might become highly committed and productive and succeed in her career. In contrast, women who are unable to create a healthy work-life balance are also not able to succeed in their careers or to set priorities. As a result, these women withdraw from work in order to take care of children, aged family members and other personal pressures. A survey in the UK revealed that the majority of women had successful work-life balances,

because their husbands shared an equal partnership. Both the partners need to schedule their working and personal hours so that they lead professionally and personally healthy lives. Children should also be educated to share some of the household responsibilities.

The Business Women of South Africa (BWASA) 2006 Census, as cited in Malan (2008), showed that women constituted 52% of the adult population in South Africa; 41% formed part of the workforce and only 16.4% were represented at executive management level (Malan, 2008). The managerial culture impacts negatively on a woman's career advancement, in that:

- It fails to take into cognisance a woman's responsibilities towards her family as the primary carer, and
- It encourages the perception that working long hours is a reflection of a high level of organisational commitment.

2.4 Working mothers and their perceived work-life balance

Since the 1970s, the male breadwinner model, in which men worked while their wives stayed home and took care of the children, has become less sustainable. Recent studies have shown that women younger than 35 years have more educational qualifications than most men in the same age group. It is also believed that education has the largest effect on improving a woman's well-being and positively affects her work-life balance (Levy, 2012).

Labour force participation rates among married women almost doubled between the years 1966, when 35% of married women were employed, and in 1994, when 61% of married women were in the labour force. By 1997, 71% of women with school-aged children were employed. In comparison, fathers' rates of employment have remained relatively unchanged (De Sousa, 2009).

The importance of childcare cannot be underestimated. Dual earner families have become more dependent on support from grandparents, nannies and childcare facilities in order for the mothers to go back to work. The responsibilities of employed women increase when there are more children at home. This directly influences the work-life balance. The ages of the

children have also been identified as a driving factor, where mothers with children aged 3-11 reported slightly lower levels of work-life balance (Levy, 2012).

2.5 Females within a male-dominated environment

Women who work in male-dominated occupations face different challenges to those who work in a more gender-balanced or female-dominated environment. These challenges affect their retention and career success.

According to Watts (2009), for many people, the issue of work-life balance is connected with caring responsibilities for children and older family members. The expectation still exists that women should adapt their work to accommodate these responsibilities. The attributes of work-life balance include time spent at work, volume of work, the workplace culture and organisational expectations and life outside work such as caring responsibilities.

Professional commitment is identified as the key factor in the marginalisation of women in the professional sector. This stems from the concept that work is a way of life and personal and family interests should fit around this ethos. The long-hours culture determines that commitment to work is demonstrated by working long hours resulting in a culture of being present. Factors such as parenting and caring are not expected to have any influence on men's work and are therefore not considered in the conventional career model. While more women are attempting to balance career and home roles at any age, their male colleagues are able to devote more time to work. There is also evidence that when men become fathers, they tend to spend longer hours at work, either to compensate for the loss of income from the mother or as a form of escape to a place of calm. Watts (2009) further found that men are less likely to let work affect their home commitments, whereas women take time off even on short notice to attend to any unplanned home demands. Women in male-dominated organisations thus experience tension between professional and home responsibilities.

According to Martin and Barnard (2013), the South African female labour force has been growing because of equity legislation and improved access to

education and work opportunities. Gender equality in the workplace refers to the provision of equal opportunities for men and women. Arguably, in practice it may be interpreted as equal opportunities for women to work in the way men do, based on the male model of work. The male model of work refers to the cultural picture of an ideal employee as someone who can participate in work completely without any social or caring obligations outside of work (Roper, Prouska & Ayudhya, 2010). Gender equity, on the other hand, is defined as equal opportunities and constraints for both men and women. This implies that both genders are equally involved in family care as well as in their careers. Progress with gender transformation and equity in South African employment is therefore still unsatisfactory.

There are powerful economic incentives for women to move into historically male-dominated occupations. Yet, women who defy conventional female career patterns and choose to pursue careers in male-dominated arenas, often return to careers that accommodate their roles as primary carers. The unique challenges that emerged from the data were twofold. Firstly, the male-dominated environment seems to maintain the gender-segregated status quo formally and covertly. Secondly, Martin and Barnard (2013) found that women have unique physical, work identity and work-life balance needs that challenge their ability to function easily in a male-dominated environment. Labour-intensive work, inadequate physical strength and hormone cycles add to the emotional strain of working in a male-dominated occupation. When there is insufficient organisational support, the authors found that women's unique physical needs have negative effects on the physical and mental well-being of the participants (Martin & Barnard, 2013).

Male-dominant work settings do not accommodate or empower women. Women seem to have adopted negative perceptions about their competence. This results in a lack of self-confidence and self-efficacy as many of their male colleagues continue to undermine women's capabilities with their perceptions of females as being incompetent.

2.6 Work-life balance of women in the international context

A study conducted by Hantrais (2003) showed that women in France are more able to combine relatively high birth rates, a high old-age dependency

ratio and non-marital family forms with full-time employment, than those in other EU member states. France is strongly supportive of family life and of working mothers. Benefits and services are provided uniformly and consistently throughout the country (Hantrais, 2003). The state promotes “flexible” work-time policies, provides generous childcare infrastructures (including a high standard of strictly regulated crèche facilities), and leave arrangements, particularly for workers in the public sector. The respondents saw the state as having primary responsibility for children and older dependent people, rather than families themselves.

Women in Spain combine low birth rates with more traditional family forms and low employment rates (Hantrais, 2003). Employed women generally work full-time with relatively long hours, irrespective of whether they have children or not. Those who work part-time often do so because they cannot find a full-time job in the formal labour market. Spanish women assign only low or medium value to family life. They reject the idea that women really prefer home and children and do not think that women need children to be fulfilled or that being a housewife can be as satisfying as paid work. They clearly believe that mothers should have the option of paid work and that children do not suffer if their mothers are out at work.

In all but the higher income groups, Spanish women who are employed depend heavily on the extended family, particularly grandmothers, for childcare. This arrangement is affected by the decline in the traditional, reciprocal family contract that supported old and young dependants. Women in all social classes commented that public childcare provision was totally inadequate and only available to the very poor.

Polish women strongly believe that women really want a family and that children suffer if their mothers are in paid employment. In combination, these indicators suggest that Polish women do not have much choice about the way in which they organise their lives. Comparatively, India has organisations that promote work-life balance by flexible working times, part-time work and the provision of childcare facilities (Doble & Supriya, 2010:331).

2.7 Work-life balance of women in the South African context

According to Bosch, De Bruin, Kgaladi and De Bruin (2012), South Africa has witnessed an increase in the number of women in general in the labour workforce. This study reported that women (approximately 25.6 million) constitute about 51% of the South African population and 42% of the total labour force.

Black women who are married and without children are looked down upon and often lose their status as common-law wives. South African black girls are socialised to produce and care for children and are often taught to *not* outperform men in education or in the workplace. In addition, intellectual pursuits are traditionally reserved for men. Women thus encounter more barriers for formal careers than men. Despite these stereotypes, South African black women are rejecting their traditional roles and childcare becomes the responsibility of the extended family such as grandparents. In terms of careers becoming more salient, it is evident that women wish to become more involved in their careers in middle adulthood when their children are leaving home. Black South African women more actively pursue careers, especially in male-dominated industries (Bosch *et al.*, 2012).

2.8 Factors affecting work-life balance

Based on research, the following factors cause female employees to experience conflict between their work and family roles:

- number of hours worked per week,
- amount and frequency of overtime required,
- inflexible work schedule,
- unsupportive supervisors, and
- an inhospitable organisational culture.

Several studies have shown that the most significant predictors of work-life balance are working hours, with regard to working outside normal hours such as evenings, weekends and unplanned overtime. Work-life balance is threatened if people are too tired after work to engage with their loved ones at home, or perform any necessary work at home. Research shows that long work hours, job demands, care responsibilities and work related travel, are

negatively related to work-life balance. Research also indicates that employed women spend more hours on household activities than employed men and more hours on work and household activities in total. It can be concluded that women still bear the primary responsibility for home and child-care tasks irrespective of their employment status (Levy, 2012).

2.9 The impact of work-life conflict

Generally, work-life conflict may result in a number of negative effects among individuals. These include emotional distress and depression, poor physical health, and fatigue and family disruption. Negative outcomes in the work environment include decreased job satisfaction, increased burn-out, poor performance and high staff turnover. Research shows that for the affluent majority, increased wealth does not necessarily bring more happiness in its wake.

Across various samples and work environments, both genders reported levels of work-life conflict. Due to more women entering the workplace, higher divorce rates are reported. This leads to an increase in single parent households and more families having childcare and elderly care demands (Nii-Dei, Kwabena, Stella, Sarfo & Harriet 2013).

2.10 Work-life balance practices

Work-life balance practices aim to provide the scope for employees to balance what they do at work with home responsibilities. Flexible working practices refer to any type of working arrangement that provides a certain degree of flexibility regarding how long, where and when employees work. Flexible working arrangements may be adopted when:

- Customers expect goods and services outside of normal working hours;
- Employees want to achieve a better balance between work and home life, and
- Organisations want to meet their customer and employees' needs in a manner that enables them to be as productive as possible

(Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, or ACAS, UK, 2015:4).

Flexible working practices may maximise available labour resources and improve customer service. The different types of flexible working practices are:

- Flexitime: In workplaces where the flow of work is less dependent on customer demand, employees are allowed to choose within set limits when to start and end work, provided they work the agreed number of hours over a fixed period (ACAS, UK, 2015:7).
- Part-time work: This is an arrangement where the employee is contracted to work less than conventional full-time hours.
- Overtime: These are the hours that are worked more than the usual full-time hours (ACAS, UK, 2015:9).
- Job sharing: This is a form of part-time work where two or more people share responsibility for a full-time job, sharing the pay and benefits in proportion to the hours that each person works (ACAS, UK, 2015:10).
- Compressed hours: This is where an employee works the normal hours required in fewer and/or longer blocks during the week by starting earlier and/or finishing later. In this way, an employee builds up additional hours that they can take as a day or half day from work.
- Shift work: This is a pattern of work in which one employee replaces another doing the same job in a 24-hour window (ACAS - Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, UK, 2015:11).
- Annualised hours: It is where the total number of hours to be worked over a year is fixed. There is flexibility regarding the working patterns. There are, however, set shifts which cover most of the year and unallocated shifts where the employee may be asked to work at short notice (ACAS, UK, 2015:12).

- Term-time working: This gives employees the flexibility to work reduced hours or take time off during school holidays which is normally unpaid.
- Temporary working and fixed-term contracts: A temporary worker is employed for a specified period. They may be employed either directly by the employer or by private agencies. Temporary workers are sometimes hired on fixed term contracts which are contracts of employment with a specific completion date on which the contract expires (ACAS, UK, 2015:13).
- Sub-contracting: This is the use of a commercial contract to get trained staff or expertise for a limited period.
- Zero hour contracts: This is a contract where the employer is not obliged to provide the employee with the minimum hours of work and the employee is not obliged to accept the hours of work offered to them (ACAS, UK, 2015:14).
- Homeworking: This is when an employee carries out all or part of their duties from home. Advances in technology have made this possible (ACAS, UK, 2015:15).
- Mobile working: This is where an employee works all or part of the week away from the place of employment, usually receiving instructions by phone or computer at home or in a vehicle (ACAS, UK, 2015:16).

2.11 The benefits of addressing work-life balance issues

It must be emphasised that work-life balance is every individual's responsibility. An employer cannot maintain a healthy work-life balance for the employees although the workplace can influence an individual's ability to maintain a healthy work-life balance. Unpredictable work demands, rigid start and finish times and long working hours will make it challenging for employees to find a healthy work-life balance (New Zealand Department of Labour, 2007). The benefits for employees to develop this balance are:

- Having a greater range of choices about work and career;

- Not needing to sacrifice home and work life for each other, and
- Acquiring satisfaction from both areas of life, hence achieving a good quality of life.

The distinct benefits for employers are:

- Attracting a wider range of candidates;
- Retaining employees that the organisation has already invested in and avoiding the costs associated with replacing employees;
- Improving employee morale and work satisfaction – this has a direct effect on staff being more responsive to the customers’ needs, hence improved customer satisfaction levels, and
- Employees are more likely to meet their organisation’s needs, such as changing working hours or shifts to meet changing customers’ requirements, if the employer has been flexible in meeting their needs (Paulose & Sudarshan, 2014:10).

3. METHODOLOGY

This research is exploratory and aimed at determining the issues which female employees face within Eskom Rotek Industries. A questionnaire based on the SWING Nijeman questionnaire was compiled with questions relating to work-life balance. The questionnaire was adopted in the De Sousa study (2009) on the relationship between work and non-work stressors and work-life balance amongst global market trading professionals. It was distributed to a sample population of 254 female employees. Systematic random sampling in the probability technique was adopted and a response rate of 47% was obtained. The statistical package utilised for the analysis was STATA. An exploratory data analysis technique was utilised to analyse the data and each attribute was measured on a 5-point Likert scale.

The measuring instrument comprised 20 target and classification questions. The questionnaire was made up of three parts covering the biographical information, factors affecting work-life balance and measuring the work-life balance. The chi-square test, Fisher’s exact test, Goodman and Kruskal’s Gamma test were performed to determine associations between the variables.

Validity and reliability measurements were also conducted to ensure that the results are reliable and measuring what was intended to be measured. All the ethical considerations were addressed to ensure confidentiality and voluntary participation.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographics

The biographical information results indicated that the majority of the female workforce were Black women between 26-35 years of age with 0-5 years of experience in their current positions. 51.67% of the sample population were married or living with a partner and a marginal smaller population of 48.34% were widowed, divorced or single. A 49.17% majority of female respondents hold a diploma and 53.34% were employed in HR, procurement, administration, training, safety and finances. Of the sample population, 29.17% was in core technical roles and only 17.5% was in management positions.

4.2 Factors influencing work-life balance

The following seven statements were included in the questionnaire to establish to what extent they influence the work-life balance of the participants. These factors were identified from the literature review:

- Number of hours overtime worked in a week
- Level of organisational support
- Business travel
- Number of subordinates
- Number of children at home and their ages
- Caring responsibilities towards ageing parents or disabled family members, and
- Level of home support

The results for these factors were as follows:

- The respondents who were working 0-5 hours overtime per week, measured 71.6%, which is reasonably low. This was followed by 6-

10 hours overtime worked by 15.83% of the respondents. Those who worked 16-20 hours overtime and 11-15 hours overtime were 5% and 5.83% respectively, while only 1.67% worked more than 20 hours overtime in a week.

- The majority, 40.83%, agreed that their personal commitments were being accommodated by their supervisors or managers, while 37.5% remained neutral and 21.67% disagreed.
- The 76.67% majority of females were not subjected to excessive business travel. Only 1 respondent travelled more than 1 800 km per week for business purposes.
- The 64.17% majority of the sample population had no sub-ordinates reporting to them. Only 2.5% (n=3) of the female employees participating in this study had more than 100 subordinates and another 2.5% (n=3) had 21-50 subordinates. Those with 1-20 subordinates comprised 30.83%.
- The 73.34% majority of the female sample had a child or children at home. Of the respondents with children, 20 women had children in the age group 0-3 years old and 14 in the age group 3-5 year old, while 3 respondents had children in both groups.
- Of the respondents, 28.33% agreed that they were taking care of ageing parents or family members with disabilities on a daily basis; 59.17% disagreed and 12.5% chose to remain neutral.
- Regarding sufficient support at home, 58.33% agreed that there was sufficient support at home, 22.5% disagreed that the home support is sufficient and 19.17% chose to remain neutral.

4.3 Measure of work-life balance

The questions in this section were aimed at measuring the level of work-life balance amongst the female respondents. For the purposes of this study, only the work-home interface was observed to assess the influence of work on home. The 5-point Likert scale was used to measure the results, where 1 indicated strongly agree, 2 indicated agree, 3 indicated neutral, 4 indicated

disagree and 5 indicated strongly disagree. The following statements were presented:

- WLB1: Being stressed at home due to demanding work
- WLB2: Work schedule making it difficult to fulfil domestic obligations
- WLB3: Work taking up time that could be spent with family and friends
- WLB4: After a work day/week, feeling less in the mood to engage in family activities
- WLB5: Unable to balance home and work life successfully
- WLB6: Feeling exhausted most of the time due to overload

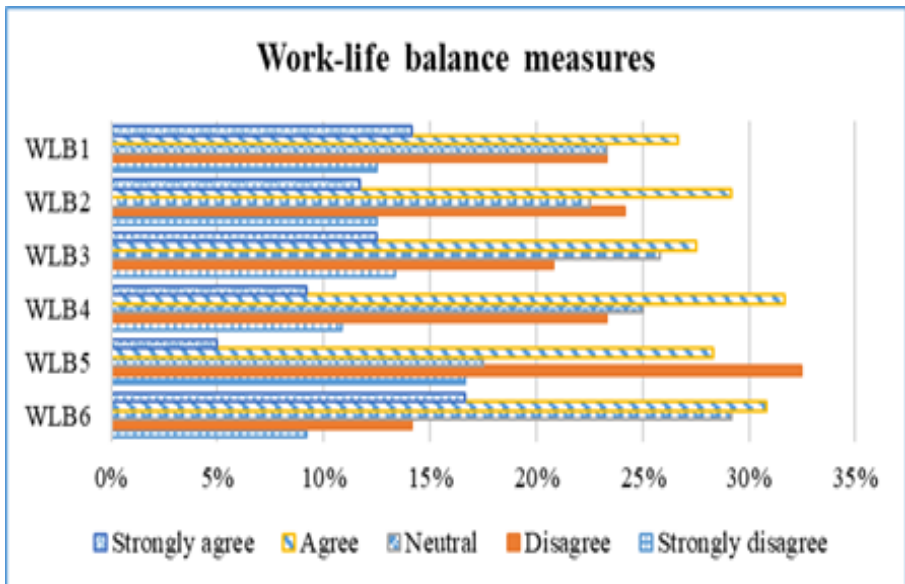


Figure 1: Level of work-life balance

According to the results in Figure 1, the majority of the respondents agreed with the statements, indicating high levels of stress and not enough time for family life. All the statements were also met with a high percentage of neutral

responses. WLB5 indicated the highest percentage of disagreement with a total of 49%. This is not quite in line with the other responses since it indicated that the majority of the respondents are able to balance work and family life successfully, yet they also agreed to feeling stressed, tired and not having enough time for domestic responsibilities.

4.4 Tests of association

- The chi-square test for independence was performed to test whether there was a relationship between work-life balance and level of organisational support.
- Fisher's exact test was performed to determine if there was a relationship between work-life balance and marital status, field of work, race, caring for ageing parents or family members with disabilities and home support.
- Goodman and Kruskal's Gamma test was run to determine the association between work-life balance and age group, number of years in current position, additional/overtime hours worked in a week, business travel kilometres per week, number of sub-ordinates and number of children at home.

4.5 Level of work-life balance

The results indicated that a small majority of the respondents, at 40% (n=48), had a low work-life balance. The number who indicated high levels of work-life balance measured 37.5% (n=45), and 22.5% (n=27) were neutral regarding their levels of work-life balance.

4.6 Biographical information

The detailed results are shown in Table 1. All testing was done at alpha=0.05 level of significance. The only significant relationship found was between the field of work of the respondents and the level of work-life balance, with a p-value of 0.032.

Table 1: Association between work-life balance and biographical variables

	HIGH	NEUTRAL	LOW
AGE			
18-25	66.67	22.22	11.11
26-35	40.63	21.88	37.5
36-45	40.63	21.88	37.5
46+	25	30	45
p-value			0.116
YEARS IN POSITION			
0-5	49.18	16.39	34.43
5-10	27.08	27.08	45.83
11+	18.18	36.36	45.45
p-value			0.125
MARITAL STATUS			
Single	50	21.43	28.57
Married	25.53	27.66	46.81
Living with partner	60	6.67	33.33
Widow	0	50	50
Divorced	21.43	21.43	57.14
p-value			0.069
HIGHEST QUALIFICATION			
Post graduate	13.33	20	66.67
Graduate	35.29	29.41	35.29
Diploma	47.46	18.64	33.9
Matric	26.92	33.33	46.15
None	66.67	33.33	0
p-value			0.143
FIELD OF WORK			
Engineering	30	15	55
Maintenance/Production	20	20	60
HR/Procurement	30	35	35

Management	28.57	14.29	57.14
Other	54.55	25	20.45
p-value			0.032
RACE			
Black	45.59	20.59	33.82
White	21.88	28.13	50
Coloured	37.5	12.5	50
Indian	22.22	33.33	44.44
Other	66.67	0	33.33
p-value			0.374

The second set of variables in the questionnaire determined the influence of specific factors on the work-life balance of the respondents. Table 2 presents the results in detail. Since the p-value for each of the variable is above the significant value of 0.05 there is no significant association between work-life balance and the variables investigated in this study.

Table 2: Association between work-life balance and factors

	HIGH	NEUTRAL	LOW
WEEKLY OVERTIME			
0-5 hours	47.67	22.09	30.23
6-10 hours	15.79	26.32	57.89
11-15 hours	14.29	14.29	71.43
16 + hours	0	25	75
p-value			0.109
ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT			
Agree	44.9	18.37	36.73
Neutral	33.33	26.67	40
Disagree	30.77	23.08	46.15
p-value			0.674
BUSINESS TRAVEL/WEEK			
0-400 km	30.04	27.27	34.78
400-800 km	35.29	11.76	52.94
800 km +	36.36	0	63.64
p-value			0.181
NUMBER OF SUB-ORDINATES			
0	44.16	19.48	36.36
1-20	27.03	29.73	43.24
21 +	16.67	16.67	66.67
p-value			0.139
NUMBER OF CHILDREN			
0	46.88	18.75	34.38
1	38.64	18.18	43.18
2	30	30	40
3 +	25	25	50
p-value			0.118

CARING RESPONSIBILITIES			
Agree	35.29	20.59	44.12
Neutral	20	40	40
Disagree	42.25	19.72	38.03
p-value	0.395		
HOME SUPPORT			
Agree	38.57	25.71	35.71
Neutral	43.48	30.43	26.09
Disagree	29.63	7.41	62.96
p-value	0.051		

When studying these results more closely, the following was noted:

- The respondents who worked more than 11 hours per week overtime had low levels of work-life balance.
- Those who perceived their supervisors and managers to be accommodating had high work-life balance and *vice versa*.
- Respondents who travelled more than 800 km per week for business affairs had low levels of work-life balance.
- For the variable regarding the number of sub-ordinates reporting to the respondent, there was a high level of work-life balance for those who were not responsible for any sub-ordinates. On the other hand, the respondent who had more than 21 sub-ordinates reporting to them the work-life balance was very low.
- The majority of the respondents with children indicated a lower work-life balance, while those without children indicated a high level of work-life balance.
- The difference between high and low levels of work-life balance for the respondents who cared for ageing or disabled family members was rather small. Quite a large number of respondents also remained neutral on this question.

- The respondents who disagreed with having sufficient home support also indicated low levels of work-life balance. This variable also had the lowest p-value at $p=0.051$.

4.7 Responses to the open-ended question

In terms of the responses to the open questions, it is evident that some female employees were experiencing work-life conflict. The long-hours culture and blurred boundaries were evident in the responses. Employee well-being and self-care were emphasised as possible ways to alleviate the work-life conflict issue.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

When examining the results of this study, it was found that they correlate well with the researched literature. From these results, it has been established that most women were experiencing affected levels of work-life balance due to their dual demanding roles. The most significant factor found was that of the field of work. The majority of the respondents in management as well as maintenance and production positions, indicated low levels of work-life balance. This could be attributed to the long working hours and blurred boundaries, being available on the organisation's network at all times. The individual responses to the open-ended questions further confirm work-life conflict. Since the results of the study tested well for internal consistency, it can be accepted that the overall feeling of female employees at Eskom Rotek Industries is one of a low level of work-life balance, and that firm options exist to address this status, for the better performance of all.

By looking at work-life balance within the organisation, Eskom Rotek Industries are joining a growing number of forward thinking organisations in South Africa and around the world. There is sufficient evidence to show that effective work-life balance strategies will greatly benefit both the employees and the organisation.

Flexible work practices, part-time work and childcare facilities are some of the practices that could be adopted within Rotek. Building a supportive work

environment is an important initiative in promoting and enhancing a healthy work-life balance (Doble & Supriya, 2010:339).

Furthermore, employees within Rotek should be encouraged as stakeholders to add value to the development of the organisation through contribution to work-life balance programmes and the compiling and development of such policies within the organisation. They should be encouraged to generate new ideas and to implement such ideas. The employees should also be involved in decisions that affect such benefits. Inter-personal relations should be encouraged. Employees should be encouraged to use their holidays and leave periods, so as to have a healthy work-life balance and to spend sufficient time with their family members. Promoting a healthy work-life balance is key to the organisation retaining critical and scarce skills and avoiding losing their key knowledge. The importance of knowledge and skills retention within Eskom Rotek Industries cannot be over-emphasised.

REFERENCES

- Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (UK) 2015. Flexible working and work-life-balance. ACAS, June: 2015. Available from: http://m.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/3/1/Flexible_working_and_work_life_balance_Nov.pdf; Accessed 20/04/2016
- Bosch, A., De Bruin, G.P., Kgaladi, B. & De Bruin, K. 2012. Life role salience among black African dual-career couples in the South African context. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 23(14), Jul. pp. 2835-2583.
- De Sousa, M.F. 2009. *Relationship between work and non-work stressors and work-life balance amongst global market trading professionals*. M.Com. Dissertation, UNISA.
- Doble, N. & Supriya, M.V. 2010. Gender differences in the perception of work-life balance. *Management Journal*, 5(4), pp. 331-342.
- Emslie, C. & Hunt, K. 2009. 'Live to work' or 'Work to live'? A qualitative study of gender and work-life balance among men and women in mid-life. *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 16(1), Jan. pp. 151-172.
- Hantrais, L. 2003. Comparing family change and policy responses in Europe. *Cross-national Research Papers*, 6(7).
- Jyothi, S.V. & Jyothi, P. 2012. Assessing work-life balance: From emotional intelligence and role efficacy of career women. *Advances in Management*, 5(6), Jun. pp. 35-43.
- Lakshmi, K.S. & Gopinath, S.S. 2013. Work life balance of women employees – with reference to teaching faculties. *International Monthly Refereed Journal of Research in Management and Technology*, 2, Mar. pp. 53-62.
- Levy, I. 2012. *Working mothers and their perceived work-life balance*. MSA Dissertation, Netherlands.
- Malan, S. 2008. Women professionals in South Africa: The interaction between work-life balance and organisational commitment. MBA Dissertation, GIBS, Pretoria.

Martin, P. & Barnard, A. 2013. The experience of women in male-dominated occupations. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 39(2), pp. 1-12.

New Zealand Department of Labour. 2007. *Work-life Balance*. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.dol.govt.nz/worklife> [Accessed: 29/02/2016].

Nii-Dei, O.R., Kwabena, A., Stella, O.A., Sarfo, A. & Harriet, O.K. 2013. *The impact of work-life balance among women in Ghana Police Service*. Christian Service University.

Paulose, S. & Sudarshan, N. 2014. Work-life balance: A conceptual review. *International Journal of Advances in Management and Economics*, 3(2), Mar. pp. 1-17.

Roper, I., Prouska, R. & Ayudhya, U.C.N. 2010. *Critical Issues in Human Resource Management*. London: CIPD.

Watts, J.H. 2009. ‘Allowed into a man’s world’ meanings of work-life balance: Perspectives of women civil engineers as ‘minority’ workers in construction. *Gender, Work and Organisation*, 16(1), Jan. pp. 37-57.