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**THE IMPACT OF FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES  
AND PRACTICES ON WORKING MOTHERS AND  
PREGNANT WOMEN**

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for:  
Masters Degree in Organisational Psychology (MSocSc),

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Faculty of Humanities  
University of Cape Town  
September 2002

**COMPULSORY DECLARATION**

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: 

Signed by candidate
---------------------

 Date: 05-09-2002

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University of Cape Town

## ABSTRACT

The demographic composition of the workplace reflects the increased labour force participation of women, including those who are married or have children. Women are also taking less time out of the workforce for childbirth – indicating that increasing numbers of organisations contain women that are either pregnant or mothers of young children. This research study investigates the impact that organisational family-friendly policies and practices have on the organisational commitment of pregnant women and working mothers. The three-component model of organisational commitment developed by Allen and Meyer (1990) serves as the conceptual basis for this study. Participants consisted of 52 women within two national organisations – the central one being an investment company, with the preliminary focus group conducted at an accounting firm. The research was conducted in the Western Cape, and comprised of one preliminary and 6 full focus groups, as well as an exploratory survey. Transcriptions of focus group discussions were analysed by means of thematic analysis, and quantitative data by means of t-tests. Results confirm those of previous research studies regarding women's need for family-friendly policies and practices. The qualitative emphasis allowed previously unrecognised policies and practices to emerge, as well as the positive and negative consequences of family-friendly policies and the absence thereof. These new findings may be important factors to consider in future research.

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## CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

This research project explores the impact that family-friendly policies and practices have on pregnant women and working mothers.

Over 80% of working women are expected to become pregnant at some point in their working lives (National Council of Jewish Women, 1987, as cited in Klerman & Leibowitz, 1994). Thus pregnant women are highly important to this study – a recent survey found that more than 75% of women who were working full-time before childbirth had returned to full-time employment by the time their children were six months old (Klerman & Leibowitz). Although there is an increased labour force participation of women, the pregnant employee is still regarded as ‘a missing person in management research’ (Caudill, 1994, as cited in Lyness Thompson, Francesco, & Judiesch, 1999, p.487). Thus it may be beneficial for organisations employing these women to attain an understanding of the attitudes and behaviours of pregnant women, as well as the factors that influenced their decision to return to work after childbirth. This was reinforced by Pattison and Gross (1996), who felt there is a need to explore the impact of pregnancy on women at work when an increasing number of women are in paid employment during pregnancy, and the majority of those women continue working into the third trimester of their pregnancies

Pattison and Gross (1996) emphasised the increasing number of pregnant women in paid employment in Britain – the majority of which continue working into the third trimester of their pregnancies. Yet pregnancy may be a stressful period for working women for ergonomic, psychological and organisational reasons (Pattison & Gross). The researchers attributed these difficulties to the great physical demands that pregnancy places on women, to which workplaces are rarely adaptable (Pattison & Gross). Furthermore, pregnancy is a time of psychological transformation and adjustment. According to Nicholls and Grieve (1992a, as cited in Pattison & Gross), women’s work-related stress was associated with negative attitudes of supervisors and colleagues, insufficient flexibility in working schedules, and time pressure. Thus organisational responses to

pregnancy could be a source of stress (Pattison & Gross). Attitudes to pregnant women and working mothers in the workplace generally make it difficult to see these women as effective workers – they are viewed as overly emotional, irrational, physically limited, expensive to employ and less committed to their jobs (Pattison & Gross).

### **Dissertation Outline**

This dissertation is structured into five distinct chapters. Chapter one offers a brief introduction to the research. Chapter two reviews the available literature concerning family friendly policies and practices in organisations and their female employees. Special references were made to organisational commitment and the impact of family-friendly policies and practices upon working women.

Chapter three details the methods employed to collect data for the research study, provides a rationale for the research design, and discusses the analysis of the data. Chapter four presents a discussion containing a thematic analysis and an interpretation of the exploratory survey results. These findings are discussed in the context of past research. Finally, chapter five offers recommendations for future research areas. The recommendations are intended to assist organisations in managing working mothers in such a way that will not only guarantee the retention of the working mothers and pregnant women, but also enhance their organisational commitment.

### **Context of Research**

In the past, women treated work and childrearing as two sequential activities, withdrawing completely from the labour force at the birth of their first child, and not returning to work until the youngest child entered school. Yet both the labour force and the nature of the family have experienced dramatic changes over the past several decades – in South Africa, 39 percent of women worked in the formal sector in 1994, as opposed to 23 percent in 1960 (Central Statistical Services, as cited by Finnemore, 1997). Today, many women regard the activities as simultaneous, taking temporary leave from work

during pregnancy and returning to work when the child is a few months old. Klerman & Leibowitz (1994) found that more than 75% of women who were working full-time before childbirth had returned to full-time employment by the time their children were six months old.

The above findings indicate that women no longer automatically quit their jobs during pregnancy. Rather, women use paid and unpaid leave to spend time with families while also retaining employment (Klerman & Leibowitz, 1997). When considering the importance of women's organisational commitment, it should be noted that about 40 to 52% of the student population at South African universities are female - which is an indication of the number of females entering the labour market (Erwee, 1991, as cited in Schreuder & Theron, 1997). It is thus expected that the South African female labour force will grow faster than the male group (Schreuder & Theron). These demographic changes are not exclusive to South Africa, but are a global phenomenon, as indicated by changes in the United States. Eighty percent of women in the US workforce are in their childbearing years, and eighty percent of these employees are expected to have children during their working lives (Galinsky, Friedman & Hernandez, 1991, as cited in Higgins, Duxbury, & Lee, 1994). Owing to the changes in workforce demographics, a gendered division of labour with the wife caring for children and the husband assuming the role of the breadwinner may no longer be an appropriate option for many couples (Higgins et al.). One of the consequences of the inability to balance work and family demands is the rising level of work-family conflict of employed parents (Higgins et al.).

This problem of mothers balancing multiple roles is a significant concern for both employers and employees (Higgins et al., 1994). Higher rates of employment among women who are mothers may increase stress for both their husbands as well as for themselves (Greenberger, Goldberg, Hamill, O'Neil & Payne, 1989). Similarly, research on single mothers indicates that inadequate financial resources and the absence of a spouse to share responsibilities or offer comfort can exacerbate the difficulties in managing dual roles (Greenberger et al.). Higgins et al. postulated that the consequences of such juggling acts may be stress, absenteeism, turnover, lower job commitment, and

diminished productivity. Therefore organisations may need to re-evaluate outdated personnel policies and expectations (Higgins et al.). Furthermore, some recent empirical studies have noted that corporate culture and human resource practices do have important implications for organisational commitment (Scandura & Lankau, 1997).

In an era where forecasts are predicting a shortage in skilled workers, organisations need to focus on attracting and retaining their talented female employees. South Africa faces not only an escalating skills shortage, but also a productivity crisis and a pervasion of uncertainty and anxiety within the socio-political and business environment (Charlton, 1993). Thus organisations are becoming more family-friendly in order to meet the changing structure of the demand for labour - offering policies and practices as methods of ameliorating conflict between work and family, with the goal of securing a dedicated workforce.

Working women with flexible and supportive managers are reported to be less irritable, have less stress, feel less exhausted and experience less tension between work and family responsibilities (Watkins, 1995). Furthermore, current researchers are exploring the link between family-friendly policies and organisational commitment. This study seeks to understand the impact that family-friendly policies and practices have on working mothers and pregnant women.

## Definition of Terms

### Organisational Commitment

During the last three decades, sustained research attention has formed an understanding of organisational commitment (OC) – its nature, antecedents and consequences (Meyer & Allen, 1997). It has become increasingly apparent that commitment is a complex and multifaceted construct (Meyer, Allen & Smith, 1993). The importance of commitment to the workplace is widely recognised due to its perceived effectiveness as a predictor of job turnover – employees who are strongly committed are least likely to leave the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

In investigating organisational commitment, it should be noted that its conceptualisation has evolved from a unidimensional construct to a multidimensional one. The model adopted within this study was that of Allen and Meyer's (1990) three-component model of organisational commitment. They viewed commitment as a psychological state that characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation, and influences the employee's decision to maintain membership within that organisation (Allen & Meyer). Such a psychological attachment thus has important implications for decisions made by employees regarding their commitment to the organisation, as well as for their resultant behaviour toward the organisation.

Allen and Meyer's (1990) model of commitment is the most contemporary model of organisational commitment, and is adopted in this study. In their review of organisational commitment literature, Meyer and Allen (1991) identified three distinct themes in the literature of commitment, which they believed constituted three different components of OC. The three different components of the commitment construct are affective (AC), continuance (CC), and normative (NC) commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Affective commitment refers to 'identification with, involvement in and emotional attachment to the organisation' (Allen & Meyer, 1996, p.253). Thus employees will remain part of the organisation because they 'want to' (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p.3). Continuance commitment implies that employees stay because they 'need to' – which is determined by the costs (or lack of alternatives) associated with leaving the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p.3). The third component is normative commitment, which refers to employees' sense of obligation to the organisation, causing them to remain because they feel they 'ought to do so' (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p.3).

#### Family-Friendly Policies and Practices

Family-friendly policies and practices are those that ameliorate the conflict between working and raising families (Grover & Crooker, 1995). Family-friendly policies and practices are those that provide employees with greater control over their work and

nonwork lives, such that they are better able to balance the demands between work and family.

In order for organisations to harness the organisational commitment of their female workforce, they need to have a clearer understanding of the policies and practices that stimulate such commitment. Furthermore, organisations need to increase their awareness regarding the effect that current policies and practices have upon working mothers. The issues focused on in this study are those of organisational commitment, the experience of working mothers, and family-friendly policies and practices.

Most of the research in this field has been conducted in America (Grover & Crooker, 1995), Sweden, or the UK – the vast majority employing a quantitative approach. The research recorded within this study is based on the experiences of South African women within South African organisations, and includes both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The qualitative component was necessary in order to explore family-friendly policies from the women's perspective, as opposed to selecting the relevant variables prior to data collection. This provided the opportunity for previously unacknowledged variables or family-friendly policies to emerge from the data.

The following chapter reviews the literature that explored organisational commitment, and family-friendly policies and practices in relation to working mothers and pregnant women.

## CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will explore the literature on the impact of family-friendly policies and practices on organisational commitment. The first section examines some early definitions of organisational commitment, and especially Meyer and Allen's (1990) three-component model of commitment. This multidimensional conceptualisation of commitment is adopted by this study as the framework for understanding organisational commitment and its associated variables. The antecedents of organisational commitment are explored, as well as the behavioural outcomes.

The second section reviews past literature involving gender and women's organisational commitment. This includes competing theories of women's organisational commitment, and findings describing the differences in organisational commitment between men and women. This section examines women's conceptualisation of commitment to the organisation, the ways in which their psychological contract with the organisation diverges from that of men, and managers' perception of the organisational commitment of female employees that utilise family-friendly benefits.

The third section outlines the family-friendly policies and practices that were emphasised in current literature. It is noted that while formal supports from the organisation can have a substantial impact on employees' attitudes, informal supports must also be recognised. It is often the informal support that conveys the culture of the organisation, and therefore determines whether the benefits will actually be utilised by employees.

The final section discusses the outcomes of family-friendly benefits and how they can both positively and negatively impact on the careers of individuals utilising these policies.

## **Organisational Commitment**

### **A Three-Component Model of Organisational Commitment**

During the last three decades, considerable research has been conducted to enhance our understanding of the nature, antecedents and consequences of organisational commitment. It has become increasingly apparent that commitment is a complex and multifaceted construct (Meyer et al., 1993). The importance of commitment in the workplace is widely recognised due to its perceived effectiveness as a predictor of job turnover – employees who are strongly committed are least likely to leave the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990).

Allen and Meyer's (1990) three-component model of commitment is the most contemporary model of organisational commitment, and is adopted in this study. In their review of organisational commitment literature, Meyer and Allen (1991) identified three distinct themes in the literature of commitment which they believed constituted three different components of OC. The three different components of the commitment construct are affective commitment (AC), continuance commitment (CC), and normative commitment (NC) (Meyer & Allen, 1997). Common to these three components is a link between the employee and the organisation that decreases the likelihood of turnover; yet the nature of that link differs for each component of commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Employees with strong affective commitment remain because they want to, those with strong continuance commitment stay because they feel they need to, while those with strong normative commitment stay because they feel they ought to (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Employees can experience each of these psychological states to varying degrees, and the 'net sum' of a person's commitment to the organisation will reflect each of these distinct psychological states (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p.4). Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed that one can achieve a better understanding of an employee's relationship with an organisation when all three forms of commitment are considered together. Other researchers' findings have supported this multidimensional conceptualisation of organisational commitment (Cohen, 1996; Hackett, Bycio & Hausdorf, 1994).

Meyer and Allen (1991) hypothesised that each component develops as the result of diverse experiences, and each has its own set of antecedents and consequences.

### Affective Commitment

A common approach to organisational commitment is one in which commitment is regarded as an affective or emotional attachment to the organisation, whereby the employee 'identifies with, is involved in, and values membership in' the organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990, p.2). In a similar vein, O'Reilly and Chatman (1986, p.493) termed this component 'identification', which occurs when an individual accepts influence to establish or maintain a satisfying relationship. The individual may feel proud to belong to a group, respecting its values and goals without necessarily adopting them as their own (O'Reilly & Chatman).

An early conceptualisation of organisational commitment defined affective commitment in terms of the strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organisation (Porter, Steers, Mowday and Boulian, 1974). This implies that commitment is characterised by three factors: a strong belief in and acceptance of organisational goals and values, a willingness to exert effort on behalf of the organisation, and a desire to maintain organisational membership (Porter et al.).

Porter et al. (1974) predicted that individuals highly committed to an organisation's goals would intend to remain in the organisation to assist with the fulfilment of those goals. Porter et al. expected measures of organisational commitment to be highly effective predictors of turnover.

Morrison (1994) felt that high affective commitment would lead employees to view their employment as based on a relational exchange. Unlike the obligations of a transactional exchange which are clearly and narrowly specified, obligations in a relational exchange are broad and open-ended (Morrison).

### Antecedents of Affective Commitment

Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982, as cited in Meyer et al., 1993) identified a variety of antecedents, including personal characteristics, structural characteristics, job-related characteristics and work experiences. Meyer and Allen (1991) found the strongest and

most consistent relationships within individuals' work experiences. Employees whose organisational experiences were congruent with their expectations and satisfying to their needs developed a stronger affective attachment to the organisation than did those with less satisfying experiences (Meyer et al.).

Meyer, Irving and Allen (1998) tested the hypothesis that the influence of work-related experiences on commitment to the organisation (especially affective commitment) would be moderated by employees' work values. Their findings suggested that the impact of comfort-related experiences on affective commitment was more positive among those who place high value on such experiences (Meyer et al.).

An organisation provides rewards or punishments in return for the contribution its employees make or fail to make, and the employees' become committed to the organisation in accordance with the rewards received or the punishment avoided (Ko, Price & Mueller, 1997). Ko et al. reviewed previous literature, and proposed that AC was thus largely the result of rewards or punishments. Their study examined fourteen rewards and punishments as possible determinants of AC. Those with positive relationships with AC were: job autonomy, supervisory support, co-worker support, distributive justice, legitimacy, promotional chances, job security, and pay (Ko et al.). The antecedents expected to be negatively associated with AC were: routinisation, role ambiguity, role conflict, workload, resource inadequacy, and job hazards (Ko et al.). The relationship between AC and these rewards and punishments is supported in the literature (Mathieu & Zajac, 1990).

Dunham, Grube and Castaneda (1994) included other antecedents of AC in their study, such as task autonomy, task significance, task identity, skill variety, supervisory feedback, organisational dependability (the extent to which employees feel the organisation can be counted on to look after their interests), and perceived participatory management (the extent to which employees feel they can influence decisions and issues of concern regarding the work environment). The use of these antecedents was consistent with findings by Steers (1977, as cited in Dunham et al.) and Mottaz (1988) that all of these factors could be expected to create rewarding situations intrinsically conducive to the development of AC (Dunham et al.)

Akhtar and Tan (1994) suggested that affective commitment could be enhanced by improving welfare measures, developing trust between superiors and subordinates, creating conditions for pleasant relations in the workplace, and other activities that promoted feelings of belongingness within the organisation.

Ko et al. (1997) discussed previous findings that four individual variables impacted on AC: met expectations, work involvement, and positive affectivity increased AC, whereas negative affectivity reduced it. The literature indicates that the environment in which organisations operate affects the employees' affiliations (Ko et al.). Researchers therefore expected that external job opportunity would decrease AC, whereas social support from spouse, parents and friends outside work would increase it (Ko et al.).

#### Continuance Commitment

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) explained that compliance or instrumental commitment involved an individual's commitment that was based on specific, external rewards. Allen and Meyer (1990) and Jaros (1997) suggested that continuance commitment involves two forms of cost-related commitment – one that is based on an employee's perceptions that the costs of leaving the organisation are high because of a lack of alternative employment opportunities, and the other based on the perception that a substantial amount of personal sacrifices would have to be made to leave the organisation. A lack of employment alternatives increases the perceived costs associated with leaving the organisation. Therefore the fewer feasible alternatives employees believe are available, the stronger will be their continuance commitment to their current employer (Allen & Meyer).

#### Antecedents of Continuance Commitment

Continuance commitment was believed to develop as employees recognise they have accumulated investments that would be lost if they were to leave the organisation, or as they discover that the availability of comparable opportunities is limited (Meyer et al., 1993). Therefore anything that increases the cost associated with leaving the organisation could lead to the development of CC (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Ko et al. (1997) suggested eight variables as potential antecedents of CC: self-investment,

general training, social support (supervisory, co-worker, parent, friend and spouse), and opportunity. In the first sample, only supervisory support, friend support and opportunity had significant correlations with the CC scale. In sample 2, five determinants were significantly correlated with the CCS, but only the two correlations involving general training and opportunities were consistent with predictions (Ko et al.).

Dunham et al. (1994) suggested that antecedents to CC could include age, tenure, career satisfaction, and intent to leave. Age and tenure were included as they could act as measures of an individual's investment in an organisation (Dunham et al.). Career satisfaction was expected to provide a more direct indicator of career-related investments, which would be put at risk if the employee relinquished membership of the organisation (Dunham et al.). Intent to leave was expected to be negatively related to CC, because employees who intended to leave the organisation were less likely to become committed to it (Dunham et al.).

It should be noted that the costs of leaving were psychological as well as financial and physical (Ko et al., 1997). If employees move to another organisation, it may disrupt their existing social relationships and increase the psychological cost of meeting new people and learning to work well with new working associates (Ko et al.). It was thus expected that social support from co-workers, supervisors, spouse, parents and friends outside of work would increase CC.

#### Normative Commitment

Allen and Meyer (1990) discussed a third component of OC, normative commitment, that reflected an individual's belief about their responsibility to the organisation. Jaros (1997) conceptualised normative commitment as reflecting a specific type of attachment emotion, whereas affective commitment refers to a more generalised attachment to the organisation.

Allen and Meyer (1990) proposed that normative commitment could be influenced by an individual's experiences both prior to (familial or cultural socialisation) and following (organisational socialisation) entry into an organisation. Regarding the former, an individual was expected to have high normative commitment to an

organisation if significant others (i.e. parents) emphasised the importance of organisational loyalty (Allen & Meyer, 1990). With respect to the latter, it was suggested that employees who have been led to believe - via organisational practices - that the organisation expects their loyalty, would be most likely to have strong normative commitment to it (Allen & Meyer).

O'Reilly and Chatman (1986) discussed this normative component as internalisation, or involvement that was based upon congruence between individual and organisational values. Shamir (1990, p.322) and Penley and Gould (1988) viewed it as a type of 'moral commitment', whereby employees who have internalised values that are similar to those of the organisation, will be more motivated to contribute to the collective work action that symbolises those values - even if these values are not expected to affect the employees directly. The consequence of acting according to one's internalised values is not necessarily a sense of pleasure, but rather a sense of affirmation obtained from the individual abiding by his/her moral commitment (Shamir).

The normative component of commitment has been viewed as problematic by some researchers, and has often been excluded from studies on organisational commitment (Mayer & Schoorman, 1998). The primary reason for this was that the normative commitment scales overlapped significantly with the affective commitment scale (Allen & Meyer, 1996).

#### Antecedents of normative commitment

Meyer and Allen (1991) suggested that two mechanisms, socialisation and exchange, play a pivotal role in the development of NC. Normative commitment develops as a result of socialisation experiences that highlight the importance of remaining loyal to one's employer (Wiener, 1982, as cited in Meyer et al., 1993), or as a result of the receipt of benefits that create within the employee a sense of obligation to reciprocate (Scholl, 1981, as cited in Meyer et al.). The socialisation processes lead to the development of NC as a result of normative beliefs that were internalised pre-entry (familial and cultural) or post-entry (organisational) (Wiener, 1982, as cited in Ko et al., 1997). According to Scholl's (1981, as cited in Ko et al.) norm of reciprocity, NC develops through the receipt of rewards from the organisation that instill a sense of

moral obligation to reciprocate with commitment. This applies to rewards that were beyond the expectations of the employee (Ko et al.).

Akhtar and Tan (1994) felt that normative commitment could be promoted in the workplace through careful selection of employees, job previews, induction training, and organisation socialisation. These practices could match individual and organisation expectations and facilitate the entry of new employees (Akhtar & Tan). Akhtar and Tan emphasised that because organisational norms and individual expectations change over time, it was essential to establish and maintain communication channels to resolve any individual concerns or conflicts of interest that could arise.

Ko et al. (1997) examined two types of expected rewards offered to an employee by others, social rewards and organisational rewards. Social rewards, such as supervisory and co-worker support are derived from interacting with others on the job, whereas organisational rewards (distributive justice, pay, legitimacy, promotional chances, job security, lack of job hazards) are provided by the organisation in order to enhance job performance (Ko et al.). Social and organisational rewards were expected to increase NC, whereas the presence of job hazards was expected to reduce it.

Dunham et al. (1994) proposed a similar set of antecedents for NC, involving co-worker commitment, organisational dependability, and participatory management. The researchers felt it was more likely for NC to develop from organisational dependability and participatory management - which would instil a sense of moral obligation to reciprocate to the organisation - rather than favourable task characteristics (Dunham et al.).

Meyer et al. (1998) evaluated the effects of competence- and status-related variables on normative commitment, and found that employees who had positive experiences would be more likely to feel a greater sense of obligation to remain with the organisation. Shouksmith (1994) found organisational commitment to be strongly related to the opportunity the organisation provided for employees to grow and achieve some degree of self-actualisation.

### Consequences of AC, CC, & NC

Meyer and Allen (1991) noted that although all three forms of commitment could be negatively associated with turnover, there would be differences in on-the-job behaviour and performance associated with affective, continuance and normative commitment. They suggested that affective commitment and normative commitment would be positively related to job performance and citizenship behaviours, whereas continuance commitment was expected to be unrelated or negatively linked to these consequence variables (Meyer & Allen; Irving, Coleman & Cooper, 1997). Thus the researchers emphasised that not all components of commitment were alike, and that organisations hoping to strengthen employees' commitment should consider the nature of the commitment being instilled in employees (Meyer & Allen).

O'Reilly and Chatman postulated that employees' normative commitment, generated from identification and internalisation, would be related to extrarole or prosocial behaviours, whereas compliance-based commitment would not be. Similarly, Jaros (1997) found that emotion-based attitudes such as affective commitment and job satisfaction were better predictors of turnover intentions than were more cognitive attitudes, such as continuance commitment.

Morrison (1994) felt that normatively committed employees would define their job responsibilities based on their internalised values that loyalty to an organisation was important. Thus they would be more likely than others to engage in organisationally functional activities, such as reporting unethical behaviour (Morrison). These findings were consistent with those of Mayer and Schoorman (1992), who suggested that employees experiencing value commitment would engage in behaviours helpful to the organisation regardless of whether or not these were an expected component of the employees' roles.

Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) believed that perceived organisational support (POS) was based on employees' global beliefs regarding the extent to which the organisation valued their contribution and cared about their well-being. Eisenberger et al. utilised a social exchange framework to argue that employees who perceive a high level of organisational support are more likely to feel an

obligation to repay the organisation in terms of affective commitment and work-related behaviour. The increased effort-outcome expectancies and affective attachments would have positive effects on the regularity of work attendance and the level of work performance (Eisenberger et al.). The social exchange framework underlying POS indicated that these perceptions generate feelings of obligation that serve to increase behaviours assisting organisational goals (McFarlane Shore & Wayne, 1993). McFarlane Shore and Wayne expected POS to be positively related to organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB). Organ and Lingl (1994) defined OCB as individual contributions that are neither contractually rewarded nor enforceable by supervision or job requirements.

Millward and Hopkins (1996) argued that the psychological contract was related to organisational commitment, with affective commitment linked to the relational contract, and calculative commitment to the transactional contract. Transactional contracts involve specific, monetisable exchanges over a finite period of time, whereas relational contracts involve open-ended, less specific agreements that establish and maintain a relationship (Robinson, Kraatz & Rousseau, 1994). They hypothesised that the more relational the psychological orientation of employees, the higher would be their self-reported organisational commitment (Millward & Hopkins). This type of psychological contract implies that individuals will fully internalise organisational values and link their identities to the organisation (Millward & Hopkins). Thus the organisational contract, despite being an unwritten agreement, can be a powerful influence over organisational behaviour (Millward & Hopkins). Conversely, it should be noted that psychological contract violations might have a pervasive negative effect on the loyalty of employees and decrease employees' relational obligations (Turnley & Feldman, 1999; Robinson et al.).

Wiener and Vardi (1980) suggested that in a professional setting, the economic contract is less emphasised, and normative commitment assumes more importance in controlling work behaviour. They found that amongst professional employees, normative commitment is the best indicator of work behaviour (Wiener & Vardi). Similarly, Millward and Hopkins (1996) expected those in professional, managerial and supervisory positions to be more relational in their psychological orientations than

would those in skilled manual jobs, who would be more transactional in their psychological orientation.

Mottaz (1988) proposed that from an exchange perspective, work rewards are the key determinants of organisational commitment. It was also suggested that the greater the congruence between work rewards and work values, the greater the commitment (Mottaz). It was found that high levels of values amongst workers make it difficult for organisations to provide work rewards that can sufficiently meet these high work standards (Mottaz). Thus high levels of commitment are not likely to develop amongst these workers (Mottaz).

### **Gender and Women's Organisational Commitment**

The findings on the relationship between gender and organisational commitment have been contradictory. Despite the trends of increased female participation in the workforce, it is often assumed that women have weak and unstable commitments to the work role (Polachek, 1976). Bielby and Bielby (1984) found evidence contradicting this view. They felt that as individuals became engaged in role behaviours, they developed identities associated with those roles (Bielby & Bielby, 1989). Thus women's seemingly greater identification with the family role can be explained in terms of job segregation in the workplace and inequality in the household division of labour, which generate sex differences in commitment (Bielby & Bielby, 1989). The results of other studies on the relationship between gender and affective commitment have had mixed results – Mowday, Porter and Steers (1982, as cited in Ngo & Tsang, 1998) and Mathieu and Zajac (1990) suggested that women were more affectively committed to the organisation than men. Some researchers contended that levels of organisational commitment are as high for women as they were for men (Bruning & Snyder, 1983). Yet other researchers have found a higher level of commitment to exist within men (Marsden, Kalleberg & Cook, 1993). Some studies found women to be less attitudinally committed than men in professional organisations (Graddick & Farr, 1983) and in the accounting profession (Aranya, Kushnir & Valency, 1986). These differences were attributed to either personality factors, to organisational factors, or to a combination of both (Aranya et al.). A meta-

analysis conducted by Aven, Parker and McEnvoy (1993) demonstrated affective commitment to have no relationship with gender.

Rosin and Korabik (1995) criticised previous research for focusing on the dissatisfaction and propensity to leave of managerial women, as it implied that male managers were more committed and satisfied organisational citizens than women. They proposed that women experience greater job demands since they perceive that they had to be better than male colleagues to get as far, and work harder and longer hours to demonstrate their worth (Rosin & Korabik). By finding that the variables which accounted for most differences between managers were age and experience rather than sex, it was demonstrated that differences between managers were primarily situation-centered rather than gender-based (Rosin & Korabik).

Gender can influence the ability to balance work and family in a number of different ways. It can behave as a predictor of the sources of conflict and act as a moderator that impacts on how the conflict is perceived, what coping skills are utilised, and how the conflict is manifested (Duxbury & Higgins, 1991, as cited in Higgins et al., 1994). Gender may also affect employees' perceptions of the workplace and their attitudinal reaction to the organisation (Ngo & Tsang, 1998). According to Lynn, Cao and Horn (1996), women may not have the same career patterns as men because women's careers are more often interrupted for childrearing activities (Ornstein & Isabella, 1990, as cited in Ngo & Tsang). Thus gender may also act as a moderator between some organisational-level predictors and organisational commitment (Ngo & Tsang). This implies that the influences of some organisational practices may be different for men and women.

### Work-Family Conflict

According to Higgins et al. (1994), a gendered division of labour with the wife caring for the family and the husband assuming breadwinner role was no longer a viable option for many couples. Furthermore, one of the consequences of the inability to balance work and family demands was the increasing level of work-family conflict experienced by employed parents. Higgins et al. described work-family conflict as occurring when an individual has to perform multiple roles that require time, energy

and commitment. The amalgamation of these demands could result in role overload and role interference (Higgins et al.). Overload exists when the total demands on one's time and energy are too substantial to fulfil the roles adequately or comfortably (Higgins et al.). Role interference occurs when work and family activities must be performed during the same time periods, but in different locations (Higgins et al.).

Regarding the work-family conflict experienced by working mothers, Higgins et al. (1994) showed that they have higher total work and family loads than employed fathers. It was found that the level of work-family conflict perceived is related to the degree of one's control over work and family roles (Higgins et al.). Women do not experience the same control over the distribution of their time as men, as they continue to assume primary responsibility for the family (Higgins et al.). This lesser control may be the cause of greater interference from work to family for women – especially when children are young (Higgins et al.).

The diverse findings on gender and organisational commitment may be explained through three competing theories. These theories may be employed as frameworks for understanding the relationship between gender and work-family conflict. They are the rational model, the gender role-expectations framework, and the job model.

#### The Rational Model

The rational model of work-family conflict assumes that the amount of conflict one experiences increases in proportion to the number of hours one devotes to work and family roles (Guttek et al, 1991, as cited in Higgins et al., 1994). According to this view, individuals possess limited resources such as time, energy and allegiance (Marks, 1977, as cited in Kirchmeyer, 1992). This implies that the more resources dedicated to one domain, the less resources available for another (Kirchmeyer). Therefore the total amount of time spent fulfilling work and family roles is positively associated with role overload and role interference – both of which are components of work-family conflict (Higgins et al.). Employed women spend more hours than employed men on family and household chores, and more hours on work and family activities in total (Hochschild, 1989, as cited in Higgins et al.). It was suggested within this rational model that women should report more role overload and interference from family to work than men (Higgins et al.).

### The Gender Role-expectations Model

The gender role-expectations model contends that women and men have different levels of commitment because women, as a result of their socialisation, place greater emphasis on their family roles than men (Dodd-McCue & Wright, 1996). This results in different orientations, affecting the role and importance of work (Aven et al., 1993). The gender model postulates that women develop their identity through their interdependent relationships with others (Cook, 1993, as cited in Dodd-McCue & Wright) and place primary emphasis on family roles. According to this model, the socialisation processes of childhood and adolescence create different identities for men and women (Dodd-McCue & Wright). It posits that women are predisposed to be less attitudinally committed to their organisations than men (Dodd-McCue & Wright). The gender model seeks to explain lower female organisational commitment by arguing that women are unable to have an intense involvement in, attachment to or identification with the goals of an organisation because women derive primary identity and fulfilment through family roles (Aven et al.). Thompson and Walker (1989) suggested that the meaning of paid work differs for men and women because the connection between paid work and family differs by gender. While men are able to keep work and family as separate spheres of life, women generally shape their paid work activities in response to family needs (Thompson & Walker).

The gender role-expectations model is thus based on traditional sociocultural role expectations, which prescribe that men take primary responsibility for earning money, while women assume the role of caretaker for the family (Higgins et al., 1994). This model predicts that the hours one spends working in the opposite sex's domain would have a larger psychological effect on one's perception of work-family conflict than hours spent in his/her own domain (Gutek, Searle & Kelpa, 1991, as cited in Higgins et al.). Thus women should experience greater role overload and interference from family to work (Gutek et al, as cited in Higgins et al.).

Ngo and Tsang (1998) noted that this model emphasises women's domestic responsibilities and argues that men and women differ in their organisational commitment. Owing to their role obligations in the home, married women were expected to display less commitment to their organisations (Ngo & Tsang). The

claims that women prefer a slower, mother-specific career path are based on the assumptions of the gender model (Schwartz, 1990). Early attention to slow career tracking for women suggested that it is only women that are predisposed to value home and family (Aven et al., 1993).

Those arguing that women have more organisational commitment than men, seem to have addressed the continuance rather than the attitudinal form of organisational commitment (Aven et al., 1993). Grusky (1966) noted that as women face more discrimination than men, it is harder for them to overcome entry barriers. Thus women who are given access to organisations have higher sunk costs than men do, and on this basis are expected to value their membership more than men (Aven et al.). The idea is that females must invest more time and energy into the organisation than males, and consequently have more to lose – hence their continuance commitment is enhanced (Aven et al.).

#### The Job Model

The third framework with which to predict gender differences in work-family conflict is that of the job model. This model assumes that gender has no special influence how an employee is involved in, attached to, or identifies with the goals of the organisation (Aven et al.). Instead, differences in attitudinal commitment are treated as the result of work experiences (Aven et al.). Karasek (1979) suggested that it is the combination of low control and heavy role demands that is related to high levels of stress. Thus the amount of work-family conflict one perceives will be associated with the employee's work and family-role demands and the degree of control he/she has over these demands (Higgins et al.). Research has consistently demonstrated that women's work and family demands are higher than men's, and that men have more control over their time – making it easier for men to satisfy work and family expectations (Higgins et al.). Although work and family demands may compete for a man's time, they are regarded as mutually supportive (Barnett & Baruch, 1987, as cited in Higgins et al.). Yet women are unable to take time away to satisfy family expectations (Barnett & Baruch, 1987, as cited in Higgins et al.). Women do therefore not have the same control over the distribution of their time as men, as the time consumed satisfying work or family expectations is mutually exclusive (Higgins et al.). This lack of control should result in a more acute perception of interference from work to family and from

family to work for women (Higgins et al.). In addition, this interference is greater when there are young children in the home (Higgins et al.). The lower control, in cases where children are young, may be the cause of even greater interference from work to family for women (Higgins et al.).

The job model contends that attitudinal commitment is a function of the work environment (Dodd-McCue & Wright, 1996). Findings imply that job segregation in the workplace and inequality in household division of labour generate sex-differences in commitment (Bielby & Bielby, 1989). Ngo and Tsang (1998) suggested that the job model highlights the impact of job characteristics and work conditions (Marsden et al., 1993). It is assumed that attitude formation does not develop from gender socialisation, the job model expects attitudinal commitment to vary only when women and men have different organisational experiences (Dodd-McCue & Wright).

The job model suggests that previous findings of gender differences in organisational commitment are evidence of the exposure to different organisational experiences (Kanter, 1977, as cited in Dodd-McCue & Wright, 1996), or a side-effect of methodological flaws where the effects of factors such as age, education, organisational level and occupational setting were not held constant (Aranya et al., 1986). According to this model, when women perform in the same organisational settings as their male counterparts, their commitment arises from the same factors (Dodd-McCue & Wright). It thus was argued that men and women that are working under comparable employment situations would display similar levels of commitment to the organisation (Ngo & Tsang, 1998).

The job model assumes that men and women are treated equally in the workplace (Ngo & Tsang, 1998). Yet evidence shows that women are subject to more employment discrimination than men (Schneer & Reitman, 1990). Women encounter entry barriers, the 'glass ceiling' and may be placed on the 'mommy tracks' (Morrison, White, & Van Velsor, 1992, as cited in Ngo & Tsang). A glass ceiling is an apparent barrier to advancement to the highest and most prominent level of an organisation (Ohlott, Ruderman & McCauley, 1994). Ohlott et al. found organisational discrimination to manifest in subtle forms, such as women being given less critical assignments involving international responsibilities, negotiation roles, and

managing multiple functions and key business units. Furthermore, it was observed that women suffered from a lack of personal support, and continued to feel left out of important networks (Ohlott et al.). Under such circumstances, Ngo and Tsang suggested that women have to expend more effort than men to overcome these barriers, and would therefore value their membership more than men do.

### Critical Perspectives of the Models

Marks (1977, as cited in Bielby & Bielby, 1989, p.777) referred to the rational model as a 'scarcity' view of commitment, and offered an alternative conceptualisation of commitment which was based on 'multiplicity'. He proposed that individuals can form strong commitments in multiple roles and are almost infinitely capable of sustaining many, diverse involvements (Marks, 1977, as cited in Bielby & Bielby). He thus suggested that individuals make time and generate energy to engage in role behaviours to which they are committed. Kirchmeyer's (1992) research participants failed to indicate a scarcity approach towards personal resources. Their levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction were not significantly reduced by increasing amounts of time or involvement spent outside of work (Kirchmeyer). In fact it was more time spent in parenting and community work, and not less time, that was associated with greater organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Kirchmeyer). It should be noted that Gray (1989) found contrary evidence in his study of hospital nurses, whereby the presence of children and the extent to which work interfered with family life was found to reduce organisational commitment.

Dodd-McCue and Wright (1996) were undecided as to which model provided the best explanation of attitudinal commitment for women. Yet the origin of attitudinal commitment was viewed as important, as the models draw varying conclusions about the power of the organisation to positively influence commitment and to change the role of women (Dodd-McCue & Wright). Ngo and Tsang (1998) indicated that in empirical studies, the gender model has received little support - particularly when samples were drawn from professionals and managers. It was found that the organisational commitment of women was not much influenced by their marital status and the presence of children (Karabik & Rosen, 1995, as cited in Ngo & Tsang). In fact, Greenberger et al. (1989) found no differences in the levels of job satisfaction or organisational commitment between married and single women. As indicated by

Pistrang (1984) and Joesch (1997), all women will not react in the same way to pregnancy and a leave policy. Previous findings seem to suggest a preference for the job model for explaining the differences in affective commitment (Bielby & Bielby, 1989; Marsden et al., 1993).

Similarly, Ngo and Tsang (1998) found no evidence to support their hypothesis that gender moderates the relationship between organisational practices and organisational commitment – implying that organisations do not have to revise employment practices to increase women employees' organisational commitment. They did expand on two assumptions regarding why it was expected that women would have lower organisational commitment (Ngo & Tsang). The first premise concerned the sexual division of labour and the woman's primary role in the family, which is expected to constrain and reduce a woman's involvement and commitment at work (Bielby & Bielby, 1989). If this was the case, then gender would have a direct and negative effect on organisational commitment. The second premise concerned the glass ceiling and the discrimination women experience in the workplace. Here men and women executives may develop different career strategies, and they may also develop different perceptions and affective responses to the same employment situations (Ragins, Townsend & Mattis, 1998, as cited in Ngo & Tsang). According to this view, gender would hold as a moderator between some organisational practices and organisational commitment.

Dodd-McCue and Wright (1996) found women to be less committed to their organisations than men, yet the women did not experience a socialisation that produced stereotypical gender-based responses to the work-family interface. Findings suggested that for women, worker characteristics play a dominant role in shaping organisational involvement and job satisfaction, while organisational factors exerted a greater influence on men (Dodd-McCue & Wright). This failure to find support for the gender model raised concerns that human resource policies aimed at enhancing attitudinal commitment are flawed. This is because the experiences in the workplace, though distinct for men and women, are more important in harnessing attitudinal commitment than factors that are stereotypically linked to gender (Dodd-McCue & Wright). This was seen as emphasising the dominance of job factors in affecting attitudinal commitment (Dodd-McCue & Wright).

It was considered that rather than focusing on gender and gender-related variables, organisations should redesign tasks and structures to provide greater opportunities to develop the attitudinal commitment of employees (Dodd-McCue & Wright, 1996). Similar concerns were voiced by Aven et al. (1993) who found no support for the gender model and felt a need for job context to be more closely examined so that the job model of organisational commitment could be applied. Furthermore, findings indicated that organisations could receive enhanced organisational commitment from women by rewarding and encouraging their professional involvement – which incorporates more flexible career tracks with upward mobility (Dodd-McCue & Wright).

Gray (1989) suggested that future research should employ an integration of the gender and job model, rather than utilising the job model for men and the gender model for women. He felt that the result of this dichotomy was a distortion of research findings because of assumptions made about gender-based motivations concerning work and the family (Gray).

#### Women's meaning of OC

Healy (1999) noted that the core of assumptions about women's commitment, are based on women's different career patterns, involving combinations of career breaks and part-time working. The careers of women with caring responsibilities are not usually compatible with the continuous, hierarchical model of a 'vertical' career (Healy, p.186). Healy felt that women's work histories could be characterised by their movement in and out of the labour market between childbirths. Healy argued that the commitment concept is socially constructed and has multiple meanings that may vary over time. Furthermore, one's choices and restrictions are shaped by external structural factors- indicating that decisionmaking is a complex inter-relationship between women's aims, and enabling and constraining structural conditions (Healy).

Singh and Vinnicombe (2000) explored whether female and male engineering managers in a male-dominated industry had a shared understanding of the meaning of commitment at work. The researchers felt this could shed light on why women

managers were perceived as being less committed at work (Singh & Vinnicombe). They found differences between men and women engineers' meanings of commitment, which contained a different mix of commitment sub-concepts (Singh & Vinnicombe). Within these sub-concepts, women gave more volunteer and virtuous meanings to commitment, and spoke more about features of high organisational citizenship behaviour (Singh & Vinnicombe). This involves constructive or co-operative acts that are neither in-role behaviours, nor directly rewarded through formal compensation systems (Organ, 1990, as cited in Singh & Vinnicombe). Yet the male engineers embodied a more vanguard, active meaning, involving more visibility to managers and the enhancement of personal career development through seeking challenging assignments, finding solutions, creativity, innovation and business awareness (Singh & Vinnicombe).

Singh and Vinnicombe's (2000) study showed that there could be gender differences in levels of commitment if measured by the same components of commitment utilised in this study. It was acknowledged that gender differences could be a result of women and men employing different words to explain the same underlying meaning. Yet this study found evidence of gender differences in behavioural meanings of commitment, supporting the proposition that gender differences exist in behavioural meanings of commitment (Tannen, 1986, as cited in Singh & Vinnicombe). Although top women had meanings similar to those of their male colleagues, top managers' meanings were more similar to males' overall – thus female managers and senior technologists did not share the mix of organisationally desirable meanings to the same extent as their male colleagues (Singh & Vinnicombe). The researchers recognised that they evaluated the behavioural outcomes of commitment rather than commitment itself, but they argued that when commitment was assessed by managers, it was the committed behaviour that was examined (Singh & Vinnicombe). These perceived behaviours become the basis on which the shared organisational meanings of commitment are constructed (Singh & Vinnicombe). The researchers proposed that these gender differences may affect the assessment of women's commitment by male managers, unless the organisational expectations of commitment are made explicit rather than remaining a tacitly understood element of commitment culture (Singh & Vinnicombe).

Scandura and Lankau (1997) suggested that women might develop different psychological contracts with organisations than men. They may be more committed and satisfied with work than men when they perceive that their organisation offers policies that are congruent with the family role (Scandura & Lankau). The perception that the organisation supports them in their need to manage both career and family can enhance their commitment and morale (Scandura & Lankau). In response to such contract packages (Rousseau, 1995, as cited in Scandura & Lankau), employees may be more satisfied and connected to the organisation. These positive feelings were associated with working for an organisation that visibly cares about the well-being of its employees (Scandura & Lankau). Flexible work hour systems aided in enhancing women employees' sense of control over their lives and their changing needs (Scandura & Lankau). Scandura and Lankau postulated that practices such as flexible work hours may be considered as part of the psychological contract offered to employees, to which the employee might respond with increased loyalty and work performance. Thus it was found that flexible work hours would be viewed as part of the psychological contract for employees that had family responsibilities (Scandura & Lankau)

### **Family-Friendly Policies**

#### **Contemporary Necessity of Family-Friendly Policies**

Moen and Dempster-McClain (1987) anticipated that employed mothers with preschoolers or with large families would prefer fewer hours of employment. This relationship was not expected for fathers. Yet it was felt that job characteristics would play a part whereby parents whose jobs had flexible schedules, would have less need to reduce their hours of work (Moen & Dempster-McClain). These researchers indicated that more innovative and flexible organisational arrangements of working time are required (Moen & Dempster-McClain). These would permit employees to tailor their work time according to their own distinct needs and preferences.

Parish, Hao and Hogan (1991) indicated that a major barrier to women's entry and full participation in the labour market is care for young children. They found that labour

force participation of women increased as the costs of participation diminished – which involved having either fewer children, or older children (Parish et al.).

Employees with children living at home need time and flexibility to deal with childcare, sick children, and domestic work. Frone, Russel and Cooper (1992) suggested that employed parents of young children were more likely to experience work-family conflict. From the Australian Institute of Family Studies it was established that by 1995, 48 percent of wives with their youngest child under 5 were in the workforce, and 67 percent with their youngest between 5 and 9 (Spry, 2001). Schafer (1980, as cited in Goff, Mount & Jamison, 1990) found that having more children at home is a source of work-family conflict. Others have related the age of children to conflict and shown that parents of younger children experience more conflict than do parents of older children (Fernandez, 1986, as cited in Goff et al.). This research study has therefore followed Goff et al. in focussing on the work-family balance of parents of children from six and under. Similarly, Anderson-Kulman and Paludi (1986) stressed that among infant and pre-school children, the nature and quality of day care services when the mother works are relevant factors in determining the child's adjustment and relationship with the mother.

Furthermore, Elloy and Flynn (1998) found childless couples to have higher levels of job involvement and organisational commitment than couples with children, as the demands for accommodation are generally greater for couples with children. The researchers observed that organisational policies are not sensitive to and do not cater to the distinct child-rearing demands of employees in dual-income households (Elloy & Flynn). They felt the implications for organisations were to foster favourable working conditions and thereby enhance employee commitment (Elloy & Flynn).

It appears that working environments and conditions are ill-suited to pregnant women, yet it is also possible that pregnancy exacerbates poor work practices (Pattison & Gross, 1996). Pattison and Gross observed that for organisations that employ women, pregnancy may be commonplace, yet for most women pregnancy may be a rare event in their working lives. Yet ironically most women are left to deal with any issues or concerns on their own, rather than being supported by organisational policy and structures (Pattison & Gross). Given the appropriate support, however, women may

find working during pregnancy to be beneficial for their psychological wellbeing and financial status (Pattison & Gross). Cohen (1997) found that organisations could enhance the positive attitudes of employees by showing more respect for their non-work domains.

### Family-Friendly Policies and Practices

In investigating family-friendly policies and practices within organisations, it is important to acknowledge both the formal policies and practices, as well as the informal social support provided by the organisation.

#### Formal Family-Friendly Policies and Practices

Ngo (1992) defined flexibility as the autonomy one has in the working milieu, and believed it comprised of three dimensions: locational (whether one can choose the place of work), temporal (whether one can choose the time of the work activity), and social (whether one can choose co-workers). Greenberger et al. (1989) examined workplace support in terms of informal social supports and formal supports, comprising of employee benefits (childcare assistance) and company policies and practices (Flexible work hours). The researchers felt that these were two conceptually distinct domains of variables – the former involve personal well-being, while the latter have to do with work-related attitudes and behaviours (Greenberger et al.).

The formal family-friendly policies and practices explored are flexibility and childcare benefits.

#### Flexibility

Holtzman and Glass (1999) conceptualised workplace policies as those that allow employees to reduce their work hours and those that allow employees to have flexibility in their work schedules. Holtzman and Glass felt that hours-reduction policies were important in allowing women to lessen their time commitments to their employers, and therefore minimise role overload. This policy includes childbearing leave, the ability to work part-time, to re-enter work slowly after childbearing leave, and to avoid mandatory overtime work (Holtzman & Glass). Flexibility policies provide workers with autonomy and decisionmaking power over when and where

their work gets done (Holtzman & Glass, 1999). This notion of flexibility extends to the ability to negotiate days worked, the start and end times of work shifts, the ability to work evenings, nights or rotating shifts that may allow a partner/relative to provide primary childcare needs, and the ability to work some regular work hours at home (Holtzman & Glass).

Ngo (1992) expected that married women in Hong Kong would choose an employment status that best accommodated their household obligations, given their responsibilities for childcare and domestic labour. The underlying belief was that in making employment decisions, wives place more importance on flexibility than on monetary compensation (Ngo). It was suggested that married women with less family responsibilities would select jobs low in flexibility, while women with more responsibilities would accept jobs that are more flexible (Ngo). These findings complied with those of Campbell and Campbell (1994), who found the occupational commitment of women with children to be significantly lower than for those without. This indicated a decreased attraction to paid employment (Campbell & Campbell).

Wenk and Garrett (1992) noted that occupational characteristics have been shown to affect labour force exits. Desai and Waite (1991) expected that women working in occupations that make it easy to combine work and childrearing (or occupations that penalise workforce withdrawal) would be more likely to return to work after a birth than other women. Because flexible work schedules help mothers meet the often conflicting demands of a young child and a job (Glass & Camarigg, 1991, as cited in Desai & Waite), it was hypothesised that women in occupations offering part-time work would be more likely to return to work than those offering mainly full-time work. The researchers felt that occupations offering policies and practices making it easier for women to combine work and motherhood would on average be more attractive to women than to men, for as long as women had primary responsibility for childrearing (Desai & Waite). Greenberger et al.'s (1989) findings were congruent with this, in that women utilised more family-oriented benefits, and were more ready to leave employers for improved benefits. Thus organisations could benefit from programs earmarked at assisting female employees in planning their careers and managing household activities that might interfere with work-related commitments (Steffy & Jones, 1988).

Holtzman and Glass (1999) added that worker autonomy via flexibility in the location of work gives mothers more choices about how to schedule their time to meet the demands of both work and family. It also allows women to accomplish work-related tasks while still being at home with infants at a time when substitute care may be difficult to find, expensive, and developmentally inappropriate (Holtzman & Glass).

### Childcare Benefits

Paid childcare was linked to more hours of work (Parish et al., 1991). Parish et al. explored the childcare support that kin, extended family networks, could provide for working mothers. They suggested that a major barrier to women's entry and full participation in the workforce is care for young children (Parish et al.). They found that although kin access and support can help to alleviate the childcare burden, it diminishes rapidly as the mothers enters their mid-twenties (Parish et al.). The conclusion of this study indicated that kin networks, although valuable, are a frail foundation on which to base any program for the long-run problems of early motherhood (Parish et al.). The tacit suggestion here involved the necessity of greater organisational involvement in childcare and childrearing concerns. Pistrang (1984) made a similar point in reporting that the psychological consequences of employment for working mothers may depend partly on their satisfaction with childcare arrangements.

Workplace-sponsored childcare has been associated with lower employee absenteeism, higher employee morale, positive publicity, and a lower rate of turnover (Anderson-Kulman & Paludi, 1986). Similarly, Kossek and Nichol (1992) found on-site child-care to be positively associated with users' attitudes towards managing work and family. Yet another study found that an on-site child-care centre had no impact on work-family conflict (Goff, Mount & Jamison, 1990). However, it was found that employees who were satisfied with the quality of childcare, irrespective of location, experienced less work-family conflict (Goff et al.). Furthermore, it was found that childcare had greater impact on females than on males (Kossek & Nichol). Grover and Crooker (1995) found that employees benefiting from a family-responsive policy such as childcare information, had greater affective commitment. Thus the affective organisational commitment of employees who had young children was more

influenced by child care information relative to those who had no young children (Grover & Crooker).

Similarly, benefits such as childcare have been found to positively affect membership behaviours, and were viewed as creating a climate conducive to enabling high performance by alleviating problems and encouraging employees to focus on their jobs (Kossek & Nichol, 1992). Kossek and Nichol noted that for employers without familial help, childcare benefits might be a critical support; thus organisations should supply more satisfactory support.

### Organisational Social Support

Organisational social support involves the extent to which the employees perceive they are supported by the organisation, as well as the supportiveness of the organisational culture towards employees balancing work and family.

#### Perceived Organisational support (POS)

Grover and Crooker (1995) explained that when an individual is treated well by the organisation, such as being offered special privileged or benefits, this action develops feelings of goodwill and accompanying positive affect in the employee toward the organisation. These feelings of goodwill may then translate into greater value-sharing or loyalty to the organisation (Grover & Crooker). If an employee accepts benefits from an organisation, then a balanced, positive attitude toward that company can be predicted (Grover & Crooker). Eisenberger, Fasolo and Davis-LaMastro (1990) and Chiu and Ng (1999) found a positive relationship between being valued and cared for by the organisation, and affective commitment to the organisation. Grover and Crooker thus believed that for an individual who receives a family-responsive benefit, that benefit may come to represent the organisation's treatment of that individual.

Eisenberger et al. (1990) argued that employees develop generalised beliefs about the extent to which an organisation is supportive of its employees. Hutchison and Garstka (1996) inferred that any action taken or policy implemented by the organisation or its representatives that affects the employee will influence the employee's perception of support from the organisation. Eisenberger et al. noted a positive relationship between affective commitment and the extent to which employees feel that the organisation

provides them with support, values their contributions and cares about their well-being. This perception of being valued and cared about by the organisation would stimulate the incorporation of organisational membership and role-status into the self-identity of the employee, increasing the prosocial behaviours carried out on behalf of the organisation (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986).

Settoon, Bennett and Liden (1996) understood perceived organisational support to be an individual's perception of the organisation's commitment to its employees. Thus the individual's expressed dedication and loyalty to the organisation was believed to be a reasonable and comparable return (Eisenberger et al., 1990). Settoon et al. and O'Driscoll and Randall (1999) found a positive relationship between perceived organisational support and organisational commitment. Similarly, Aryee and Tan (1992) found that organisational support or opportunity for development would positively affect organisational commitment. These results were congruent with Eisenberger et al.'s expectation that employees who perceived high support from their organisations would express stronger feelings of affiliation and loyalty to the organisation. The implications of these findings point to specific practices and policies that organisations can implement that will cause employees to feel valued by the organisation – and when employees feel valued by the organisation, they are more likely to be committed to the organisation's goals and to the achievement of those goals (Hutchison & Garstka, 1996).

Cohen (1997) found that for employees who valued their nonwork domains, more organisational support increased their ability to cope with demands from multiple domains. Cohen suggested that this would prevent negative attitudes toward the organisation and would result in higher levels of intention to remain in the organisation. He expected that when the organisation was not supportive of its employees, employees who valued their nonwork domains would feel frustrated by their inability to fulfil their nonwork responsibilities and needs (Cohen). Some of this frustration would be attributed to the work setting, the organisation in particular, and could result in stronger intentions to leave the organisation (Cohen).

Tan and Tan (2000) suggested that supervisors are directly responsible for communicating organisational policies and strategies to their subordinates, which

makes them the formal link between the organisation and the employee. Tan and Tan extended the ideas of supervisory and organisational support to supervisor and organisational trust, which was linked to OC. Trust in the organisation affected levels of organisational commitment and turnover intention (Tan & Tan). It was found that when subordinates trust their supervisor, they would generalise such trust to the whole organisation because they perceive their supervisor as representing the organisation (Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). Tan and Tan felt the same could be said about organisational commitment. Thus trust in the organisation was expected to be positively correlated with organisational commitment (Tan & Tan).

Eby, Freeman, Rush and Lance (1999) explored the psychological state of perception of empowerment and exchange, and felt these perceptions would increase when the work context was highly supportive, participative and fair. It was indicated that supervisors can play a key role in this process by encouraging and assisting employees' efforts to attain meaningful goals (Eby et al.).

#### Supportive Organisational Culture

An important family-friendly policy category involves indicators of the quality of interpersonal relationships at work and formal family supports (Holtzman & Glass, 1999). These are respondents' assessments of supervisors' and co-workers' attitudes toward their pregnancy and treatment of the employee on returning to work, the ability to take sick-leave to care for a sick child, and any form of employer-sponsored child care assistance (Holtzman & Glass).

The provision of family-friendly policies may represent an organisational culture which is supportive of families and demonstrated sensitivity to career-family demands (Scandura & Lankau, 1997). Thus employees who perceived their organisational culture to be supportive of employees' involvement in the family domain experienced less work-family conflict (Scandura & Lankau; Thompson et al., 1999). Thompson et al. found that perceptions of a supportive work-family culture are associated with greater utilisation rates of such benefits. It is possible that the presence of flexible work hours in the organisation may be a vital influence on employees' OC in that the presence of these policies demonstrates that the organisation is willing to adapt to employee needs (Scandura & Lankau). In fact, the central finding of Grover and

Crooker's (1995) study was that people are more attached to organisations that offer family-friendly policies, regardless of the extent to which the people might personally benefit from the policies. The perception of a supportive work-family culture was related to higher levels of affective commitment, lower intention to leave the organisation, and less work-family conflict (Thompson et al.). Chiu and Ng (1999) emphasised that in a time and age where total quality and superior customer service are essential to success in an environment of persistent competition, employees' dedication has never been as valuable to organisations as it is now.

A supportive work environment that endorses good relationships with supervisors and co-workers has been viewed as an important predictor of working mothers' job satisfaction (Greenberger et al., 1989). Holtzman and Glass felt that this supervisor and co-worker support was imperative owing to the new mothers needing to adjust to a new set of role demands outside the workplace. The quality of relationships with supervisors has also been shown to be an important predictor of work-family conflict (Goff et al., 1990). They indicated that employer support for and recognition of a mother's responsibilities could take the form of formal policies (such as employer-sponsored childcare) or in the form of positive interpersonal relationships (Holtzman & Glass). Supervisor support was rated as more important to new mothers' job satisfaction than the various formal policies designed to assist them with childcare (Holtzman & Glass).

In the same vein, Grover and Crooker (1995) suggested that even the most family-friendly workplace policies may be useless or counter-productive if the work climate does not support them. Corporate cultures often reinforce the myth that career dedication should be measured by the amount of time an employee spends at work, that career paths should be linear and uninterrupted, and that parental leave is appropriate only for those employees not on the fast track (Starrels, as cited in Lyness et al., 1999). When supervisors or co-workers do not support employees taking parental leave or utilising flextime, these policies will then fail to engender the organisational attachment found in genuinely supportive organisations (Grover & Crooker). The researchers suggested that organisations initiating family-oriented policies need to promote a corporate culture that not only accepts, but also values the necessity and long-term benefits of the policies (Grover & Crooker). Lyness et al.

suggested that this would allow pregnant employees to feel that they do not have to hide their pregnancy for fear of being shunted onto the 'mommy track' or taken less seriously in their careers.

Stroh and Reilly (1997) found that to attract and retain talented managers, organisations must foster work cultures that are less political, and place priority on meeting employees' career needs. Their findings indicated that women who leave their organisations are not only concerned with salary, but also with the female-friendliness of the work environment (Stroh & Reilly). Thus organisations need to attend to these variables if they are to attract and retain women managers.

Aryee, Luk and Stone (1998) found a positive, significant effect of supervisor work-family support on both organisational commitment and turnover intentions. Similarly, Randall, Cropanzano, Bormann and Birjulin (1999) expected that employees of supportive organisations would raise their investments in the form of higher job performance, more positive work attitudes and more helpful citizenship behaviours. Aryee et al. suggested that the supervisor could be perceived as a bearer of the organisation's culture, implying that organisations should train supervisors to be more sensitive to the work-family problems of their employees.

### **Career Implications For Family-Friendly Policy Users**

#### **Positive Consequences of Family-Friendly Policies and Practices**

The literature highlighted two central positive outcomes for employees utilising family-friendly policies and practices: enhanced organisational commitment, and a facilitation of the work-family balance.

#### **Organisational Commitment**

A wide range of personal and job-related variables have been identified as correlates of affective and continuance commitment (Cohen & Lowenberg, 1990, as cited in Ngo & Tsang, 1998). Yet only a few studies, such as Gaertner and Nollen (1989, as cited in Ngo & Tsang) and Scandura and Lankau (1997) have examined factors at the organisational level, particularly those related to employment practices. It has been

postulated that some employment practices can generate affective and continuance organisational commitment, particularly when these practices are perceived by employees as supportive to the accomplishment of their significant needs (Eisenberger, Huntington & Sowa, 1986). Graddick and Farr's (1983) paper indicated that the perceived treatment of employees correlated with organisational commitment according to whether the treatment was viewed as favourable or unfavourable. As men and women may vary in their personal needs and work expectations, some employment practices may have different effects on commitment for the two genders (Ngo & Tsang).

Lyness et al. (1999) confirmed the hypothesis that pregnant women whose organisations provided family-responsive benefits would be more committed to their organisations, would work later into their pregnancies, and would return to work more quickly after childbirth than those not receiving family-responsive benefits.

Scandura and Lankau (1997) explored some explanations regarding the link between the perception of flexible working hours and increased attachment to the organisation and overall satisfaction. They observed that flexible working hours allowed employees to feel greater control over their lives owing to the opportunity to work during times more congruent with personal needs (Scandura & Lankau). Also, employees engage in social comparison processes, and may compare their own occupational setting to peers in other jobs and/or organisations that do not provide flexible working hours. Such comparisons should increase the value of the employees' psychological contract with the organisation and thus their commitment (Scandura & Lankau).

Marsden et al. (1993) found men to have slightly higher levels of organisational commitment than women, which was attributed to gender differences in commitment-related jobs and career attitudes. This finding that OC is enhanced by job-related variables led Marsden et al. to suggest that employers aiming to increase female employees' OC should be attentive to the same features that increase it for male employees – their working conditions and opportunities. Lynn, Cao and Horn's (1996) results supported the suggestions of Aranya et al. (1986) that differences in organisational commitment between men and women could be the result of

organisational variables. It was postulated that if women in male-dominated professions developed similar attitudes, needs and values to men, the sex differences found in OC could be attributable to organisational structure rather than to personality variables (Aranya et al.). It was found that a positive interpersonal climate and the opportunity to work autonomously were of special relevance to OC (Marsden et al.). Other relevant organisational factors included the availability of regular promotion procedures and the fostering of an atmosphere of legitimacy in the workplace (Marsden et al.). There was no evidence found demonstrating that policies alleviating work-family conflict would have a greater effect on the OC among women than among men (Marsden et al.). The availability of childcare assistance was as strongly associated with men as it was with female employees (Marsden et al.).

#### Facilitation of the Work-Family Balance

Scandura and Lankau (1997) discussed women's childrearing responsibilities, citing that 52 percent of women with children under 6 work today, as compared with 11 percent in 1960 (Lee, 1991, as cited in Scandura & Lankau). They suggested that the offering of family-friendly programs might affect the work attitudes of employees, such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction (Scandura & Lankau). Family-responsive policies are associated with the well-being of employees, involving lowered stress, increased job enrichment and autonomy, reduced absenteeism and enhanced productivity (Scandura & Lankau). It was found that female managers reported higher levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction when they were working for an organisation that they believed offered flexible working hours as part of the psychological contract (Scandura & Lankau).

Anderson-Kulman and Paludi (1986) also explored the role strain experienced by employees attempting to integrate work and childrearing roles, and suggested that this stress could be alleviated through the availability of family-oriented occupational policies. They found that many women reported experiencing conflict about care of sick children, or other child-related issues (Anderson-Kulman & Paludi). Role overload is especially acute in the period following childbirth, because infants and toddlers require far more time-intensive care that cannot be provided by mother substitutes (Holtzman & Glass, 1999). Greater job satisfaction was associated with lower levels of role strain of working mothers, which indicates that the workplaces

should make provisions to ease employees' integration of these roles (Anderson-Kulman & Paludi; Holtzman & Glass). Other researchers have also suggested that role juggling can increase distress and negative affect (Williams, Suls, Alliger, Learner, & Wan, 1991). Employers need to modify policies so as to ameliorate the role conflict and strain associated with the multiple roles of working mothers. Thompson et al. (1999) indicated that by not fostering a more balanced work-family life for employees, the organisation is actually contributing to tensions in employees' personal lives, which affects concentration, creativity and productivity at work. Anderson-Kulman and Paludi discussed family-oriented policies such as job sharing, flexible work scheduling, or employer-sponsored day-care.

### Negative Consequences For Family-Friendly Policy Users

Lyness et al. (1999) noted that an especially damaging concept to women is the belief that the pregnant employee is no longer committed to her job, and may not return to work after childbirth. This being a substantial fear of employers, it may result in a woman becoming instantly suspect if she becomes pregnant – irrespective of her accomplishments and commitment (Lyness et al.).

Allen and Russell (1999) noted that despite the proliferation of family-friendly benefits, little research has examined how their usage may affect career outcomes. Lewis (2001, p.22) doubted whether such policies are able to impact on organisational culture and the socially constructed view of the 'ideal worker', and therefore have a negative effect on both the utilisation of policies and the way in which users of the policies are perceived. Thompson et al., (1999) defined a supportive work-life culture as the shared assumptions, beliefs and values concerning the extent to which organisations value and support the integration of employees' work and family lives. However, Lewis argued that the traditional male model of work embodies a range of assumptions about the separation of work and home and the division of labour, which remains a barrier for the acceptance of a supportive work-life culture.

The negative outcomes for female users of family-friendly policies and practices therefore includes their career development being threatened, negative perceptions about their organisational commitment, and gender discrimination.

### Career Development Threatened

Lewis (1997) explored the problem of the lack of utilisation of family-friendly initiatives, and suggested that these policies are perceived as enabling employees with family commitments to work at the margins, yet rarely challenge traditional patterns of work as the norm and ideal. Lewis explained that women do not generally feel entitled to both support for family needs and equity in career development. Thus while many women are hesitant to utilise benefits or to move away from male-oriented, family-hostile ways of working, others accept that taking up benefits will hinder their careers (Lewis).

Schwartz (1996) questioned whether women could use family-friendly policies related to leave and flexibility, and resume career momentum and opportunity for upward mobility. Yet it was suggested by Schwartz (1989) that women utilising such policies should be willing to compromise on career growth and compensation. She believed that organisations should distinguish between career-primary and career-and-family women, and provide them with different developmental opportunities (Schwartz, 1989). While career-primary women should be given the same opportunities as men, they should also be expected to work under the same pressures and time constraints. Yet career-and-family women would be provided with the family-friendly policies desired in order to maintain the work-family balance (Schwartz, 1989). Although this suggestion was highly controversial, it should be noted that the central goal was to encourage organisations to retain talented women who – without a mechanism for balancing work and family – might otherwise leave (Schwartz, 1996).

### Negative Perceptions of Employee Commitment

Lewis (1997) found that while family-oriented policies are being introduced into organisations, the belief remains that time represents money, and therefore also productivity and commitment. Productivity and commitment are measured in terms of hours spent at the office, so women who work reduced hours or do not work beyond traditional working hours, are regarded as less productive and less committed than other staff (Lewis). Lewis felt that commitment is defined by management as finite and non-expandable, which implies that if someone has commitments outside of work, this reduces the level of commitment that can be channelled towards work. The notion

of time as productivity and commitment hinders the positive impact of family-friendly policies on employees, and on the organisation, thus limiting their success in changing organisational culture (Lewis).

Anecdotal evidence has indicated that individuals who make use of family-friendly policies are viewed as less serious about their careers (Powell, 1990). Schneer and Reitman (1994) found that an early career gap had a negative impact on income and managerial level attained during midcareer for both men and women. Powell stated that a request to take time out for family reasons, by a male or female employee, may often be regarded as evidence of lack of career commitment. Hymowitz (1984, as cited in Allen et al.) reported that many male executives persist in believing that working mothers are merely working temporarily, and that women managers who choose to have children are not truly committed to their career. Pistrang (1991) added that an implicit assumption about new mothers is that they are always happy to leave work because their primary commitment is to the family. In fact, according to Castro (1989, as cited in Allen et al.), professional women feel that male managers classify female employees as either mothers or achievers. Researchers (Allen et al.; Allen & Russell) postulated that a parental leave of absence would generate a similar negative effect on career outcomes as that of an employment gap.

Allen and Russel (1999) explored the effects on employee gender, leave of absence and level of performance on perceptions of employee organisational commitment, work commitment, family commitment and reward recommendations. Managers or individuals making performance-related judgements develop opinions about how committed an employee is to various life roles or to the organisation (Allen & Russell). Allen et al. (1994) found that individuals perceived as highly committed to the organisation were more likely to be recommended for organisational rewards than those employees perceived as less committed. Furthermore, managers may subscribe to the stereotype that females reduce their commitment to their organisations due to family reasons (Schwartz, 1989). Employers are thus likely to view family responsibilities and any time away from the job for family reasons as an indication of limited employee commitment to the organisation (Powell, 1990). There is evidence that becoming a parent has a negative effect on a woman's career in terms of how

committed she is believed to be by the organisation (Swiss & Walker, 1993, as cited in Allen & Russell).

Allen et al. (1994) found that taking a short leave of absence by a high performer did not generate negative consequences differentially for men and women, in terms of perceived organisational commitment. Yet the researchers found that employees taking parental leave were viewed as having easier jobs than those not taking leave – if leave could be taken with no ill-effects, the individual was thought to not be a significant member of the organisation (Allen et al.). Allen and Russell (1999) found that both males and females were perceived as less committed to their work after a parental leave of absence than in the control position. In the parental leave position, females were perceived as more committed to the organisation than were males (Allen & Russell). Allen and Russell explained this by observing that women who take parental leave are conforming to a role for their gender that is both acceptable and socially prescribed. Thus Allen and Russell suggested that when evaluating average levels of performance, there may be less certainty for managers in determining who is deserving of rewards – hence perceived affective commitment may have a significant influence over these decisions.

#### Gender Discrimination

Researchers hypothesised that women were rated as performing more organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB) than men (Lovell, Kahn, Anton, Dowling, Post, & Mason, 1999). It was found that women performed higher levels of OCB than their male counterparts, especially in altruistic behaviour (Lovell et al.). However women were not rated with higher performance evaluations, indicating that gender influenced the ratings assigned to women (Lovell et al.). Lovell et al. suggested that a subtle form of discrimination exists because although women engaged in more OCB than men, they were not evaluated more highly than men were.

Allen, Drevs and Ruhe (1999) investigated reasons why college-educated women change employment, and felt it was relevant to explore organisational concerns that apply to the unique career psychology of women (Ornstein & Isabella, 1990, as cited in Allen et al.). They found that supervisory support was positively related to women's OC, as women managers and professionals required more encouragement

than men to reach higher organisational levels. Thus Allen et al. suggested that supervisors need to be sensitised to the career needs and issues of women employees, and to assist them as much as possible in actualising their goals in the organisation. The researchers felt it was imperative for organisations to take women's intelligence and dedication to the organisation seriously, and to not assume that women are any less committed than men (Allen et al.). Furthermore, it was noted that male stereotyping and preconceptions of women were viewed as the biggest factor holding women back from organisational advancement (Ciabattari, 1996, as cited in Allen et al.).

### Conclusion

This discussion has explored the three-component model of organisational commitment (Allen & Meyer, 1990), along with each component's network of antecedents and consequences. The issue of gender and organisational commitment was then investigated, highlighting the growth of women's participation in the workforce and demonstrating the conflictual findings regarding women's organisational commitment. The rational model, the gender role-expectations model and the job model were then examined as competing explanations for the relationship between gender and organisational commitment. It was proposed that women hold different meanings and understandings of OC to men, which may have important ramifications for the development of women's psychological contracts and thus their OC.

The contemporary necessity of organisational family-friendly policies and practices was highlighted, indicating the policies and practices that are required by working mothers, as well as the types of organisational supports. Such formal and informal policies were shown to have a positive impact upon the organisational commitment of women, as well as on their ability to balance work and family. Negative career implications of policy users were evaluated, with research accentuating the negative impact on the users of family-friendly policies. This emphasises the need for organisations to ensure that their attempts at creating a family-friendly environment are not only genuine, but also communicated and endorsed at all levels of the organisation.

The following chapter details the approach to and methods of data collection, interpretation and analysis.

University of Cape Town

## **CHAPTER THREE - METHOD**

This chapter details the method employed in this research and its application to the present study. The chapter consists of six sections: the research context, the research design, a rationale of the research design, limitations of the research design, analysis, and a conclusion.

The first section will discuss the research context, outlining the sample, organisations and unit of analysis investigated within this study. The second section describes the research design, which involves an assessment of focus groups and the exploratory survey as research methods. The utilisation, practicalities and sequencing of the two methods will be discussed. In the third section, the researcher will explore the rationale underlying the research design and the contribution that focus groups and surveys can make to the research goal of identifying the family-friendly policies and practices impacting on female employees' OC. The limitations of a mixed-method research design are also taken into consideration. The fifth section, analysis, details the way in which the qualitative and quantitative data was managed and interpreted.

### **Research Context**

#### **Sample**

The sample selected for the focus groups and surveys consisted of two different groups of women. The focus groups involved working mothers of children who were six and under (preschool age), as well as employed pregnant women. These two groups were also the respondents of the survey. One preliminary mini-focus group and six full focus groups were conducted. The exploratory nature of the research dictated the need to continue the series of groups until they became repetitive, reaching a point of theoretical saturation (Morgan, 1998).

The preliminary mini-focus group consisted of three participants working mothers. This was conducted at a large international accounting firm. Samples 1 to 6 (see Table 1) were full focus groups, consisting of five to twelve individuals. The participants consisted of both pregnant women and working mothers.

**Table 1: Focus Group Demographics**

<b>Sample</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>	<b>Average Number of Children</b>	<b>Average Age of Youngest Child</b>	<b>Average Age of Women</b>	<b>Average Tenure</b>
<b>Full</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>6.7</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>31.9</b>	<b>6.4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>33.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.2</b>	<b>29.3</b>	<b>4.7</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>30.1</b>	<b>1.6</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>3.7</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>4.4</b>

The six full focus groups were conducted at the organisational headquarters of a large, paternalistic and bureaucratic international financial services organisation, which has branches throughout South Africa. This organisation has over thirteen thousand employees within South Africa, and fifty percent of these employees are women. At the organisational headquarters, there are four-thousand and eight-hundred full-time employees, and two-thousand, eight hundred contracting and temporary employees. This organisation will be referred to as 'X' from here onwards.

#### Unit of Analysis

According to Klein, Dansereau and Hall (1994), every construct is level-bound – implying that the researcher had to be aware of level issues when examining organisational phenomena. Rousseau (1985) discussed different levels within organisational research. The *level of theory* describes the target that the researcher aimed to depict or explain, while the level of statistical analysis refers to treatment of the data during statistical procedures (Klein et al.). In this study, the levels of theory and analysis concerned the group – specifically, the group of pregnant women and working mothers with children of six and under.

The level of theory was the group, which indicates that the group members were sufficiently similar that they could be characterised as a whole (Klein et al., 1994). Furthermore, the researcher had to specify the level of theory as well as explain why the group members were expected to be homogenous (Klein et al.). In this study, the group was homogenous as the women were dealing with similar parenting issues as their children were all in similar stages of development.

The pregnant women fit into this group because although they did not have children at the time of the discussion, they were dealing with the same organisational policies and practices as the mothers - such as maternity leave and supervisory support. In addition, their preparation for motherhood implies that they soon would have the same need for family-friendly policies and practices as the working mothers. This notion is consistent with results from the exploratory survey, which indicated that there was no difference in organisational commitment between working mothers and pregnant women (see Appendix E, Table 9). All the participants had to (or were preparing to) balance their family lives with similar organisational policies and practices. Thus many of them were dealing with the same stressors inside and outside of the workplace.

Analysis and interpretation in this research took place at the group level, with a view to drawing conclusions which may assist in harnessing understanding for existing and future groups of women experiencing similar issues within a similar work environment. Furthermore, the results are intended to provide organisations with practical advice on managing these groups in the workplace.

### **The Research Design**

Combining qualitative and quantitative techniques within a single research design represented a methodological union between two divergent research traditions (Wolff, Knodel & Sittitjai, 1993). Incorporating a qualitative approach (represented by the focus group method) into an integrated research design with a quantitative component (an exploratory survey) can enhance the quality of the resulting analysis, as well as the confidence that can be placed in it (Wolff et al.). It should be noted, however, that this combination of methods is not without complexity and shortcomings – implicit in the

two approaches are fundamentally contrasting views of reality and the best ways to explain it.

## The Research Process

### Focus Groups

Focus groups are a type of research technique that collects data through group interaction on a topic defined by the researcher (Morgan, 1996). The focus groups were full groups of 8 to 12 participants, as defined by Greenbaum (1998). Participants were selected on the basis of their common demographics germane to the topic (Greenbaum). The discussions for the full groups lasted approximately 90 to 120 minutes (Greenbaum). Thus focus groups offered the practical advantage of collecting valuable data within a limited timeframe (O'Brien, 1993).

The focus groups were facilitated by a moderator who functioned as the leader of the discussion, stimulating discussion while saying as little as possible during the session (Greenbaum, 1998). The role of the moderator was to stimulate discussion through open-ended questions, as well as keeping the participants focused (O'Brien, 1993). The moderator was required to listen carefully, and employ probes and follow-up questions to concentrate the discussion on topics that elicit participants' personal points of view (Krueger, 1993). The discussions were recorded by audiotape, and thereafter transcribed so as to protect the quality of the research (Krueger).

The degree of structure within the focus groups was based on the type of information that needed to be elicited from the discussions. A balance was required between the researcher's agenda and the participants' insights, necessitating a less structured approach consisting of open-ended questions (Morgan, 1998). This served to stimulate new perspectives and create a discussion emphasising the participants' perceptions of family-friendliness. This type of structure also impacted on the moderator's behaviours, which were balanced between facilitating the discussion and directing it, fostering a moderate degree of structure (Morgan).

When using focus groups as a means of data collection, it was important to recognise that they were conducted in an environment (the organisation) where the processes of

interpersonal communication and social influence were ever present (Albrecht, Johnson and Walther, 1993). Each group contained a combination of women that were work colleagues, as well as women that had never previously met. The focus groups consisted of women from different departments and occupational fields, possessing varying levels of tenure and authority within the organisation. Thus the communication processes within the focus groups cannot be ignored as they affect the validity of the data collected. The social interaction within the groups affected both opinion formation and opinion articulation (Albrecht et al.). Regarding the nature of the focus group discussions, the form of opinion disclosure most valuable to the researcher was that relating to internalisation. These were deeply ingrained and personal opinions, and were the most challenging for the researcher to extract. It was beneficial to the researcher that the nature of the topic was conducive to the sharing of personal experiences and emotions.

The moderator needed to have a deep grasp of these group processes, as the processes had an impact on the nature and direction of the groups' discussions. The group discussions were irrefutably unpredictable, and it was the function of the moderator to anticipate the route the discussions could take. The moderator required the ability and intuition to distinguish the beneficial topics of discussion from those irrelevant ones leading nowhere (Morgan, 1998). It was thus the moderator's task to carefully guide the conversation back towards the mark, making subtle shifts while maintaining group enthusiasm and interest.

The general concepts explored were formulated as a set of discussion guidelines (Knodel, 1993). These were used by the moderator to generate discussion amongst the focus group participants, where participants responded to each other's experiences with reports of their own quite different experiences (O'Brien, 1993). Participants, when comfortable with the other participants, readily shared very personal experiences in a group setting – more readily than in a dyadic interaction (O'Brien). The female participants identified with each other, and shared many of their anxieties and insecurities. The relatively open format of the discussions provided the researcher with an in-depth examination of attitudes (Haslinger & Sheerin, 1994). This allowed

the researcher a richness and diversity of information that would not have been yielded from a one-on-one interview.

This study targeted a sample that had a strong interest in the topic of the survey, which made it probable for there to be very high rates of voluntary participants (Neuman, 1997). Owing to the direct interest that working women have regarding family-friendly policies and practices within their own organisations, the willingness to participate in the focus groups was high. The women felt that this issue related strongly to them and their working lives, and were therefore eager to voice their opinions within an accepted and approved forum.

Morgan (1988, as cited in Blackburn & Stokes, 2000) stated that the hallmark of focus groups was the explicit use of the group interaction to yield data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction characteristic of groups. The participants were more likely to be candid because the emphasis was on the group rather than the individual - thus the participants realised that the attitudes/experiences they shared were not necessarily being identified with them as individuals (Blackburn & Stokes).

Focus groups hold many advantages as a method of gathering qualitative data (O'Brien, 1993). The group interviews acted as a valuable tool in obtaining insight into the way the women perceived and understood their personal life situations (Basch, 1987, as cited in O'Brien). Thus focus groups yielded context and depth as they improved the background behind individuals' views and experiences (Morgan, 1998). Through the give-and-take exchanges of the group discussion, participants were encouraged to investigate both their similarities and areas of dispute (Morgan). Participants, when comfortable with other similar participants, shared very personal experiences – perhaps more readily than they would have in a one-on-one interview (O'Brien). This method facilitated an understanding of certain attitudinal relationships, and the antecedents that contributed to those relationships. Through participants aiming to deepen their understandings of each other, the interpretative insights sought by the researcher were revealed (Morgan).

### Exploratory Survey

The type of survey utilised was that of a cross-sectional, self-administered questionnaire (Neuman, 1997). The researcher gave questionnaires to respondents, who read the instructions and recorded their answers. The survey was completed by focus group participants after the discussion was closed. Forty-nine participants responded to the questionnaire. The survey consisted of seventy-one items that were based on a five-point scale, allowing participants to select a response ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree', or from 'completely unimportant' to 'highly important'. This form of survey was most appropriate to this study as it was most cost-effective and it could be conducted by a single researcher (Neuman). The survey offered anonymity, avoided interviewer bias, and allowed the respondents to complete the survey at a time convenient to them (Neuman).

The researcher developed the survey questionnaire that was used to measure variables, based on the research objectives. Issues that were taken into account in the survey construction were the wording of the questionnaire, types of questions asked, the length of the survey, and the order or sequence of the questions (Neuman). Given the sensitive nature of the research, it was important for the survey researcher to construct the survey in such a way so as to be sure that the answers provided by respondents were 'true' (Strickler, 1999).

The survey was used to produce quantitative information about the social world, and describe features of people in the social world (Neuman, 1997). The survey process was deductive – the researcher began with a theoretical or applied research problem which resulted in empirical measurement and data analysis (Neuman).

### **Rationale of Research Design**

A mixed-method research design is employed in this study, involving focus groups and an exploratory survey. The preliminary focus group was especially beneficial in guiding the survey construction (O'Brien, 1993). This focus group data informed the content of the survey questionnaire, such as the wording and item development (O'Brien). Furthermore, the focus groups provided an understanding of what the research project meant to members of the study population (O'Brien). For example,

focus group data allowed the researcher to learn the phraseology that the women utilise to describe their own experiences (O'Brien). This aided the investigator in asking useful questions, as well as asking the questions in a useful way (O'Brien). Thus by utilising these two methods, they complemented one another and counteracted the limitations inherent in each method, forming a unified research design (Wolff et al., 1993).

### Combining Multiple Methods

Burrell and Morgan (1979) defined four paradigms that consist of diverging meta-theoretical assumptions, which may dictate the researcher's frame of reference, mode of theorising and action plan. The different paradigms are thus based on different sets of assumptions, and different ways of viewing the world or social reality (Burrell & Morgan). The focus group research is located within the interpretive paradigm, which takes a subjectivist approach to the analysis of the social world (Burrell & Morgan). It seeks explanation from the realm of the individual, from the frame of reference of the participant rather than from the observer (Burrell & Morgan). Furthermore, its approach to social science is nominalist, anti-positivist, voluntarist, and ideographic (Burrell & Morgan). Survey research, however, falls under the functionalist paradigm, wherein concerns are approached from a stance that is realist, positivist, determinist, and nomothetic (Burrell & Morgan). The assumption here is that the social world is composed of concrete empirical artefacts and relationships that can be identified, measured and studied (Burrell & Morgan).

According to Creswell (1994), most applications of qualitative and quantitative methods rely on contrasting meta-theoretical assumptions about both the nature of knowledge and the most appropriate ways of generating that knowledge. It was argued that one could not operate in more than one paradigm at any given time, as the acceptance of the assumptions of one paradigm implied the rejection of the assumptions of all the other paradigms (Burrell & Morgan). Thus the use of multiple methods has spurred a paradigm debate, from which several schools of thinking arose (Creswell, 1994). The 'purists' argued that paradigms and methods should not be mixed, the 'situationalists' proposed that certain methods are appropriate for specific situations, and the 'pragmatists' encouraged the integration of methods in a single

study (Creswell, p.176). Studies combining focus groups and surveys adopt the pragmatic approach, which asserts that a false dichotomy exists between qualitative and quantitative approaches, and it attempts to make the most efficient use of both paradigms in understanding social phenomena (Creswell, 1994).

Thus the amalgamation of two paradigms may lead to much scepticism. While proponents of quantitative approaches may be sceptical about anything termed typical without painstaking definition and verification thereof, qualitative researchers may be reluctant to generalise at all (Wolff et al., 1993). Thus when employing both methods, interpretation and generalisation may continue to be a point of issue (Wolff et al.).

Miles and Huberman (1994, p.10) expressed confidence in qualitative data owing to its 'local groundedness' and proximity to a naturally occurring event in a natural situation. The emphasis was thus on a specific case, a focused and bounded phenomenon embedded in its context (Miles & Huberman). Because the influences of the local context were not stripped away, the potential for discovering and understanding the latent issues was strong (Miles & Huberman). The qualitative data yielded focuses on holism and richness so that the underlying complexity could be revealed. The researcher attempted to obtain a 'thick description' from the data, which was both vivid and nested in a true context (Miles & Huberman, p.10).

It is therefore evident that reconciling these two explanations required careful attention to the difference between choosing methods and operating within paradigms (Morgan, 1998). A central concern lay with any failure to understand the significant differences between qualitative and quantitative approaches to research. Morgan's stance acknowledges the importance of paradigms, because he asserted there is much to be gained from recognising the deep epistemological divergences between qualitative and quantitative approaches to the perception and pursuit of knowledge.

It is for these reasons that Morgan (1998) suggested that any research design should be matched with an appropriate set of motivations for combining qualitative and quantitative methods. One such motivation for this study involves the notion of complementarity, which aims to use the strengths of one method to enhance the performance of another method (Morgan). It has been broadly defined as measuring

overlapping but different aspects of a phenomenon, yielding an enriched understanding of that phenomenon (Greene, Caracelli & Graham, 1989, as cited in Morgan). The central goal of this study was to therefore integrate the complementary strengths of each method through a division of labour (Morgan).

The division of labour was accomplished through two decisions: a priority decision that links a principal method with a complementary method, and a sequence decision that indicates whether the complementary method will precede or follow the principal method (Morgan, 1998).

#### Concurrent Use of Focus Groups and Surveys

The concurrent use of focus groups and an exploratory survey was a central part of the design of this study. The use of focus groups allowed the researcher to illustrate and confirm conclusions from the survey analysis (Wolff et al., 1993). The qualitative method added a contextual element that was impossible to extract from the statistical analysis – thus the combination of methods has facilitated an enrichment of the analysis (Wolff et al.). The use of the focus groups also aided in clarifying and elaborating the participants' logic behind the somewhat inconsistent relationships found in the survey (Wolff et al.). The results of the survey could therefore be better understood – highlighting the benefits gained from utilising two independent observations.

As suggested by Wolff et al. (1993), the exploratory survey questionnaire and focus group discussion guidelines were designed in advance to generate independent quantitative and qualitative research perspectives on the topic under investigation. The results of the survey therefore did not inform the contents of the focus group discussion, and vice versa in a sequential manner that is regarded as more common. Instead, both the survey questionnaire and the discussion guidelines were jointly devised before the results of either method were brought to knowledge (Wolff et al.). It should be noted however, that the preliminary focus group data was utilised in the construction of the survey. The survey data and transcribed focus group discussions could have been analysed together or independently (Wolff et al.).

### The Priority Decision

This research-design decision ascertained whether the qualitative (focus groups) or the quantitative (surveys) method would be the principal instrument for gathering the study's data (Morgan, 1998).

The strategy utilised in this study was to select one method as the central means of data collection and to design the complementary method so that it could effectively assist the central one (Morgan, 1998). The method selected as the principal data collection method, the focus groups, contained the strengths that were important to the project's goals, while the complementary method, the survey, provided benefits that added to the research design's ability to fulfil the project's goals (Morgan). This research therefore placed greater emphasis on the focus group data, which was enriched and confirmed by the exploratory survey.

### The Sequence Decision

This decision involves the sequence in which the qualitative and quantitative data were utilised. The different types of information needed to be combined and connected in ways that enhance their contributions to the success of the overall research project (Morgan, 1998). This research design is one that employs both methods simultaneously. The researcher had to support two different field efforts at the same time, as well as co-ordinate what was being learned from the two approaches simultaneously (Morgan). Furthermore, Morgan noted that qualitative and quantitative methods work according to very different timelines, causing the effort of creating connections between them to be extremely complex.

### **Limitations of the Research Design**

Morgan (1996) suggested that studies that bring together focus groups and surveys are an important way of combining qualitative and quantitative methods. The particular strengths and limitations inherent in the different methods means that they complement one another in a unified research design (Wolff et al., 1993). Survey research is seen as the paragon of quantitative analysis with an emphasis on measurement standardisation and representativeness, while focus groups emphasise the importance of finding the subjective meaning of actors in a social setting (Wolff et

al.). Focus groups cannot claim to be representative of a larger inferential population (Wolff et al.). The selection of focus group participants was purposive, and reliant more on suitability or convenience than on representativeness (Wolff et al.). Similarly, the number of focus groups conducted in a single research design will always be small by survey standards (Wolff et al.).

There are a number of factors that could have threatened the quality of data generated from focus group discussions. Haslinger and Sheerin (1994) defined the most significant shortcoming of focus groups as being a lack of precision. If the moderator was not sufficiently skilled, the focus group results could have had limited predictive value, and could rather have reflected the underlying biases of the individuals conducting the discussion (Haslinger & Sheerin). The moderator acknowledged this potential threat to quality, and attempted to maintain objectivity during all discussions.

The moderator of the focus groups was required to listen carefully, and make use probes and follow-up questions in order to keep the discussion focused (Krueger, 1993). If the moderator communicated the wrong verbal or nonverbal cues to participants, the participants may have responded to this and expanded on areas obtaining approval from the moderator while ignoring areas where positive cues were not provided (Krueger).

The moderator also needed to be sensitive to the potential development of a polarisation effect, which was found to occur in focus group settings (Sussman et al. 1991, as cited in Morgan, 1996). This occurs when attitudes become more extreme after the group discussion, but it is not likely to skew the results of most focus group research (Morgan).

Concerns also exist that surveys lack the flexibility of focus groups to pursue particular issues in any greater depth or to accommodate a wider range of explanatory categories than foreseen in the original questionnaire design (Wolff et al., 1993). Furthermore, surveys cannot capture the kind of in-depth contextual detail that focus groups can provide (Wolff et al.). This is most likely due to the stringent unilateral control exercised within survey research regarding measurement and interpretation

(Wolff et al.). The selection of items on the questionnaires was indicative of priorities established before data collection (Wolff et al.).

Response rates were a concern for the researcher, as a high nonresponse rate could impact on the researcher's ability to generalise from the results (Neuman, 1997). Participants completed the survey straight after the discussion, before leaving the room. Although participants had allocated a two-hour period of availability, many of them were forced to leave prior to completion of the survey questionnaire because of time pressures. Those leaving early were given a 'take-away' survey, yet the response rates for these were not optimal.

### **Analysis**

The research analysis consists of two main sections: the analysis of the qualitative data, and the analysis of the quantitative data. Within the first section, the noting of patterns or themes is discussed, which involves clustering and counting. Within the section on the analysis of the quantitative data, the origin and reliabilities of the scales utilised are presented in tabular format. The quantitative tests conducted are also briefly discussed.

#### **Analysis of Qualitative Data**

In accordance with the research objectives, the most appropriate form of analysis was that of tape-based analysis. This involved a careful listening to the tapes on which the focus group discussions were recorded, and the preparation of a transcript-based analysis and thereafter an abridged transcript (Morgan, 1998). The abridged transcript was considerably shorter than transcript-based analysis – it was arranged as advised by Morgan, according to themes running through each focus group and contains comments that directly related to the topic of interest.

In the analysis of the focus group data, there were two critical components - one mechanical and the other interpretive (Knodel, 1994). The initial stages were mechanical, where the data was organised and subdivided into meaningful segments. Thereafter followed the interpretive aspect, which involved determining criteria for organising the

textual data into analytically useful subdivisions (Knodel). This was necessary in order for the search for patterns within and between subdivisions to yield meaningful conclusions (Knodel). A provisional list of descriptive codes or themes was created prior to fieldwork, obtained from previous literature and studies (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Some themes were revised after fieldwork, while some were created from the data yielded.

#### Noting Patterns or Themes

During analysis, certain patterns or themes began to emerge from the data. These patterns involved similar variables across categories of responses, as well as patterns of processes involving connections within the context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In establishing themes, it was necessary to decide how much weight to assign to different kinds of information. It was not only the participants' words and context that had to be considered, but also the internal consistency within the group, the frequency and extensiveness of certain comments and the specificity of participants' responses (Morgan, 1998). The researcher thus sought evidence of the same theme from different subjects whilst remaining open to disconfirming evidence. Miles and Huberman explained this as pattern-coding, where recurring themes pull together separate pieces of information.

#### Clustering

Clustering was used to group and then conceptualise objects that had similar patterns or characteristics (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

#### Counting

The researcher identified themes from the data that emerged a number of times, and were consistently presented in a specific way (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Thus in deciding which themes were significant or recurrent, the researcher utilised the advice of Miles and Huberman and employed the process of making counts, comparisons and weights. This process aided the researcher in clarifying what was present within a large quantity of data, in verifying hunches, and in keeping the researcher analytically honest (Miles & Huberman).

## Analysis of Quantitative Data

### Quantitative Tests Conducted

T-tests were used to evaluate the differences in means of organisational commitment between two different groups of women: those whose youngest child was one year old, and those whose children were between the ages of two and three. T-tests were also used to compare the organisational commitment means of married women to those of women who were single, divorced or 'other'. The t-test was appropriate for sample sizes as small as 10, as long as the variables were normally distributed within each group and the variation of scores in the two groups was not reliably different (Neuman, 1997). The t-test makes the assumption that the data follows a normal distribution within each group. This assumption was tested by the Shapiro-Wilk's test, which tested whether the data was normally distributed. If the data was not normally distributed, it would have been necessary to use the non-parametric equivalent of the t-test, the Mann-Whitney U test. Yet with a small sample size, it was advisable for the researcher to employ both tests and check for consistency. The equality of variances assumption was verified with the F test (which was included in the t-test output). (See Appendix E, Tables 6, 7, and 8).

The purpose of analysis of variance (ANOVA) was to test for significant differences between means in working mothers' organisational commitment. There were three groups compared: women with no children, with one child, or with two-to-three children. When comparing only two means, the ANOVA gives the same results as the t-test for independent samples (when comparing two different groups of cases or observations), or the t-test for dependent samples (when comparing two variables in one set of cases or observations). The ANOVA also makes the assumption that the data follows a normal distribution in each group. As before, the researcher tested this assumption using the Shapiro-Wilk's test. If the data was non-normal, the nonparametric equivalent of the ANOVA was employed - the Kruskal-Wallis test. For the purposes of this research, the Kruskal-Wallis test evaluated the consistency of the parametric ANOVA in the presence of small sample sizes. (See Appendix E, Tables 9, 10, and 11). Owing to the limited size of the sample, factor analyses were not conducted.

Table 2: Origin and Reliability of Scales

Scale	Reliability	Source	Comments
<u>AC</u>	0.85	Bagraim (2001), adapted from Meyer & Allen (1997).	The average inter-item correlation of 0.51 is moderate, which may point to some questions with low internal consistency. Such questions are Q1 ('I would be happy to spend the rest of my career with X') and Q2 (I really feel as if X's problems are my own'), which have significantly lower inter-item correlations than the other questions.
<u>CC</u>	0.789	Bagraim (2001), adapted from Meyer & Allen (1997).	The average inter-item correlation is low at 0.389. Problematic questions are Q7 ('Right now, staying with X is a matter of necessity as much as desire') and Q12 ('One of the few negative consequences of leaving X would be the scarcity of available alternatives'). Their inter-item correlations are 0.43 and 0.39 respectively.
<u>NC</u>	0.83	Bagraim (2001), adapted from Meyer & Allen (1997).	The average inter-item correlation was low at 0.37. Q18 ('I owe a great deal to X') had a significantly low inter-item correlation of 0.12.
SUPC (Support of Coworkers)	0.55	Bagraim (2001), adapted from Kim, Price, Mueller and Watson (1996).	The Cronbach Alpha indicates that this construct has not been reliably captured by the three questions (Q33, Q34, Q35) relating to it.
SUPM (Support of Managers)	0.93	Bagraim (2001), adapted from Kim et al. (1996).	
POS	0.76	Bagraim (2001), adapted from Eisenberger et al. (1986).	The average inter-item correlation is low at 0.366, with problems in Q59 ('If given an opportunity X would take advantage of me') and Q60 ('X is willing to help when I need a special favour').

Family-Friendly policies & practices	0.82	Compiled by researcher from the literature.	The average inter-item correlation is low at 0.36. Q26 ('Crèche Facilities') and Q31 ('Support from Coworkers') had extremely low inter-item correlations, and would significantly increase the Cronbach Alpha if deleted.
Consequences of family-friendly policies & practices	0.95	Compiled by researcher from the literature.	The average inter-item correlation is 0.65. The two questions with the lowest inter-item correlations are 39 ('I worked later into my pregnancy than expected') and Q40 ('I returned to work sooner after childbirth than expected'), with correlations of 0.42 and 0.13 respectively.
Work-Family Culture	0.71	Adapted by Thompson et al. (1999) from Lyness et al. (1999). Items 63 & 67 are from Thompson et al. (1999), with all other items coming from Lyness et al. (1999).	The average inter-item correlation is low at 0.196. Items containing the lowest inter-item correlations were Q61 ('At X, women can easily combine career and family') and Q64 ('It is generally quite acceptable to talk about one's family at work'), with inter-item correlations of 0.18 and 0.137 respectively.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, it should be emphasised that focus groups and surveys each offered a distinct set of strengths and limitations to this mixed-method research design (Wolff et al., 1993). The focus groups and exploratory survey offered asymmetrical yet independent observations of the study population that facilitate the ability to draw conclusions, as well as confidence in the nature of the conclusions themselves (Wolff et al.). The researcher was cognisant of the theoretical assumptions guiding the use of these methods (Wolff et al.). By taking careful consideration in selecting an appropriate research design, the researcher addressed the potential incompatibilities in the analysis of these two research methods. In describing the analysis of the qualitative data, it was explained that patterns and themes were noted through clustering and counting. The analysis of the quantitative data was also discussed,

where the researcher assessed the origin and reliabilities of all the scales employed in the study. Furthermore, there was a brief explanation of the quantitative tests conducted. Such a focus on the analysis of the data aided the researcher in taking the necessary caution in ensuring the quality of the interpretations and conclusions drawn. The following chapter records the discussion and results of the research.

## **CHAPTER FOUR – RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter contains the central themes from the focus groups with working mothers and pregnant women. The first section discusses participants' perceptions of how the organisation managed its working mothers and pregnant women. The second section discusses the positive consequences of family-friendly policies and practices and the perceived negative organisational outcomes from a lack of support for working mothers. The discussion concludes with recommendations made by the research participants for the organisation. Integrated into these sections are the preliminary survey results and significant correlations.

### **Perceived Management of Women in the Organisation**

This section explores participants' perceptions regarding the organisation's management of its working mothers and pregnant women, and its handling of women's issues. The participants felt discriminated against, and perceived a disparity between the internal and external images of the organisation. The participants described their experiences of maternity leave, of balancing work and family, as well as their level of perceived organisational support - from the organisation, top management, immediate supervisors and coworkers.

### **Perceptions of Discrimination Against Working Mothers**

The participants expressed strong perceptions of bias and experiences of discrimination as pregnant women and working mothers. They perceived discrimination in the organisational leave policies, in the expectation of the participants' availability for work, and in the top management decision-making processes. The participants felt they were also discriminated against through the poor communication with the all-male management team.

### Perceived Discrimination in Leave Policy

The participants felt that the organisation does not recognise or value the caregiving role of working mothers. This was interpreted by participants as discrimination, particularly in the granting of time off work when children were sick. Organisational practice stipulated that this time was included in their leave - causing the leave of mothers to be far less than that given to other organisational members. As one participant explained: *"I think (that its) gender discrimination because men aren't the ones who would sacrifice that time. It's us women who do it (FG4)."*

Another participant emphasised her sense of injustice, *"But I think that's unfair because it's not your choice. When you have a child you have to go...it's not like you want to go. It's like you are forced to go for the child's health. So why must you work that time in? (FG6)."* The participants felt that the time consumed in seeing to family emergencies (such as obtaining medical care) for sick children should not be taken off their leave – nor should they have to work it back. These results echo those found amongst American women by NACAB (1990, as cited in Smith, 1999) which reported that women took doctor's appointments as part of their holiday leave in order to avoid upsetting employers or coworkers.

### Perceived Discrimination In Expectation of Availability For Work

The participants were frustrated at being expected to work overtime, irrespective of their roles outside of the workplace. They felt that this was unrealistic in terms of their available time for work and nonwork roles. Fondas (1995) suggested that employees who were expected to work overtime became less productive and were more prone to burnout. Furthermore, the participants felt that this expectation was unfair, as overtime was perceived as being linked to one's career mobility. *"...people need to have a balance in their life...don't expect your moms to be able to work from 7 am to 7 pm. If you don't do it then you don't get anywhere in your career... they expect too much (FG5)".*

This expectation of overtime was interpreted as a lack of empathy and understanding within management. It was suggested that the central principle of women's lives is their

relatedness to and mutual support and empathy with others (Erdwins, 2001). The participants' inability to work overtime was viewed by management as a lack of commitment and dedication. This contributed to the stress they experienced. As one participant expressed, "*And then it's like 'You're not dedicated to people because you don't work overtime'. But what do they want you to do with your children in that little bit of overtime? (FG1)*".

The participants felt that their performance should be judged according to the outputs they produced, rather than on the amount of hours they spent in the office each day. Women's family ties are viewed as obstacles to promotion, as these ties limit the women's availability at work, and being available is seen by managers as essential for promotion (Linehan & Walsh, 2000). The women felt that the attitudes of managers and their methods of evaluating performance need to be aligned with tangible outcomes rather than vague impressions of how hard people work. Yet they felt that instead, the method of performance appraisal hinged on the overtime they worked. The participants echoed the mothers with young children from Singh and Vinnicombe's (2000) study, that organisational commitment should not be measured by the hours worked. Yet male managers emphasised their expectation of overtime from their subordinates (Singh & Vinnicombe). A participant argued against this system:

*It is those values and attitudes that have to change. That we need to trust our people. We need to manage what they contribute. Not what you can see, and how long you see them for. Not how much time you spend in the building that is monitored through your access card. You see what value are you as an individual adding and contributing to our business, our bottom line (FG3).*

Some of the participants were in situations where they required greater growth and challenge within their careers. Yet a move to the next stage of their careers was stipulated as involving overtime. The participants had been led to believe that without the ability to work longer hours, the upward move would not be possible.

*I can't actually go any further with my career because going any further means that I really need to do a lot of overtime, a lot of work after hours and I can't do that. I can't give that of myself because of my child... I'm in a situation where I can't really move unless I apply myself and put in the extra hours and the extra time. I can't (FG2).*

In organisations where long hours are considered as important for career advancement, mothers are faced with identity dilemmas and difficult career decisions (Linehan & Walsh, 2000). The pay imbalances and career advancement obstacles within companies such as X was a central concern for Luzzo (1994), and Moncrief, Babakus, Cravens and Johnston (2000). Participants felt that their organisation should do more to facilitate the movement of women into upper-level management positions.

#### Perceived Discrimination in Top Management Decisionmaking

Participants felt that the all-male top management team lacked understanding of or empathy for issues facing working mothers. This issue contributed to feelings of resignation and disempowerment amongst the female workforce. They felt that top management comprised of a group of men who had no family responsibilities apart from working. One of the participants described this sense of alienation from the top management team:

*There isn't that open culture... you don't know where to raise things like this (issues of working mothers) because most of the – well all of the men on our development board take the decision. They all have children and they all have full time wives at home (FG1).*

The participants were frustrated with management's decisionmaking process, felt that they had no power over this process and were unable to influence it. The participants insisted that it was not transparent, and that it seemed to be 'something secretive' that took place behind closed doors. Participants felt alienated from the group of men making decisions in the organization and controlling the process. One participant confirmed this

feeling of alienation, *'Your request goes into a little black box somewhere and you get an answer 'yes' or 'no' and there's no dialogue, no discussion (FG1)''*.

Participants argued that they were never given justifications for why their proposals for family friendly policies were refused. Thus they did not understand the problems with their proposals, which prevented the women from improving them so that the policies could eventually be accepted. Watkins (1995) noted that this was likely to lead to feelings of hopelessness, cynicism, distancing, blame, and ultimately to mediocre performance. One participant expressed this sense of resignation:

*Ja, it's normally 'no' and 'we don't want to discuss it further'. So it's also not a question that you get feedback so that you know how to approach it differently or come back with a different suggestion. And I think that...the whole issue must be sort of demystified. Just put it on the table and, as you say, have input from the employees which I don't feel at the moment is there (FG1).*

#### Perceived Divergence between Internal and External Organisational Image

The focus group participants expressed anger at the discrepancy between the organisation's image projected at the South African public, and its treatment of its own employees. The organisation is perceived as a major advocate of family values, education, and the future of South Africa. However, these values were not made visible to the workforce through the company policies or actions. *"If we're the leaders...then why shouldn't we take a lead on what family values are? That is what we sell ourselves as (FG2)."*

The participants felt that the priority placed on education by the company was not reflected in organisational practices. The participants felt it should be understood that education begins in the home. Thus the time required for mother and child interaction should be validated and encouraged through the implementation of flexible work practices. The participants were frustrated by the organisation's lip-service to education:

*They're 150 years old. I mean how many more years will they need to promote the child and crèches but they're not actually...looking after your child – the education starts at home. That is it. So that's the bottom line (FG5).*

The participants indicated that they had identified with the external image of their organisation, until they were able to compare the organisational policies with those of other organisations. The participants realised that while they had had to fight for six months of maternity leave, women in other organisations were freely given more leave. The women came to realise how poorly they were treated as employees of a large, market-leading organisation:

*I just want to say when I was on maternity leave thinking 'oh fantastic. I can take my 6 months'. I thought it was quite special...I realised I wasn't so special. Just about every other company of people I was talking to were (sic) getting 6 months. The Pick & Pay's were getting 9 months. The Woolies were getting 11 months. I couldn't believe it (FG1).*

This is indicative of the social comparison process where employees compare their situation to peers in other organisations (Scandura & Lankau, 1997). If an employee's work situation appears more favourable than that of their peer's, the comparison can increase the value of the employee's psychological contract with the organisation (Scandura & Lankau). In this case, the comparison process caused the women to feel less special regarding the family-friendly policies they had been given. Furthermore, they felt almost embarrassed for their company that projects such a caring image while providing its employees with the bare minimum. A participant expressed her shame at X's policies:

*You know I'm very positive towards X but suddenly being on maternity leave and hearing what all the benefits the other mother's were getting I suddenly felt "but jislike (sic), you know, I'm actually not proud of X. I actually don't want to tell*

*people that X, with like so many employees only gives to most women 3 months partly paid and then 4 months if you take unpaid (FG1).*

### Maternity Leave

Peterson (1999) felt that maternity leave was an important subject for investigation, as it locates at the intersection of procreation and the market. Peterson (p.169) emphasised that 'a significant dearth of research focuses on maternity leave within organisational studies'. She argued that the research that does address maternity leave, seldom reflects female opinion of this female-directed policy (Peterson). This discussion involves participants' experience of maternity leave – involving their experiences before, during, and after maternity leave. Their re-entry into work and reasons for returning to work were also explored.

### Pre-Maternity Leave

The participants experienced anxiety in revealing their pregnancies to their managers. They were apprehensive regarding the managers' reactions to the pregnancies, as well as the impact that this knowledge would have on their working lives. These anxieties seem to be warranted, as Marill (1993) argued that working mothers contend with underlying tensions in the office. A woman who announces her pregnancy is expected to encounter negative attitudes from managers, colleagues and subordinates (Davey & Davidson, 1994). The participants indicated irritation that this was such a large concern for them in the beginning stages of their pregnancy. One participant expressed her frustration at her level of anxiety:

*Because what I also feel is just with my colleagues...many of us that are pregnant at the moment and the biggest stress for everybody is to tell your Manager. That's like the biggest thing – 'How are you going to do it? (tell the manager)'. And that to me is so wrong (FG1).*

There were several participants that were pregnant at the time of the focus group discussions, yet had not revealed their status to their managers. Some felt that it was something they wanted to enjoy privately, before making it public and confronting the expected negative reactions. Some participants felt such a degree of fear in announcing their pregnancies that they doubted whether they were willing to go through the experience of being pregnant at all. A participant encapsulated the extent that the company had impacted upon the participants' pregnancies:

*It took me a month to go and tell my Manger that I was pregnant. But during that time I felt so guilty and I cried a lot. And I was even thinking about abortion, you know. And today if I look back and I think if I'd gone that route, what sort of personality I would have been? I would have changed that child's life for nothing, for nothing. But emotionally what kind of person would I have been? ...I wonder how many women in this Company have done, gone that route (abortion)... how many employees are X sitting with that is (sic) emotionally unstable, you know, due to that that factor? (FG5).*

The participants felt that their pregnancies were reluctantly tolerated rather than respected and valued. The policy of maternity leave was treated by managers as a favour for their employees, rather than as a right legislated by government. One of the participants emphasised the disdain with which pregnancy was treated: *"They (managers) never just say like 'there we go, like have fun, enjoy your leave! Like, congratulations,' whatever. It's like '...Maternity leave. We're doing you a huge favour here but we'll push it through for you' (FG1)".*

The participants felt that their role in society as family caretakers is important, and should be recognised as such by the organisation. A participant affirmed her need for respect, *"We need to say: 'family is important to our society therefore we will go and have policy's and practices that will govern that' (FG3)".*

The participants were aware that there was an implicit choice in becoming pregnant - between one's family life and one's career advancement. The message they received from their organisation indicated that the two were mutually exclusive. This meant that any career aspirations would have to be postponed for a few years. As an angry participant explained, *"But it seems to me as soon as a worker is pregnant – I've actually said to myself... my career has to take a step, a few steps back for a few years and then again I will start looking after my career again. But why should I? (FG3)"*.

Some participants had been promised promotions or training prior to their pregnancies, which had not become actualised once the pregnancy had been announced. This not only jeopardised the women's opportunities for promotion, but the also security of their jobs. The women who had not received their promised training were at risk of facing retrenchment on their return to work after maternity leave. Similarly, Pattison and Gross (1996) reported that many women are dismissed during pregnancy or maternity leave. A participant described the job insecurity she faced:

*...I've been doing a job for 3 years without being trained for it and I'd been begging for training and now I'm pregnant and who's going to send a pregnant woman out on training? And they promised me that I will be sent on training. I'm still waiting for it... So where has the training gone now? (FG1).*

#### During Maternity Leave

With pregnancy came an implicit assumption that career advancement would not occur. The participants did not feel supported during their maternity leave, and were not informed of any changes within the workplace. They found it difficult to return to work with their previous levels of confidence. This relates to the findings of Pattison and Gross (1996) that reorganisation of departments during maternity leave can translate into uncertainty for women regarding what job they are returning to. This was consistent with participants' experiences: *"When you're on maternity leave it doesn't happen, your career advancement. Because like you say, 'take care of your job' because it's very hard to come back and fit right in where you left (FG4)"*.

### Post Maternity Leave

The participants felt discriminated against when they returned to the workplace, as their salary was 'frozen' irrespective of their productivity levels. Their 'working hours' were judged by the amount of time they spent in the office, rather than by their outcomes. They were not given the promotions that had been due to them, as other employees had spent more time working visibly in the office. This is consistent with Marill's (1993) argument that maternity discrimination has not gone away, but rather become more covert. Pattison and Gross (1996) indicated that although large organisations are more knowledgeable about maternity legislation, this is not necessarily reflected in better treatment of employees. Some participants were confused at their treatment:

*And my normal standard of work is very very high...I haven't deviated from my standard of work even now. I've actually done more projects in the 4 months that I'm back, than I've sometimes done in a normal six months. My standard has always been the same for 11 years. And suddenly I had to take a dip (in salary) when I came back from maternity leave (FG1).*

The manner that the women were perceived and treated implied that they could no longer function as effectively now that they had had a child. Managers implied that as mothers, they could no longer be as focused, and as a result their work would suffer. These findings comply with those of Taylor & Langer (1977, as cited in Pattison & Gross, 1996), who reported that pregnancy may make it harder for women to be regarded as effective workers. It becomes expected that women will behave in a stereotypically feminine way, making it less likely that the women will receive fair treatment within the organisation (Pattison & Gross). The women were subject to the outdated perceptions of managers and coworkers:

*When I came back after maternity leave... there was a project that had to get started and one of the Managers came up to me and said 'I would like you on my project but I've heard rumours that you're not so dedicated, that you're not as*

*thorough and as dedicated as you were before'. And I said 'what?'... (He said) 'Oh no it's just a rumour. They thought you might not be because now you've got a distraction, you've got a child'. I was so furious (FG1).*

The women therefore did not feel it was to their advantage to make use of the family-friendly policies within the organisation. Not only their effectiveness, but also their dedication and commitment would be doubted. The participants' reluctance to admit to having any difficulties relates to Tabor's (1983, as cited in Pattison & Gross, 1996) findings that women are affected by their need to avoid being seen as needing 'special treatment' and by their concern over promotion prospects. Allen et al. (1994) found that employees who take parental leave are viewed as having easier jobs than those who do not take leave. This may be linked to the notion that if an individual can take a voluntary leave without any ill-effects to the organisation, the individual may not be a vital facet of the organisation (Allen et al.). It was thus more constructive to participants' careers to make up any time missed. This is similar to Ohlott et al.'s (1994) finding that women have difficulty finding supportive people to talk to, and feel they must continually fight to be recognised for the work they do. *"I think I would probably feel that (my commitment is doubted when making use of family-friendly benefits). That's why I never use it. I would probably feel that, ja... That's why I would rather make up (time) (PreFG)"*.

### Re-Entry into Work Post-Maternity Leave

Participants indicated that when they re-entered the workplace after their maternity leave, they experienced an initial shakiness in adjusting once again to their work roles and a need to mask any difficulties in making this adjustment.

#### Initial shakiness

The participants felt that there was little understanding of how difficult it was for women to return to work after maternity leave. They felt both intimidated and fearful returning to work – intimidated by having been away from the organisation, and fearful from being away from their children. They needed time to readjust into the 'working woman' role. Some of the participants had not been kept informed of changes that had taken place

within the office, which made them feel left behind and forgotten about. It was almost as if they had to reclaim their jobs and working space. The participants described the emotional turmoil they experienced in returning to work:

*You're shaky (returning after maternity leave). You've got to adjust. It's a whole new ball-game leaving the baby at home first time, especially when you're still breast feeding which most are (for the first) 3-4 months...And in terms of addressing that person and welcoming them in, you must know that (for) every mother who arrives back in the job, the first day is a shaky, adjusting experience. Also what's not recognised is...its like 'Find your desk. Oh no you've been forgotten about'. Oh no. You've got to find your own job again (FG2).*

The participants found returning to work difficult because the expectations of the organisation had not shifted to accommodate the women's new life role. Rather than allowing the women a slow re-integration phase, the organisation expected them to slot directly back into their previous level of performance. The women found it a struggle to attempt to attain their previous level of performance with the additional stress and exhaustion of being a mother. Pattison and Gross (1996) found that women reported becoming forgetful, having difficulty concentrating or planning, and making errors on tasks that they would previously have been able to accomplish. Irrespective of whether these failures actually occurred, the feeling that they did could have generated anxiety for the women about their performance at work. This loss of confidence in their own abilities to handle the job may create a reluctance to return to work (Davey & Davidson, 1994).

The women may thus feel they have to work harder in order to do a good job (Pattison & Gross, 1996). The participants felt they had to take on more onerous tasks than usual in order to prove themselves (Wakefield, 1989, as cited in Pattison & Gross). The participants felt forced to take on the additional pressure in order to meet expectations:

*To them (the company) whether you have a child or not, it doesn't matter...you left and came back and nothing has changed according to them. Your life has*

*become more chaos, more stress, because you've got to manage everything better now with having a child, but to the work they don't know anything different. You come back and you've still got the same job that you have to perform in the same hours. Nothing has changed for them (FG6).*

The participants felt that a shorter working day should be part of the women's reintegration post-maternity leave. Returning automatically to a full working day was extremely overwhelming for the women – physically, emotionally and psychologically. They felt that an initial month of shorter days would ease these anxieties. A participant explained the need for a phasing-in period:

*If your department is functioning particularly well without you...as soon as you come back, you know, have to claim your rightful place...Also the one minute, the one day, you're still with the baby on maternity leave and the next day you're back full time at work. So I think there should be a phasing-in time maybe. A month or so...because you feel obliged... you're back (in a) full time job... it shouldn't be full time (FG5).*

The participants felt that at work they were unable to reveal the difficulties they were experiencing in their family roles. They were often exhausted from inadequate sleep, yet were not able to admit to colleagues or managers that they were not coping. They felt extreme pressure to be as alert and productive as those without children, yet found it draining. One participant described the cycle of masking her exhaustion:

*But then again you try and act like nothing's wrong. You go on. You work your 9-hour day but at the end of the day you are so tired. Now imagine having to look after a baby from about 4 months and being pregnant and still acting normal. And you never want to let on that, you know, you're having a tough time and you're struggling and you're not getting any sleep (FG5).*

The participants were not only hiding their physical struggles, but also their emotional conflicts relating to motherhood. Many found the return to work after childbirth to be a traumatic experience, yet approached this in a fairly stoic manner. A participant expressed that she did not feel she could reveal the emotional impact that childbirth had had on her:

*Especially with the first child it's quite emotional when you come back ...you adore this little thing and now all of a sudden the whole day you're away from your new baby. So emotionally ...it depends on how strong you are and (if) you can handle it. But still it's not nice (FG3).*

### Reasons for Returning to Work After Childbirth

The participants revealed three central reasons underlying their return to work: Financial necessity, the need for stimulation, and their love for their work.

#### Financial

The participants indicated that a central reason for the return to work involved financial need. Thus their return to work after childbirth was one of necessity rather than choice. Campbell and Campbell (1994) suggested that women with young children become sensitive to the financial implications of their new role, and therefore become especially motivated to protect their source of income. Participants explained their financial needs: *"I mean if you want things like a car and a house... and you want the best for your child, you have to go back to work. But you could afford to go back half day, but it's not offered to you (FG1)"*.

#### Stimulation

The participants felt that after childbirth, they required the stimulation of their work to connect them to the real world. One participant described her need to extend her mind beyond childrearing: *"Boredom. Your mind is so not stimulated. Your husband goes to work every day and he comes back with all these stories and you're like 'I fed a baby a bottle'(FG1)"*. Thus for many of these working women, being at home full-time with a baby represented a major change in lifestyle. The women may be prone to boredom and a

sense of isolation (Davey & Davidson, 1994). The participants felt that while focusing their activities and thoughts on childcare, it was as if the world around them faded away. “...you’re just so out of touch with the world. Everyone is talking about everything that’s going on around them at work and you’re like ‘Shit. Did that really happen? Wow’ (FG1)”. The comments are consistent with the results of Davey and Davidson, who found that women preferred to return to work, as it provided them with a sense of achievement and mental stimulation.

### Love of work

Some participants indicated that their return to work was fuelled by a love of their job or the work that they did. The financial need was present, although this was complemented by an enjoyment of their work. The participants seemed to feel that it was important to their life-balance: “I enjoy my work. I need the balance in my life. So yes I wanted to come back as well. It was not only just financial (FG5)”.

### Balancing Work and Family

The participants outlined four themes regarding their efforts to balance work and family after their return to the workplace. There was strong agreement amongst participants that exhaustion and pressure, feelings of guilt and feelings of anxiety were common experiences for working mothers.

Balancing work and family is challenging when an individual has to perform multiple roles that require time, energy and commitment (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, as cited in Higgins et al., 1994). The participants expressed a substantial degree of stress in balancing their work and family roles. The participants felt high anxiety about the rushing involved in their schedules, and their need to be on time for both their company and their children. They were consistently stressed about what would go wrong with their schedule each day. This results in role overload, which exists when the total demands on time and energy are too great to perform the roles adequately or comfortably (Higgins et al.). A participant illustrated the constant barrage of stressors facing working mothers:

*You've got these huge stress levels, you know. Am I going to make it to the school in time? Am I going to make it to work in time? What if my child is sick? What if? And then you think 'what am I going to do at the end of the day?' Worrying, stressing about it (FG4).*

There appeared to be a constant battle to keep both family and work satisfied. The participants felt guilty – whether they were at work or with their children. Both occupy such a great deal of the participants' time, that they become locked in a cycle of rushing between the two. This is indicative of another aspect of work-family conflict, role interference (Higgins et al., 1994). This occurs when work and family activities must be performed during the same time in different locations. One participant described the battle in balancing her time and energy:

*You feel guilty leaving your baby somewhere else. You do worry 'Are they being looked after properly?'...You feel guilty leaving work for your child and you're busy with something. You know there is stress related there. Also getting to work. You get to work later because there is more to do in the morning... And then obviously because you get to work later you've got to leave later so...your morning is busier (FG6).*

Stress is created through the lack of control the women have over the different variables in their lives. Additional stress occurs when the women fear they are destroying the faith that the organisation has placed in them. A participant emphasised her need to do the right thing for both the organisation and her family:

*...I do feel guilty because this whole year it's been totally bad luck...the next thing is like the kids and then they get sick...and I'll then come back to the office...Its almost like you are losing that bit of trust that you've actually got with your employer...and then you sometimes look at 'why am I doing this?'. But it is your*

*responsibility. You have to take care of these people because they are falling under your umbrella... (FG4).*

### Exhaustion and Pressure

The participants expressed panic at having to see to all their work and family needs within the limited time available to them. Anderson-Kulman and Paludi (1986) found that frequently endorsed problems of working mothers involved stress, fatigue, pressure, and difficulties with time-management. Working women reported experiencing a time shortage for nearly all of their activities (Anderson-Kulman & Paludi). Peterson (1999) suggested that women are discovering that the jobs they have assumed demand so much time that little remains for other important commitments, such as family. The participants expressed their daily challenge of trying to fit everything in, *"Life is already so stressful. Running around here or there, trying to put everything into a full day...Its like impossible to do everything...You run out of time to calm yourself (FG3)"*.

The participants agreed that their children were often extremely needy after not seeing their mothers all day. This placed more pressure on the women, who were tired from a full day of work, yet were required to provide their children with quality time. A participant depicted her experience of guilt, pressure, and her attempt to 'do it all':

*I really said to myself – 'You are such a cruel mother you know', and I went on and on with myself, 'How could you? How could you?'. That guilt. And then after a while I started...getting used to the routine. But at the end of the day it's too much, its too much pressure. In the morning you rush to drop your child...Its just too much. And then you come back from work screaming and shouting and sometimes I have to consciously tell myself 'Now you are now under pressure. You are taking it out on your kids. So just stop', you know. And how often do you really get time to get that (time with the children)? You don't because its so much under stress...They're screaming and shouting wanting your attention and especially you in-between. (FG5)*

There was a theme of exhaustion amongst the participants, especially those with young or sickly children. They were often deprived of adequate sleep, yet were required to function as effectively as others. The participants' schedules seemed to be running at sub-human conditions:

*She (baby) sees me for about 2 hours before she goes to sleep. And I have to make it like quality time so I have to spend time (with the child). I can't cook or clean or do other things in that time. So I start cooking afterwards. So I get to bed about 12. I have to wake up three times at night anyway, depending if she's sick – even more. And I'm constantly tired in the day (FG2).*

### Feelings of Guilt

The participants felt guilty that they were neglecting their children and not providing them with the necessary attention. They felt that they were always frenetically attempting to combine work and family, which prevented them from spending the desired amount of time with their families. Hock, McBride and Gnezda (1989, as cited in Erdwins, 2001) defined this as maternal separation anxiety, which involves the mother's sense of worry and guilt over being separated from her child. Hock et al. (1989, as cited in Erdwins) suggested that maternal separation anxiety is significantly related to working mothers' employment and psychological well-being. Linehan and Walsh (2000) found that because of the guilt feelings women experienced in balancing an international career with childrearing responsibilities, the majority of female managers generally choose between career and family. The participants related their feelings of guilt in the focus groups:

*And often when I drop my kid off at the crèche I look and I think 'I can't believe that I'm doing this to her. That I'm leaving you for the whole day with other people'. Although she's in excellent care...Still you just feel you're neglecting your child in a way. You're not being there for them (FG3).*

There was strong agreement regarding the guilt that working mothers experience. They feel guilt at requesting time off work for their children, as well as for spending too little

time with their children. Thus there was almost a sense of resignation that although the company could do substantially more to support them, it could not alleviate their sense of guilt. This sense of guilt was perceived as integral to the experience of being a working mother. As one participant phrased it, *"I've got to be honest. I believe the Company can do so much. But I think that as a working mother you will always experience some of that guilt. It's very very hard (FG2)"*. Furthermore, the participants acknowledged their feelings of guilt for asking for time off from work when they needed it. *"When you need time to go off, ja, it shouldn't be a problem – but it is a problem, hey? You feel awful asking for it"*.

### Feelings of Anxiety

Anxiety was consistently expressed by the participants. They indicated that anxiety was experienced about the quality of their childcare, as well as about the welfare of their children. The participants also expressed anxiety that women would take advantage of the family-friendly policies and practices (if implemented in their organisation), which could result in these policies being retracted.

### Anxiety About Child-Care

The participants were highly anxious in leaving their children with caretakers – family or hired care. The participants' fear that others would not care for the child as they would was related to maternal separation anxiety (Erdwins, 2001). The participants were cognisant of the rampant abuse of children within South Africa, and felt fearful for their children's safety. McBride (1990, as cited in Erdwins) reported significant correlations between maternal separation anxiety and women's experience of psychological spillover from work, such as irritability, preoccupation and fatigue. A participant obtained much agreement when she spoke about how she spent much of her working time on the phone ensuring that the children were safe, healthy and happy.

*Either you've just gotten someone new to look after your child and you're not quite sure if it's the right person...so for him to be touched by someone else I had this fear. I really had this fear...and when they say they had these kids being*

*kidnapped – so it made me (feel) like ‘Oh my children are going to be kidnapped’. All the time...I just had this fear (FG5).*

#### Anxiety About the Welfare of Child

The participants felt that without their daily supervision, the children were more susceptible to negative influences, such as drugs, alcohol, and freedom on the internet. The mothers feared that without the constant guiding of their children, family values would be threatened – negatively affecting the emotional, physical or psychological welfare of the child. The participants were very vocal about their fears:

*But I’ve got a serious issue with the current, the kids of today. Ever since mothers had to start working the kids’ values started dropping. They started going to drugs, they started going into alcohol...You need to go behind it. Why do they do it? Its because their parents aren’t at home... They get lots of money from their parents to compensate for the time that they don’t spend with their children because they have to work... mothers need to be involved in their children’s lives (FG2).*

#### Anxiety About Abuse of Family-Friendly Policies and Practices

The participants placed great importance on family friendly policies, and felt that they would play an essential role in alleviating the women’s difficulties in balancing work and family. Yet the participants expressed anxiety that the family friendly policies would be abused by other women within the organisation. They feared that women would take advantage of the policies, creating resentment amongst supervisors or other organisational members. The participants felt that this could result in the provision of the policies being retracted. *“I think its great that they have it (family-friendly policies) in place...but people mustn’t misuse it...the quicker they misuse it the quicker they’re going to take it back... Its great if its there but don’t misuse it and spoil it for the rest of us (PreFG)”*. Some of the women felt sympathy for employers and the challenge they face in managing a group of employees – which usually contains some that take advantage.

*I would hate to be an Employer. So it's so, like, a fine line. Because you get people – they're genuine – they just work and they're good and they want time off. It's fine. Then you get people that misuse it or abuse it. You know it's like these rotten apples in the basket. And unfortunately that is everywhere (PreFG).*

## Support

An important family-friendly policy category involves indicators of the quality of interpersonal relationships at work and formal family supports offered by the organisation. These form the respondents' assessment of the organisational culture, which in turn impacts on the utilisation of the family-responsive policies. According to the survey participants, 75.5% of participants felt that a supportive organisational culture was 'highly important' for working mothers. An additional 20.4% of participants ranked it as being 'important', indicating that 95.9% of participants overall were affected by their organisational culture. The participants discussed their experiences of support – at the organisational level, the top-management level, the immediate management level, as well as that of their coworkers.

### Perceived Support From the Organisation

This section involves participants' perceptions of support at the organisational level. The participants felt a distinct absence of organisational caring, and believed that the organisation was unnecessarily rigid in its treatment of working mothers. They felt that the organisation demonstrated a lack of trust in the participants.

Perceived Organisational Support (POS) involves a general belief that employees form concerning the extent that the organisation values their contributions and cares about their wellbeing (Eisenberger et al., 1990). High levels of perceived organisational support were thought to create feelings of obligation within employees to repay the organisation (Settoon, Bennet & Liden, 1996). Perceived organisational support has been described as an organisation's 'commitment' to its employees (Settoon et al., p.220). Therefore employees regard their own organisational commitment to the organisation as a

reasonable and comparable form of reciprocation (Settoon et al.). Settoon et al. found a positive relationship between organisational commitment and perceived organisational support.

Hutchison and Garstka (1996) proposed that any action taken or policy implemented by the organisation or its representatives that affects the employee, will influence the employee's perception of support from the organisation. The importance of POS was emphasised by Becker (1992), who found that employees identified their top managers, supervisors and coworkers as relevant foci of organisational commitment.

### Perceived Lack of Organisational Caring

The participants were disappointed that the organisation demonstrated a low level of concern for their lives outside of work. They felt that the organisation should do more to accommodate their family needs. This was viewed as not only impacting on the mothers themselves, but also on the child and the manner in which it is raised. A participant described her group's exasperation by the catch-22 situation they found themselves in:

*You want a balance. When you work the whole day you don't have a balance. You get home 5, 5.30. You've got two hours of your child a day maybe. That is nothing. I mean you decided to have this child. Now you're forced to work the whole day because of financial reasons and your work just won't accommodate anything else. It's like they are totally selfish and they don't worry about the children, and it makes such a big difference in the children the way you bring them up, the more time you spend with them. Its like the Company just doesn't care. (To the company) Your work is the most important and they don't take anything else into consideration. (FG6)*

The participants expressed a need to feel cared for by the organisation. They wanted to know that they are considered as whole, special, skilled people, rather than as cogs in a machine. They spend every day providing the company with their energy and expertise, and wanted to feel that they are recognised and valued for this. O'Driscoll and Randall

(1999) emphasised the importance of employees' perceptions of caring on the part of the organisation, as they may actually lead employees to experience an affective attachment to the organisation.

The participants felt that their children would be the future generation of workers, and thus the organisation should invest more consideration in the raising of these children. A participant expressed a longing to be given more consideration by the company:

*(If there were family-friendly policies) I would feel a little bit more of a friend, you know. You are giving the Company your time and your expertise and the Company is not just sort of like a big faceless machine that dishes out your salary at the end of the month. You know somebody that cares about you as a human being...we're not just all parts of a big huge machine. We are human beings and we do have a responsibility...especially as mothers are bringing up children that are going to be the workers in 20 years time (FG4).*

The participants viewed the organisation's neglect of its working mothers as a myopic approach - participants emphasised that if the organisation cared for them, the positive consequences would be channeled back into the organisation. They felt they were good employees, and were thus worthy of being treated with care and concern. A participant described working mothers' ongoing fight for the organisation to recognise their needs:

*Whereas the people at the bottom that are pregnant and that are suffering...I'm not talking for myself - I'm speaking for everybody in my division...There is no balance at the moment. Your life just revolves around work and work is not interested in what happens afterwards... I know it (proposal for family-friendly policy) goes to the top and that is where it gets thrown out. Because they (top management) just look at the money aspect...but they don't think about the people and the people are the important part of this business. I really think that in the end it's like a circle, a full circle. If you make the employees happy they are going to*

*their best and work their hardest... its about time they look at the women and what the women wants, you know. (FG6)*

The participants were angry at the organisation for showing a lack of concern with the women's other life roles. The participants felt that the organisation clung to its rules and regulations without any consideration to the effects on the employees. The women resented the organisation's rigidity – not only because of the inconveniences caused, but also because the rules seemed irrational and uncompromising. One participant described her frustration:

*I still remember when I brought my son in when I got problems at home. I wasn't allowed to bring my son in. They wouldn't let me sign (him) in. I said 'I just want to fetch something'. And it was just me and him. He was 3 months old. What is he going to do in the office? He's not going to do pinch anything. He's not going to steal anything. But I just couldn't believe these guys...I was not allowed in with this baby. I had to drive home (FG4).*

#### Perceived Lack of Trust

The participants were exceptionally sensitive about their beliefs that the organisation does not trust them. This was most visible in the way their children were treated. The regulations stipulated that the women were not allowed to sign their children into the organisation – rather, it had to be done by their manager. They could, however, sign in anyone else. The participants felt personally affronted by this, as they felt that the organisation was suspicious of both them and their children.

*Its like they don't trust me and it's like I don't own my child...why can I sign in somebody else but not sign in my son? I'm saying 'other people are more important than my son'. Look, I can sign in a friend who (the company) doesn't even know... I cannot do that with my own child, which to me I feel is unfair (FG4).*

Furthermore, this regulation was highly impractical for the women, who were sometimes required to unexpectedly work on weekends or public holidays. When the women were suddenly called to the office, they had nowhere to take their children except with them to work. By the organisation not allowing the women the power to sign in their own children, it sends a message of fear and distrust. This was indicative of an inconsistency between organisational rhetoric and reality. A participant illustrated the communicated lack of trust:

*...I mean the fact that I'm employed as a permanent employee and they still don't trust me, you know. That hurts. That's deep for me. And for my job I'm expected to come out, be on stand-by 24 hours a day. I can't get my baby in the front door (of the building) without a song and a dance. You know – I mean it's weird. (If something is falling over, I need to be on site. I've got a baby but I can't bring him into the (building), but somebody is waiting for me on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor. It just doesn't make sense. So we need to get consistent with what we preach and we need to practice that, and not just talk trust and openness and integrity. We need to live that. (FG3)*

#### Perceived Support from Top Management

The participants were cynical about the level of concern for working mothers within the top management of their organisation. They felt that even though the managers may have their own families, most of them were assumed to have wives that stayed at home in order to care for the children.

*But for us we've all been there, we know it. I know she's got to go to the crèche...I know that. I've been there. But that doesn't mean that the Manager upstairs or the Partner knows that. His wife probably does it. She's probably a housewife but (he) doesn't think like that. (PreFG).*

Thus the participants felt that the men themselves were never exposed to the stress involved in balancing work and family. The women felt this explained their ignorance in

and apathy for accommodating women's needs. The women felt that top management did not genuinely support pregnancy and motherhood, but rather tolerated it. "... *I'm also being treated very well...by my colleagues and by my boss and by my team...but I just don't feel from a Management level there's implicit support...It's (in their eyes) a 'necessary evil' basically that you have to go through (FG1)*". Randall and O'Driscoll (1996) noted that employees that were particularly estranged from top management were likely to be calculatively committed to the organisation.

#### Perceived Support from Immediate Managers

The participants appeared to be cynical about the extent that their managers and supervisors genuinely supported them. They felt that although there may be a token display of support from managers, this was not perceived as conveying their true attitudes towards the participants. As one participant speculated, "... *We don't know what they say upstairs behind closed doors (PreFG)*". The survey indicated that a staggering 71.4% of participants felt that support from supervisors was 'highly important' for working mothers, with an additional 24.5% rating this as 'important'. These results were consistent with those of Erdwins (2001), who found that women who know their immediate supervisor dislikes employees making use of family-friendly policies, may be reluctant to use these resources – even if they are a part of the organisation's benefits package. Similarly, Gerstel and McGonagle (1999) suggested that the implementation and legitimisation of policy by managers may be even more important than official policy in determining whether employees take leave or experience conflict when trying to do so.

Their managers' support for family-friendly policies and practices had a substantial impact on the participants' ability to balance work and family. These results are consistent with those of Goff et al. (1990), who reported that supervisors' supportiveness around family-related problems was directly linked to lowered role conflict for their women participants. Similarly, Erdwins (2001) found that the support obtained from a direct supervisor could be particularly influential in reducing role strain for a woman.

Kacmar and Carlson (1999) found that the exchange quality of the relationship between supervisors and subordinates directly affected the subordinates' feelings of commitment to the organisation. The better the relationship, the more committed the employees (Kacmar & Carlson). According to Konovsky and Pugh (1994), the employee's relationship with a supervisor can represent the organisation to the employee. This indicates that the outcomes of social exchange are based more on the contract between employee and supervisor than between employee and the organisation (Konovsky & Pugh).

#### Perceived Support from Co-Workers

The participants felt that the level of support obtained from coworkers was dependent on the nature of those individuals. Some participants had coworkers that were critical of participants' need to take time off for family reasons, such as caring for a sick child. They felt their coworkers resented this, and perceived this as 'time off' rather than as a necessity. Furthermore, some colleagues questioned this 'family time' taken by the participants. This made the task of balancing work and family more stressful. 48.98% of participants rated coworker support as 'highly important', and another 46.9% viewed it as 'important'. Greenberger et al. (1989) found that having supportive co-workers could make an additional contribution to the organisational commitment of married women. The participants appeared to be quite astute in observing their coworkers' attitudes, as indicated by one participant:

*I will say in my department some people are very supportive and ask you when you come back (they ask) "How is the child?" Others will just totally ignore it and you can see that they think, "Ah, here you're taking time off again" you know...it depends who your colleagues is (sic), the people around you. Some people are supportive. Some people aren't. They question (the time you take off).*  
(FG6)

The exploratory survey results indicated that participants whose youngest child was two- or three-years-old rated the support of coworkers as significantly more important than

respondents with a youngest child of one-years-old ( $t=2.856$ ,  $p=0.007$ ). This may suggest that the participants with slightly older children required more support and empathy from their coworkers. The slightly older children were likely to be more demanding of the participants' time and energy, in terms of organising playschool, lift schemes, daycare, and possibly leave for when the children are sick. Thus the mothers of slightly older children may be more dependent upon the empathy and support of coworkers. (See Appendix E, Table 4).

#### Support Levels Determined by Parental Status

There was a perceived difference in the level of support displayed by the managers and coworkers that had children, as opposed to those who did not. Some participants perceived the unmarried coworkers or managers as far more career-oriented and intolerant of family needs. A participant commented about her coworkers: "*They haven't had kids. They really don't care at all. So it's very difficult (FG1)*".

They felt that the individuals who had experienced parenthood were more likely to understand the family needs and roles of working mothers. "*...You only understand it once you actually have the child, because then your responsibilities shift...(there is) a total difference between someone who has a family and someone who doesn't (FG4)*". Thus it was not only the level of support, but also the degree of understanding and empathy that was different from individuals who were also balancing work and family. A participant described the disparity in support, "*...unless if you're talking to somebody with a child they tend to understand what the issues are but if you are given someone who doesn't have a family or kids it makes it very difficult for people to understand...(FG4)*".

#### **Perceived Outcomes of Family-Friendly Policies and Practices**

The participants' comments were congruent with those of Pattison and Gross (1996), who suggested that because pregnancy is frequent within large organisations, the organisations should possess established procedures for coping with pregnancy. The participants felt that they did in some way have a right to family-friendly policies and practices. They felt

that they were hard workers, and that the provision of family-friendly policies was a reciprocal process. The time consumed away from the job would be recaptured in terms of their productivity and effectiveness. It was emphasised that the participants were not just takers in the process, but were loyal and worth the effort.

*I believe that (if there were family-friendly policies) we would work harder and faster as well. And they (X) would be getting exactly what they're getting out of us full day in a shorter period of time. But I don't think I would be prepared to feel 'Oh actually now I owe this company something', because I don't (FG5).*

The results of the exploratory survey will be included in this section along with the focus group themes. The survey was located along a five-point scale. It should be assumed (unless stated otherwise) that in reporting the results, the percentage of responses for the options of 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' (or 'important' and 'highly important') were merged. Correlations were marked as significant where  $p < 0.05$ .

#### Positive Consequences of Family-Friendly Policies and Practices

The participants indicated that with family-friendly policies and practices, their affective and normative commitment to the organisation would be enhanced. Other positive consequences included organisational citizenship behaviour, alleviation of stress, the participants' increased availability for work, as well as their improved productivity.

#### Affective Organisational Commitment

The participants indicated that they would be affectively committed to the organisation as a result of its family-friendliness. 85.7% of participants agreed that with the introduction of family-friendly policies and practices, they would feel more committed to the organisation, and 87.7% agreed that they would have a greater sense of morale. Furthermore, 81.6% believed they would feel more satisfied in their jobs, and 79.6% felt they would feel more enriched in their jobs. These results can be linked to the 85.8% of

participants who agreed that they would think more positive thoughts about the organisation if provided with family-friendly policies.

They also felt that working for a family-friendly organisation would give them pride in and respect for the company. In addition, they indicated that their reaction to the support would involve them feeling more emotional about the organisation. *"It would be more than emotional. It would be partly emotional and also gratitude, grateful (FG5)"*. This complies with Brown's (1996) conceptualisation of AC as a set of strong, positive attitudes towards the company that incorporate a dedication to goals and a shared sense of values. A participant described the pride she would feel for a company that was acknowledged for supporting its women, *"...you can stand up and say you work for the Company and you're not embarrassed by it because it's got a good name out in the market place, and all the benefits that are thrown in just makes it even more (PreFG)"*.

The participants expressed that along with pride, other attitudinal changes would involve enhanced gratitude and respect for the organisation. *"Ja grateful and also more respectful... You'd respect the Company. Not that we don't respect the Company... you'll have more respect for the Company and for what they offer (FG5)"*. Morrison (1994) emphasised the importance of AC, as affectively committed employees were more likely to define their job responsibilities more broadly and engage in organisational citizenship behaviour (OCB). This involves individual contributions that are neither contractually rewarded nor enforceable by supervision or job requirements (Organ & Lingl, 1994).

#### Normative Organisational Commitment

The participants felt that if the organisation provided them with support, they would feel a need to reciprocate through working harder for the company. 81.7% of survey respondents agreed and strongly agreed that if offered family-friendly policies, they would feel 'cared about and valued by the organisation'. *"And I think also one would just feel that the company cares for you... maybe its just the fuzzy feelings, but I think that at the end of the day, those fuzzy feelings really make you loyal or not (FG1)"*.

The participants' feelings are aligned with the findings of Allen and Meyer (1996) that normative commitment may be enhanced by experiences within the organisation that make employees feel that the organisation is providing them with more than they can easily reciprocate. The women felt that they reciprocated with a loyalty and obligation to remain with the company. *"If you fall pregnant they must give you that time off. You are coming back, you are loyal to the firm. You're not just grabbing all the time. (FG1)"*

The exploratory survey results indicated a significant, positive correlation (of 0.446,  $p=0.01$ ) between AC and NC. This suggests that employees' feelings of pride and emotional attachment to the organisation were associated with their feelings of obligation towards the company. (See Appendix D, Table 3)

The exploratory survey results also presented a correlation between POS and AC (0.2896,  $p=0.044$ ) and NC (0.36,  $p=0.011$ ). This suggests that when the participants perceived their organisation as supporting them, they were more likely to want to retain their membership within the company – out of both an emotional attachment to the company and a feeling of obligation to remain. (See Appendix D, Table 3).

#### Organisational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

As one participant stated:

*I think you realise they're making sacrifices for you, so you would do your utmost to actually reciprocate back. I know I would. Its also a big thing for me. I mean the thought of coming back to work full time with a small baby and its really something that worries me a lot. And if there was the option of reduced working hours, I'd make very sure that I'd do it right by the Company (FG6).*

The participants indicated that although they already felt some level of organisational commitment to the company, the presence of family friendly benefits would only serve to improve their organisational behaviour. *"If you think of the commitment that we are giving to the Company already and we don't have anything where I think if we had given*

*something we would be even much more committed (FG1)*". Hunt and Morgan (1994) found the outcomes of commitment and organisational citizenship behaviour to incorporate altruism, conscientiousness, and non-idleness.

#### Alleviation of Stress

The participants were in strong agreement that with organisational support, their lives would be more relaxed, balanced and healthy – physically and emotionally. *'Your stress level will go down'* (FG5). This was reflected in the exploratory survey, where 81.7% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement *'If X offered some family friendly policies...I would feel less bothered by stress'*. The survey indicated that with the introduction of family-friendly policies, 91.8% of participants felt they would have a greater sense of control over their lives, 87.7% felt they would feel a greater sense of well-being, and 87.7% believed that they would suffer from less tension in their personal lives.

The participants experienced high levels of stress in coordinating work and crèche times. They found it difficult to find daycare facilities in their area that suited their working schedules:

*I put her (the child) into another aftercare in Pinelands. She was very happy with but there was no transport so I had to go out of the building every day, pick her up, drop her off, come back to work, find parking again...and I used to try and work my calendar around it. It became absolutely unbearable...Its hair-raising sometimes with the children (FG4).*

Their need to conform to crèche schedules meant that the participants had to often leave the office when meetings had been planned or tasks left unfinished. The participants perceived negative reactions from their colleagues, which contributed to the pressure experienced. As described by one participant:

*By 4.30 or 5 I actually need to rush out of here (office) because otherwise the crèche closes and he's the only baby there after 4 p.m. It took me 3 months to get used to that... And that's the only crèche in my area...But I find the worst part is to leave in the afternoon because I'm not used to it. You know I'm having to (sic) actually rush out of here and my colleagues... I find that they are the ones who's (sic) now sort of – sort of like lifting their eyebrows.*

#### Increased Availability For Work

The participants spent much of their time attempting to coordinate their work and crèche times. Because the daycare facilities have specific operating times for which children must be dropped off and fetched, this placed a restriction on the women's working hours. The amount of work that the participants could accomplish each day was restricted by their children's daycare centers. Thus they felt that if there was such a facility, they would be able to come to work earlier and leave later without fearing for their children's care. As suggested by one participant:

*I just think that a lot of moms actually do a lot of running round before work and after work... why not create a small facility where they are able to accommodate x amount of kids? ... In that way we are able to be at work when we're required to instead of running around... they (the company) are also able to get hold of us quicker (FG3).*

In addition to minimising the amount of time working mothers spend away from work, a childcare facility would also allow them to work longer hours. Some of the participants indicated that they were willing to work overtime, yet were limited by their children's day-care hours. They anticipated that an on-site childcare facility would provide them with an opportunity to work overtime if so desired. The women foresaw major advantages for the organisation with the implementation of a childcare facility:

*But then (if there was an on-site crèche) I would bring my kids to the crèche...and go and work. And if I won't be able to pick them 5 p.m. I can maybe dial and say*

*'I'm not able to fetch them up at 5 p.m., can I fetch them at 7?' And I'm sure there won't be people looking around and saying I'm missing work (FG5).*

### Improved Productivity

The participants felt that with the freedom to determine their own hours or location of work, their productivity could be enhanced. Not only could they improve their own productivity, but they felt they could be more productive than those working at the office during office hours. The results of the survey are indicative of this belief, where 85.7% of participants agreed that they would be more productive with the provision of some family-friendly policies. Furthermore, 89.9% agreed and strongly agreed that these policies would improve their concentration at work.

Colleagues at the office were perceived as wasting time on irrelevant activities such as smoke-breaks, yet the participants who worked from home felt that they accounted for every minute of work they did. Although they were not working from the office, their time was more constructively utilised than those spending their days in the office environment. One participant highlighted the benefits of family-friendly practices:

*I work harder than I used to because I actually fit in a whole days work in the 5 hours at work and then I'm still going home and doing work at home. So in the end I'm actually thinking "this isn't fair." I'm doing just as much work as anybody else and I'm clocking in my hours and they see I work more than the 7.45, whereas some people...they can sit the whole day and actually do nothing where I am listing every day exactly what I do. So I think it's actually unfair. You know though I wouldn't want to be promoted I'm happy but in the end you think "no it's not fair." Because you are still working as hard or even harder. (FG6)*

### Negative Consequences of Absence of Family-Friendly Policies and Practices

The participants noted some negative outcomes associated with the absence of family-friendly policies and practices. Such outcomes involved the participants' continuance

commitment to the organisation, the shift in participants' priorities away from work, feelings of resentment towards the organisation, and a trend towards changing permanent employment status to contracting for the organisation.

### Continuance Organisational Commitment

The participants expressed their willingness to leave the organisation in search of a company that provided more support for their need to balance work and family. Similarly, they would be more willing to remain at X if they were provided with more policies. This was consistent with the survey results, which demonstrated that if family-friendly policies were offered, 82.7% of participants would have less intention of leaving the organisation. As indicated by one participant:

*...when they declined my application to work shorter hours - I actually thought I would prefer to go and work for a Company even if I have to work full days... that said to me up front 'No, that's never going to happen' rather than give me the impression that they are so liberal and they are so keen on all of this, and when push comes to shove, actually no they're not. So having family friendly policies would definitely be an incentive for me to stay (at X) (FG1).*

This relates to Brown's (1994) assertion that continuance commitment involves employees that maintain commitment out of self-interest associated with the perceived costs of not keeping the commitment. These results are consistent with those of Greenberger et al. (1989), which found that women use more formal family-related benefits, and are more ready to leave the organisation for improved benefits. Randall and O'Driscoll (1996) found that high calculative commitment was associated with less organisational support, less agreement with organisational policies, perceptions of fewer positive values epitomising the organisation, and looser bonds to the organisation.

The participants explained that it required a significant amount of time and energy before they became organised in terms of childcare and lift schemes. Thus they were extremely reluctant to disrupt the patterns that they created for their children. Some participants

were willing to remain in an unsupportive organisation rather than reorganise the daily details in the child's life. As indicated by Cohen (1997), organisations can reduce the withdrawal cognitions of employees by being more supportive of their nonwork needs. The participants agreed on the difficulties of finding an equilibrium where both child and work arrangements can be fulfilled, as explained by one participant:

*The thing is when you're working in – when you fall pregnant a lot of the times you look in the area for a day mother or you look in the area for a crèche... If you are not feeling that this is where you want to work anymore... you're going to start having to look for another job which means maybe having to catch a train and another train or getting a lift club for your child to go to this place. As a whole, reorganising of your life. So a lot of us rather just stick it out, put up with the nonsense because it's much easier for us to just drop the kid off wherever it is at the moment and you're happy with that day mother. You don't want to have to change your whole life-style because that is what happens when you change anything in the child's life style. (FG1)*

According to the exploratory survey results, the continuance commitment mean of respondents whose youngest child was 2 or 3 was higher than that of the respondents whose youngest child was 1 (See Appendix E, Table 4). This can be explained by the cost invoked by a slightly older child. At the slightly older age, the children begin playschool, which involves not only a school fee, but also a lift scheme and daycare schedule. Thus the respondents may have felt more continuance commitment to remain in the company because they were in greater need of a consistent salary, and they did not want to disrupt their carefully devised schedules. Furthermore, the survey compared the continuance commitment of two groups of women: those who were married, and those who were single, divorced or other. The second group expressed significantly higher levels of continuance commitment – suggesting that they were more inclined to remain at the organisation, as they were most likely carrying the burden for the cost and care of the child. Thus their dependence on their salary may have been greater, and their perception of manageable alternatives to company X lesser than that of the married respondents.

### Shift in Priorities Away From Work

The participants generally agreed that after childbirth, their central priority became motherhood and the raising of their children. Many of these women had been highly ambitious and career-oriented prior to the birth of the child, yet thereafter their attention shifted towards the family. Smith (1999) echoed this change, suggesting that as priorities shift, the public domain becomes less important or more irritating. The participants became prepared to sacrifice the financial gains and promotions they would have had access to in order to spend more time with their child. As one participant noted, *"I think we've seen a lot of that. Really excellent women who've decided 'So what if I don't have this financial strength anymore? I will compromise. But work is no longer the priority' (FG3)".* Women seem to have the choice of making their family needs invisible in order to conform to traditional patterns of work, or to modify their work schedule at a potential cost to career advancement (Linehan & Walsh, 2000). Bielby and Bielby (1984) indicated that more than anything else, the demands of raising young children caused women to interrupt their employment. Women's work behaviours needed to adjust to accommodate the demands of child-rearing (Bielby & Bielby). The participants felt that they required more of a balance between work and family. A participant explained the shift in working mothers' priorities:

*...before you get pregnant...you want to make a career...Everything is about the career and then you fall pregnant...(and then) the baby must come first. The child is your first priority and work is like 2<sup>nd</sup> until you get to a stage where...you returned back to work... and I sort of like (said) 'I must find now the balance', you know (FG5).*

For some of the participants, the shift in their priorities became apparent in a crisis situation, such as when a child became sick. It was at these moments when the women were forced to choose between two entities demanding their time and energy. They felt that although the organisation may claim to be in need, it was actually the child's needs that were greater, as well as more important. The domestic family world seems to gain

greater significance as part of the woman's life project (Smith, 1999). A participant described her need to care for her family:

*Many times it's happened (sick child) that it's the time of your life at work when you're most busy. Now what do you say? How are you going to do it? You child is sick, how are you going to get away, for example? You know you also have to make a choice. I mean when you get back (to work) it's almost like (managers say) "How could you do this? How could you do that at a time when we needed you most?" But who actually needed you most? The family comes first. Well to me my family comes first and when my child is sick I will have to leave (FG3).*

#### Feelings of Resentment

The participants felt that the lack of support impacted on their behaviour and emotions. They were reluctant to make any sacrifices for the company, because they felt that their needs were never considered. The participants became more rigid as a response to organisational rigidity. A participant described this rigidity:

*You would be a lot more dedicated (if there were family-friendly policies). And giving. I mean if somebody asked you to work like an extra 15 minutes you would make like that extra little plan or the hour. You would make a plan for that. But now you say 'No. (Its) my child. You're not giving anything so I'm just going to go home now, sorry. Make your own plan' (FG1).*

As a result of harbouring these negative emotions for an extended period, the participants observed that they became harder and more selfish individuals, "Ja...I feel it turned me into somebody that I don't actually like because...It hardens you (FG1)".

#### Trend Towards 'Contracting' Employment Status

Employees of X that were adamant about obtaining work flexibility were forced to resign as permanent employees and become contractors instead. Some participants had experienced this change in employee status. They were resentful about losing their

benefits, medical aid and leave. The participants perceived these resignations as a great loss to the organisation.

*And some of them are actually deciding to leave their permanent jobs here at X, and become contractors because then at least...they're able to control their hours better. We're losing a lot of valuable people who simply want those 3-4 hours a day to be able to be good moms... I think the Company is being very short-sighted (FG4).*

The loss to the organisation is highlighted when considering Koberg and Chusmir's (1991) findings that although women experienced significantly greater sex role conflict than men, they equalled men in terms of job involvement, and professional and organisational commitment. Ohlott et al. (1994) suggested that the experience of obstacles such as negative stress may contribute to turnover amongst talented women managers. Furthermore, if women are placed in positions where they face substantial obstacles and receive less support than men, they are actually being set up to fail (Ohlott et al.). The experience of these participants echoes the findings of Dodd-McCue and Wright (1996) regarding the need for more flexible career tracks as a means of retaining women in the workforce.

#### **Participants' Recommendations for the Organisation**

The participants generally understood family-friendly policies and practices as a means of creating a win-win solution for both the organisation and its employees. By implementing family-friendly policies and practices, the organisation would be able to optimise the productivity of the employee at work, while simultaneously satisfying their roles as mothers. This involved a recognition by the organisation that employees have a personal life outside of their work life. According to one participant, *"I think the Company (should be) willing to bend and accommodate people, to take their personal lives into consideration. Realising people have a life outside of work (FG6)"*. Fondas (1995) mentioned the argument that companies will not succeed in retaining women until they

offer them a vision that reconciles individual and professional contributions with the assumption of family responsibilities. This was consistent with the one of the participant's feelings:

*...A family friendly policy...would mean for Companies to look at a way of saying 'Okay how can we meet each other halfway? What can we do to empower you to still give the same or more than you can in a totally different way?' (FG3).*

The participants suggested that the organisation could become more family-friendly through the introduction of flexibility, facilities, structured social support and Human Resource policies.

### Flexibility

Flexibility was interpreted by participants as involving the location of work, the number of hours worked, and the ability to actually structure one's own working hours.

#### Flexibility in Location of Work

The participants felt that the organisation should accommodate those whose jobs enabled them to work from home. The survey results indicated that 24.5% felt this was an 'important' policy, while 57.1% believed it to be 'highly important'. Holtzman and Glass (1999) agreed that allowing flexibility in the location of work provided working mothers with the opportunity to accomplish work-related tasks while at home with their infants during a time when substitute care may be expensive, difficult to find and possibly even developmentally inappropriate. The participants indicated that they could be more productive working from home, yet most of the departments had not implemented this practice. The participants felt that this represented a win-win situation:

*The flexibility of being able to work at home should your child be sick, and be able to - at the end of the day still get your work completed and that the firm is happy, and the clients are happy and you're getting the work done (PreFG).*

### Flexibility in the Number of Hours Worked

Participants discussed the importance in having the option of working half-day, or being able to select a reduced-hour workday package.

#### Half-Day Option

The participants described family-friendliness as creating options for female employees, such as offering a half-day work contract. This would provide them with a greater opportunity to see to family needs. As explained by a participant:

*I think it would be allowing time for people, for mothers especially...to be able to spend that time with their families and in so doing get the most out of... that employee while they are at work. And in my mind the most obvious way is to have a half-day working policy for whichever parent is going to need it (FG5).*

The participants felt that working a half-day rather than a full day would have a large impact on their lives. Their evenings after a full day of work were frenetically filled with household chores such as cleaning and cooking, as well as caring for the children. The participants felt they had minimal time for themselves. They indicated that a policy allowing a shorter workday would provide them with a less stressful way of attending to their nonwork roles. This was highlighted by the results of the survey, where 10.2% of participants felt that this was an 'important' policy, while 71.4% felt it was 'highly important'. A participant emphasised the importance of having a half-day option:

*I think they also need to look at the half-day situation again. That's been taken away. I don't know why. Maybe the Company has got reasons for doing that but maybe they can look at it and bring it back with the changes or the things that didn't work and adjust that (FG5).*

These results were congruent with those of Desai and Waite (1991), who found that women in occupations with opportunities for part-time work were more likely to return to

work within three months of the birth. Working part-time is viewed as a common strategy for combining work and childrearing, and a method of attracting and retaining working women (Desai & Waite).

#### Reduced-Working-Hours Packages

The participants felt they could benefit immensely by being able to select their own amount of working hours per day. 77.6% of participants rated this policy as 'highly important', with another 18.4% viewing it as 'important'. The participants preferred a slight reduction in working hours, and would have liked the freedom to tailor the number of hours in their working day according to their specific needs. "*Taking into consideration the fact that we have family's and...that we would like to be able to be given the option of structuring our working hours slightly differently to accommodate our children (FG5)*". These findings resonate with those of Campbell and Campbell (1994) and Moen and Dempster-McClain (1987). This policy would provide participants with more power and discretion in the structuring of their lives. One participant aptly emphasised the impact that such a policy would have on working mothers' daily lives:

*I think life is just a pull and there is so much to do and everyday you are fighting the clock, you know...How do you fit it all in, you know? Just for me having even a slight reduction in working hours. If I could leave here at 3 instead of 5 it would make all the difference. And I think it affects your work as well...And you're stressed and harassed all the time. You know you can actually sit down and do the work because you know that they're offering you lots of time to do whatever else you need to (FG6).*

#### Flexibility in Structuring the Work Day

The participants required the flexibility to structure their working hours according to their needs, which incorporated the utilisation of flexible working hours, and flexibility in taking leave when necessary.

### Flexible Working Hours

Working mothers require flexibility in structuring their time between work and family – 81.6% of participants viewed this as ‘highly important’, and 12.2% felt it was ‘important’. They felt that in structuring their own time, their focus on work and nonwork could be enhanced. The participants also required flexible work hours for tasks that were not urgent, yet could only be fulfilled within working hours, such as searching for a new crèche. Both mothers and pregnant women expressed such a need in order to accommodate routine doctor/gynaecologist visits. According to Ngo and Tsang (1998), flexible arrangements in the workplace are more important to women, who must balance work and family demands, and thus encounter more work-family conflicts than men. Employees perceive flexible working hours as an indication of the organisation’s concern for work and family – thereby increasing women’s control over their lives, as well as increasing the value of their psychological contract with the company (Scandura & Lankau, 1997). For such employees, flexible working arrangements may enhance their organisational commitment (Scandura & Lankau). This was evident from one of the focus group participants:

*...I'm sure all your children have said to you "mommy please don't go and work today. Please don't go and work." It's terrible...So just imagine where we had that environment where we can come in at 8 am, leave at 12, 1 pm, see to our children - especially if you have more than one it's difficult. Because each one needs the individual attention...You know, they all need their special attentions. If we can work flexible hours we can...work your time around working...and also working at home because its just...(going) from one job going to another job, and that's also things that, you know, X does not recognise (FG2).*

### Flexibility in Taking Leave

The participants experienced difficulties when their children suddenly became sick, as there was no formal policy in place for unexpected events. Thus a sick child was experienced as a source of much guilt and frustration for the mothers. Their priority was to obtain medical care for the child, yet they were unsure about how to obtain such leave.

*You can't take sick leave because your child is sick but, you know, how the hell do you get him to the Doctor on that basis? It's often that flexibility I feel, and understanding from the Managers, because some Managers are more understanding than others and I know X has got the flexibility, flexible working hours but I mean I think it's bigger than that (FG5).*

The participants required the security of knowing that if anything unexpected or urgent occurred requiring their attention, they would be able to directly see to the needs of the children. The survey reflected that 67.3% of participants felt it was 'highly important' to obtain family leave beyond the legal minimum, with another 26.5% rating it as 'important'.

### Facilities

The facilities recommended by participants included on-site childcare, a facility with childcare information, and parking bays for pregnant women that are situated in close proximity to the offices.

#### On-Site Childcare

The participants expressed great need for an on-site childcare facility. Yet the issue had been consistently been discussed and discarded, causing the participants great frustration. They felt that the majority of their workforce comprises of women – most of which give birth during their working lives. An on-site childcare facility was therefore viewed as a practical solution to the childcare dilemmas much of the workforce was experiencing. This is congruent with Kossek and Nichol's (1992) argument that childcare benefits create a favourable climate conducive to enabling good performance, by alleviating problems and allowing employees to focus on their jobs. The participants felt this facility was of the utmost necessity, yet appeared pessimistic as to whether it would ever come to fruition. One participant captured this pessimism:

*I mean for instance we've been asking for a crèche now ever since I can remember. I remember before my time as well. A crèche that is available for working moms...And I mean it's been talked and talked and talked and nothing has ever happened. The fact is more women are working there (at X) than men. Many more and I mean a lot of them have children and a lot of them are having babies. So no definitely (the company is not family-friendly) (FG5).*

As suggested by Scandura and Lankau (1997), the participants engaged in a social comparison process, where they saw other organisations accommodating their working mothers. This caused them to question why their own organisation could not put similar policies in place, and to feel resentment at the reluctance of the organisation to do so. The women perceived their company as being anxious that the women would utilise the childcare centre inappropriately. This was viewed by a participant as a sign of mistrust from the organisation:

*I know Liberty Life in Joburg has childcare. They've got a crèche. Apparently it's working well. But I know that X's feeling is that they feel if the crèche is right here the mom is going to be tempted to go and visit the child inside working hours. That is one comment...We want them to trust us (FG3).*

The participants indicated that a childcare facility could have psychological benefits for the working mothers, but also productivity benefits for the organisation. The women believed that with a daycare facility for their children, they would be less anxious regarding the quality of care for their children. They insisted that such a facility would improve women's focus at work.

*Why can't they have a crèche here... I still feel that we need certain facilities where we can leave our kids and maybe come to the office and I think you focus more (on work) because as long as you're worried about what's happening to your child...you are more worried about what's happening to the kids (than about work) (FG4).*

This is consistent with Goff et al.'s (1990) evidence that employees who were more satisfied with the quality of their child's care experienced less work-family conflict. The participants expressed that they would also feel more secure knowing that although they were not with their children, the children were in the same building as them. The children were therefore highly accessible in an emergency. The participants emphasised that this knowledge would alleviate much of their anxiety at work, allowing them to be more focused and productive. The quality of their work would be enhanced as a result. These results echo those of Erdwins (2001), who found women's maternal separation anxiety to be most closely linked to satisfaction with childcare arrangements. Such anxiety about the child's welfare may have numerous ramifications for the mother's psychological health, well-being, work productivity and employment decisions (Erdwins).

#### Facility with Childcare Information

The participants felt they would benefit from a facility or website that conveys information regarding crèches and daycare centers. The participants strongly supported this idea:

*A family support center... Evaluate the areas. Within the areas... (saying) 'You can get - these are all the day cares. These are all the prices. This is what's offered. These are the booking and these are the contact numbers', so that every single mother independently doesn't have to think 'My goodness me. I've got to speak to every neighbour or somebody...' - let's have a facility or even a web site (FG2).*

Thus with this facility, working mothers could have access to childcare across different areas, in case they moved or required a new crèche. Grover and Crooker (1995) found that childcare information had a positive impact on organisational commitment for employees with small children.

### Parking Bays for Pregnant Women

The participants were quite adamant about the necessity of allocating parking bays close to the building specifically for pregnant women. Many of the participants worked late into their pregnancies, and found it immensely difficult to walk the distance from their parking spaces to the building. As noted by one of the participants:

*Now that you're talking about feeling heavy... my maternity leave started the month that I gave birth – so it was extremely difficult for me to walk. So I tried to walk small little steps, and there's no facilities for you to park close to the building...they don't even consider giving you special pregnant parking bays (FG2).*

The majority of pregnant women suffer from leg cramps, lack of energy, tired legs and serious back-ache (Wolkind & Zajicek, 1981, as cited in Pattison & Gross, 1996). The participants felt that just as there were medical spaces available, so should there be spaces allotted to pregnant women. This idea was viewed as easy for the company to implement, especially since the women would not be using the spaces on a long-term basis. The participants felt that this was a practical way of dealing with their physical discomfort:

*... Especially in the last two months when it gets really difficult. I think that's (special parking bays) actually something they could seriously consider. You get up late because you're tired and exhausted. Then you have to park right at the bottom. You wait about 15 minutes for the bus to show up because nobody lets you into the queue...and then I have to walk the kilometer, and that actually exhausts me (FG6).*

### Structured Social Support

The participants revealed a need for structured social support in the form of a support group for pregnant women and working mothers, and a weekly informative talk helping participants deal with the issues of parenthood.

### Support Groups For Working Mothers

Many of the participants expressed positive feelings towards meeting the other participants, and sharing the issues they face as working mothers. The focus groups provided them with a forum to air their difficulties and frustrations – in both the work and family arenas. It also allowed for the alleviating of guilty feelings. Mothers felt reassured knowing that there were many mothers like them that were dealing with issues in balancing their work and family, such as leaving their children in childcare. As commented by one participant, “*And I think also knowing that other mothers have also left their children at crèches and day mothers (PreFG)*”. Desai and Waite (1991) found that the presence of many women with young children in an occupation may provide social support to the mother, which may make the experience of work easier for a new mother. As explained by one participant, they could strongly identify with each other’s struggles:

*The support group thing that you mentioned. I must say just listening to somebody like you speaking and identifying with so much of what you say, particularly being an older mother, most of my friends either have their children years ago or didn’t have children at all and because I’m at work I don’t make friends with the mother’s at the crèche. And they’re a lot younger than me anyway. So I have got very few people I can kind of identify with as mothers. This conversation makes me feel normal again. You think ‘I don’t want anyone to know about (how) I’m pretending to cope’ (FG2).*

The participants’ feelings can be related to Abraham’s (1999) findings that employees who experienced emotional dissonance remained satisfied with their jobs, as long as they had the support of coworkers. Social support created less of a reduction in their organisational commitment (Abraham). The participants felt that a mothers’ support group would be of emotional and psychological benefit to them. The participants felt it was almost a cathartic experience, as observed by one participant:

*...we need a support group here because just hearing that someone else also feels like that...I wonder how many people are actually struggling and stressing to the point of cracking...and it's not because we are not good enough. It's actually because we've got too much to handle (FG2)".*

#### Weekly Talks on Parenthood

The participants referred to talks they used to receive from the Parent Center, and felt that there was much benefit gained from such information. 34.7% of the participants ranked childcare information as being 'important', and an additional 32.7% regarded it as 'highly important'.

*...the Parent Center used to come and give talks every Wednesday afternoon and I promise you they were brilliant. And I would love to see that come back because...many of the topics helped me in bringing up (the children) and understanding the phases that my children were going through (FG2).*

#### Human Resource Policies

The policies suggested involve provisions for participants' leave requirements, a focus on education regarding women's issues, and an emphasis on the consistency of policies and their implementation across the organisation.

#### Leave Provisions

The participants called for formal and consistent policies relating to sick children, and for a re-evaluation of leave policies to ensure the equitable treatment of working mothers.

#### Leave Policy For Event of Sick Child

The participants were frustrated with the lack of clear policies for the event of a sick child. With the absence of a unified policy, different managers reacted to this situation in different ways. Some allowed the mother to tend to the child, while other women were required to take leave. Davey and Davidson (1994) commented that this was a policy

frequently requested by working mothers. Where the survey investigated the necessity of family leave options beyond the legal minimum, 67.3% of participants rated this as 'highly important', with another 26.5% viewing it as 'important'. Yet most of the participants had experienced difficulties obtaining leave for sick children. The participants described the inconsistency in policy within the company:

*...When your child is sick some departments actually tell you to take leave or others say, "okay it's fine you can go and then come back, whatever." But it is a big problem when children are sick. There is no policy for that... There needs to be a policy around that, because its not set on what you're allowed to do and what you're not. (FG6)*

### Equitable Leave Policies

The participants were dissatisfied with X's leave policies, and felt that they were not equitable for pregnant women or working mothers. Rather than using their leave for self-rejuvenation, the women were using it for when their children were sick. The participants complained that they obtained less leave than men or single women, and as a result felt discriminated against. Thus they felt that women should be given leave according to the number of children they have. This becomes a necessity when regarding one of the participant's life situation:

*I spend all my sick leave on my children. All my leave, most of it, on my children, you know...I don't know if the Company will ever agree to this - but they should say for each of your children you're are getting x amount of days. When they're sick you have x amount of sick days per child where you can take your child to the Doctor and it doesn't affect your annual leave. Because at the end of the day you can just take a week or two weeks leave where the other people are taking 3 weeks leave because you use so much of your days for... doing this for the child and that. (FG5)*

### Education

The participants felt that education regarding maternity leave and its surrounding issues was sorely needed in the organisation, as well as about the existing and available facilities within the organisation.

#### Lack of Understanding of Maternity Leave

There was little understanding within the organisation of what maternity leave actually entailed for women. In the survey, 63.3% of participants felt that it was 'highly important' for the organisation to provide maternity leave options beyond the legal minimum, with an additional 26.5% agreeing that this was 'important'. For the participants maternity leave involved minimal sleep, chaos, and a complete shift in life roles. Those who had not experienced maternity leave were not cognisant of the full implications of maternity leave, and therefore perceived it as four months off work. One participant commented: "*Maternity leave is hard work. That's how I feel about it. And people do think it's a holiday (FG4)*". There was no acknowledgement that office work was replaced with another, more full-time type of work. Thus organisational members expected women to return to work as if rejuvenated from a holiday. A participant expressed her exasperation, "*When you come back and you look tired they ask you 'You're just four months away...why are you tired?' ...when you come back people expect that you must be rested. You're actually starting with the difficult part...(FG5)*". This is consistent with Peterson (1999), who found that maternity leave was defined in terms of other types of leave (sick leave or vacation leave) rather than as a concept of its own.

Participants felt it was important for the organisation to become educated regarding the experience of working mothers. Some women discussed the depression they had felt at returning to work, which the organisation had not made allowance for. The participants indicated that this is something experienced by many women, and thus requires some understanding on the part of the organisation. According to one of the focus group participants, "*Depression is another big thing that they don't understand (FG1)*". Pattison and Gross (1996) reported that both depression and anxiety are heightened during pregnancy. This indicates a strong need for organisations to initiate education of

issues affecting women during pregnancy. Peterson (1999) argued that the contradictions surrounding maternity leave reflect the inability of organisations to understand this multifaceted phenomenon.

#### Lack of Awareness of Company Facilities

Many of the participants were unaware that a clinic existed within the company. It could be utilised by women for breastfeeding purposes, where the women could express milk. Yet this was not communicated to all women, causing many to have to make other arrangements. This often resulted in the women finding themselves in awkward and embarrassing situations. The women were annoyed by the lack of awareness, *“But how many people even know about the clinic, because I didn’t even know about the clinic... they actually go to the toilet to do it (expressing milk)... They come out and they’re all embarrassed (FG5)”*.

Gibson (1993) found that the number of full-time working women that breast-fed for six months was low – possibly because businesses have overlooked the needs of this employee group. Another participant described the uncomfortable circumstances involved in which she attempted to express milk

*I actually did go into the office, (my) manager’s office in my Call Centre... I stood with my back and the chair and (had to) do everything in a corner and hide it, you know. But if they were in a meeting...I had nowhere to go. So I started leaking and I had to go to the toilet and then I threw the milk away because I wouldn’t use it (FG5)”*.

#### Consistent Policies Across Departments & Managers

The participants indicated that the family-friendliness of organisational policy was often dependent on one’s manager. Thus policies such as leave and flexibility varied across different departments. The women were dissatisfied with this rather random distribution of family-friendliness, and were adamant that policies be consistently implemented across the organisation.

*Its also not consistent throughout the Company because, you know, you've got certain things in place in one area...and its not in place in other areas and its broken up into different units, whereas it should be something that is across the board. If it (policy) needs adjusting for a certain area fine, but there must be one for the policy in place (FG5).*

The family-friendliness experienced by the women was dependent upon the life-stage, and philosophy of their managers. Those managers with children were more sympathetic to the women's family needs, while others were uninterested in the women's roles outside of work. One participant commented: "*(Its) also boss dependent because sometimes you can have a boss who is quite lenient or understanding or you have somebody who just couldn't care a damn (FG5)*".

### Conclusion

This discussion has demonstrated the complex relationship of factors affecting working mothers and pregnant women in their efforts to balance work and family. The discussion initially explored the experience of mothers in the workplace, maternity leave, and the interrelated stressors involved in balancing work and family. The women perceived a distinct inconsistency between the rhetoric of the organisation and the reality the organisation offers its employees. The women did not feel that the organisation understood, supported, trusted, or cared about them – nor did it treat them equitably. The women's perceptions of the organisation were followed by the consequences of family-friendly policies and practices that, if implemented, could initiate substantial positive consequences for both the participants and the organisation. Such effects would involve enhanced affective and normative commitment, OCB, the alleviation of stress, and increased productivity and availability at work. There was a strong theme of negative consequences within this company, involving continuance commitment, feelings of resentment, and the resigning of effective employees to become contractors. The discussion therefore dealt with participants' conceptualisations of family friendliness and

expressions of their experiences, as well as practical suggestions for organisations hoping to attract and retain working mothers. In order to foster the positive consequences, the participants recommended flexibility, facilities, structured social support and human resource policies.

The following chapter presents recommendations for future research involving organisational commitment and family-friendliness.

## **CHAPTER FIVE – RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

This chapter will thus present some recommendations for future research projects in this field of organisational psychology.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

During the course of research, a number of potential areas for future study were identified.

#### **1. Moderators of Organisational Commitment:**

The results of the exploratory survey indicated a significantly strong relationship between POS and both AC and NC. This may have occurred, as suggested by Eisenberger et al., (1990), because employees who perceived high support expressed stronger feelings of attachment and loyalty towards the organisation. Thus POS should be investigated as a mediating variable for all the aforementioned consequences of family-friendly policies and practices.

#### **2. Large-Scale Survey:**

The survey conducted in this study was exploratory and was conducted concurrently with the focus groups. In future research a large-scale survey based on the focus group themes identified in this dissertation could function to enhance our understanding of the relationship between family-friendly policies and working mothers. Such a survey should compare women across all levels of the organisation, taking into account their levels of education, working conditions and financial status. This may yield findings regarding the different needs of different women for family-friendly policies and practices.

#### **3. Career Advancement:**

This research focused on the impact that family-friendly policies and practices have on pregnant women and working mothers. However, the effects of these policies on career advancement are uncertain. Data describing the career impact of utilising leaves and

flexible work arrangements is rare and largely anecdotal (Schwartz, 1996). Therefore further research should document the career advancement of employees using family-friendly policies and practices. Schwartz suggested that this research be longitudinal, and should focus on issues such as compensation, performance evaluations, work responsibilities, and promotions – as well as on perceptions of employees, co-workers and supervisors.

#### 4. Workplace Culture:

More attention should also be drawn towards workplace culture, in order to evaluate how it's various components and shared assumptions affect employee-utilisation of family-friendly policies and practices.

#### 5. Working Fathers:

This research has focused on the impact of organisational policies and practices on working mothers. However, research should also be directed at the issues faced by working fathers – where parental policies and leaves may be less accessible and regarded as less acceptable than those for mothers.

#### 6. Coworkers:

It seems relevant to examine the views of the coworkers of employees utilising family-friendly practices, including their perceptions regarding the employees' organisational commitment. The women in this study cited the importance of coworker support and understanding. As organisations increasingly veer towards team-based systems, coworkers are becoming more responsible for evaluating the performance of their teammates. It would thus be necessary to evaluate the impact that these practices have on the perceptions and performance evaluations of coworkers and teammates.

#### 7. Self-Efficacy Beliefs:

Many of the participants expressed the belief that family-friendly policies and practices would enable their performance. Future studies might investigate whether employees

utilising these policies have greater perceptions regarding their self-efficacy and ability to perform effectively at managing both work and childcare duties.

#### 8. South African Research:

There is a lack of research conducted and published in South Africa on both organisational commitment and family-friendly organisational practices. In-depth research should be conducted in South African organisations to examine the relationship between family-friendliness and organisational commitment. This would enhance organisations' understanding of the practices and policies that harness organisational commitment amongst South African women.

### Conclusion

This research evaluated the impact that family-friendly organisational policies and practices have on the organisational commitment of working mothers and pregnant women. This study employed Allen and Meyer's (1990) three-component model of organisational commitment, which comprises of affective, continuance and normative commitment. The relationship between organisational family-friendliness and women's attitudinal and behavioural outcomes was explored through understanding the subjective experiences and perceptions of working mothers.

The results of the study confirmed the findings of previous research, yet emphasised the importance of emergent themes that had not been considered in past empirical research. Through the openness and interaction within the focus group discussions, the women suggested a number of new policies and practices that organisations could implement – which they believed would substantially increase their organisational commitment. Furthermore, women were provided with the forum to express the impact that perceived support – or the lack of it – had on their work and personal lives.

The women indicated that formal and informal organisational supports generated a network of positive outcomes for the both the women and the organisation. A perceived

lack of supports was also associated with a range of consequences, yet these had a range of adverse effects for the women and thus the organisation. The findings contain practical recommendations for organisations that believe it worthwhile to foster the organisational commitment of working mothers and pregnant women. Such findings hold importance when considering that most women become pregnant and give birth at some point in their working lives. This research is thus aimed at organisations that hope to not only understand, but also attract and retain a committed and productive female workforce.

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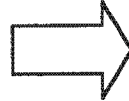
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## APPENDIX A – THESIS THEMES

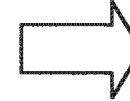
### WORKING MOTHERS' EXPERIENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Perceived Discrimination  
Divergence btwn Internal & External Image  
Maternity Leave  
Balancing Work & Family  
Support



### ORGANISATIONAL OUTCOMES OF FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Positive Consequences of Family-Friendly Policies & Practices  
Negative Consequences of Family-Friendly Policies & Practices



### RECOMMENDATIONS

Flexibility  
Facilities  
Structured Social Support  
Human Resource Policies

## APPENDIX B - FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDELINE

- ◆ What does the term 'family-friendly' mean to you?
- ◆ Do you think that organisations have become more 'family-friendly'?
- ◆ Is this a family-friendly place to work?
- ◆ Why?
- ◆ What should they do here to be more supportive to working mothers?
- ◆ What influenced your decision to return to work after the pregnancy?

### OC: AC, CC & NC

- ◆ Do you think that the family-friendly supports make you feel more attached/loyal to the organisation?
- ◆ Do you feel that having this job with the current family-friendly policies & practices makes you less likely to search for another job?
- ◆ Do you feel more obligated to stay or to be loyal to the organisation because of its policies?

### INFORMAL/SOCIAL SUPPORTS

- ◆ Did the organisation support you during and after your pregnancies?
- ◆ What about your supervisors and colleagues?
- ◆ How did they react to you when you took maternity leave?
- ◆ How did people react when you had to take time off for family reasons, i.e. a sick child?
- ◆ How has this impacted on you?
- ◆ Do you ever feel that by using any of the benefits (i.e. maternity leave), you will be taken less seriously/have your commitment doubted?

### CONSEQUENCES

- ◆ When you realised you were pregnant, did your attitude to work change? How?
- ◆ When you came back to work after having a child, was your attitude different to what it was before?
- ◆ Were there any practical difficulties you had to face, i.e. anxiety re: child being at home?
- ◆ Do the current policies and practices have any impact on your life? i.e. regarding stress or time
- ◆ How have these benefits made your life easier?

## APPENDIX C – EXPLORATORY SURVEY

# The Impact of Family-Friendly Policies/Practices on Working Mothers

Dear Working Mother,

Thank you for your participation in this survey. I hope that you will find it both interesting and thought provoking.

The purpose of this survey is to gather information regarding organisational family-friendly policies/practices, and their impact on working mothers. This is your opportunity to help develop new understandings of how organisations can support working mothers.

Please remember that it is important that you answer every question in this survey to ensure its validity.

All survey responses will be treated with complete confidentiality.

Thank you for your participation.

Caryn Serman

Please address any questions or concerns to:

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### *About your feelings towards X*

Please indicate the degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling a number from 1 to 5		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with X	1	2	3	4	5
2	I really feel as if X's problems are my own	1	2	3	4	5
3	I feel a strong sense of "belonging" to X	1	2	3	4	5
4	I feel "emotionally attached" to X	1	2	3	4	5
5	I feel like "part of the family" at X	1	2	3	4	5
6	X has a great deal of personal meaning for me	1	2	3	4	5
7	Right now, staying with X is a matter of necessity as much as desire	1	2	3	4	5
8	It would be very hard for me to leave X right now, even if I wanted to	1	2	3	4	5
9	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided (that) I wanted to leave X now	1	2	3	4	5
10	I feel that I have too few options to consider leaving X	1	2	3	4	5
11	If I had not already put so much of myself into X, I might consider working elsewhere	1	2	3	4	5
12	One of the few negative consequences of leaving X would be the scarcity of available alternatives	1	2	3	4	5
13	I feel an obligation to remain at X	1	2	3	4	5
14	Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel that it would be right to leave X now	1	2	3	4	5
15	I would feel guilty if I left X now	1	2	3	4	5
16	X deserves my loyalty	1	2	3	4	5
17	I would not leave X right now because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it	1	2	3	4	5
18	I owe a great deal to X	1	2	3	4	5
19	I was taught to believe in the value of remaining loyal to your employer	1	2	3	4	5
20	"Job-hopping" from one organisation to another seems unethical to me	1	2	3	4	5
21	Loyalty is important and I have an obligation to be loyal the organisation that employed and trained me	1	2	3	4	5

### About family friendly policies and practices at X

Please indicate the degree of importance of each Family-Friendly policy/practice by circling a number from 1 to 5. If it already exists in X, please circle the number in the left-hand column.		Completely unimportant	Not important	Not sure	Important	Highly Important
22	A Reduced Working Hours option for working mothers	1	2	3	4	5
23	A Part-time Work option for working mothers	1	2	3	4	5
24	A Flexible Working Hours option for working mothers	1	2	3	4	5
25	A Work From Home option for working mothers	1	2	3	4	5
26	Creche Facilities for the children of working mothers	1	2	3	4	5
27	Childcare Information for expectant mothers	1	2	3	4	5
28	Maternity Leave options beyond the legal minimum	1	2	3	4	5
29	Family Leave options beyond the legal minimum	1	2	3	4	5
30	Support from supervisors/managers for working mothers	1	2	3	4	5
31	Support from co-workers for working mothers	1	2	3	4	5
32	An organisational culture that is supportive of family needs	1	2	3	4	5

### About the support your managers and co-workers give you

Please indicate your degree of your agreement or disagreement with each statement by circling a number from 1 to 5.		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
33	My co-workers are willing to listen to my family-related problems	1	2	3	4	5
34	My co-workers can be relied on when things get tough at home	1	2	3	4	5
35	My co-workers are helpful in me getting my job done while maintaining family commitments	1	2	3	4	5
36	My immediate manager is willing to listen to my family-related problems	1	2	3	4	5
37	My immediate manager shows a lot of concern for me and my family-related needs	1	2	3	4	5
38	My immediate manager can be relied on when things get tough at home	1	2	3	4	5



### About the support your organisation gives you

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by circling the corresponding number 1 through 5		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
55	X takes pride in my accomplishments at work	1	2	3	4	5
56	X really cares about my well-being	1	2	3	4	5
57	X strongly considers my goals and values	1	2	3	4	5
58	X values my contribution to its well-being	1	2	3	4	5
59	Even if given an opportunity, X would not take advantage of me	1	2	3	4	5
60	X is willing to help me when I need a special favour	1	2	3	4	5

### About your work environment

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements by circling the corresponding number 1 through 5		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly agree
61	At the X, women can easily combine career and family	1	2	3	4	5
62	Management is accommodating of family-related needs	1	2	3	4	5
63	Higher management encourages supervisors to be sensitive to employees' personal and family concerns	1	2	3	4	5
64	It is generally quite acceptable to talk about one's family at work	1	2	3	4	5
65	To turn down a transfer or promotion for family-related reasons is like the 'kiss of death' to your career (at X)	1	2	3	4	5
66	Many employees resent women who take time off for maternity leave	1	2	3	4	5
67	X employees who participate in family-friendly programs (i.e. reduced working hours) are viewed as less serious about their careers than those who do not participate	1	2	3	4	5
68	In order to get 'noticed' at the X, employees must constantly put their job ahead of their personal or family life	1	2	3	4	5
69	Employees are often expected to take work home at night & on weekends	1	2	3	4	5
70	Employees are expected to put their jobs before their families	1	2	3	4	5
71	To get ahead, employees are expected to work more than 50 hours a week	1	2	3	4	5

## **About you...**

(This information is confidential. Your company will not have access to any specific information about you).

**1. Marital status**

- Married
- Divorced
- Single
- Other

Please specify: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Race**

- White
- Black
- Coloured
- Indian
- Prefer not to answer this question

**3. How many children do you have?** \_\_\_\_\_

**4. What are their ages?** \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Your highest qualification:** \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Your age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**7. How many years have you spent with your current employer?** \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Year that you entered full time employment (e.g. 1986):** \_\_\_\_\_

**9. Your job grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**10. What is the nature of your contract with X (i.e. permanent/contract worker)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Any other details you think are relevant:**

**Thank you for completing the survey  
Your participation is appreciated.**

## APPENDIX D – EXPLORATORY SURVEY CORRELATIONS

Table 3: Correlations

Complete Correlation Table

Marked correlations are significant at  $p < .05000$

N=49 (Casewise deletion of missing data)

	AC	CC	NC	SUPM	SUPC	W_F	POS
AC	p= — 1	<b>0.3285</b> p=.021	<b>0.4482</b> p=.001	-0.1065 p=.486	-0.0418 p=.776	0.0342 p=.815	<b>0.2896</b> p=.044
CC		p= — 1	<b>0.3981</b> p=.005	0.068 p=.643	0.0017 p=.991	-0.0041 p=.978	0.1889 p=.194
NC			p= — 1	0.1121 p=.443	-0.1406 p=.335	0.0185 p=.900	<b>0.36</b> p=.011
SUPM				p= — 1	0.0546 p=.709	-0.2336 p=.106	<b>0.2803</b> p=.083
SUPC					p= — 1	-0.3176 p=.026	-0.0272 p=.853
W_F						p= — 1	-0.2123 p=.143
POS							p= — 1

CONCLUSION

(1) POS positively correlated with AC, NC, and SUPM

(2) increased levels of POS are associated with increased levels of AC, NC, SUPM (and vice versa)

## APPENDIX E - QUANTITATIVE TESTS CONDUCTED

T-tests were conducted to establish the differences in means between Mothers with respect to the **Age of the Youngest Child**.

Group 1: Youngest child Age 1

Group 2: Youngest child Age 2-3

Table 4: Age of Youngest Child

	Mean Group1	Mean Group2	t-value	df	p
AC	18.452	21.182	-1.579	40.000	0.122
CC	18.924	22.144	-1.954	40.000	<b>0.058</b>
NC	15.595	16.475	-0.639	40.000	0.526
SUPM	10.032	11.727	-1.589	40.000	0.125
SUPC	10.323	12.396	-2.856	40.000	<b>0.007</b>
W_F	39.323	38.839	1.308	40.000	0.198
POS	17.548	18.464	-0.603	40.000	0.550

Table 5: Test of Normality

	GROUP 1		GROUP 2		Distribution
	W	P	W	p	
ACSUM	0.962	0.330	0.961	0.789	Normal
CCSUM	0.954	0.199	0.956	0.725	Normal
NCSUM	0.949	0.150	0.971	0.897	Normal
SUPMSUM	0.951	0.171	0.903	0.206	Normal
SUPCSUM	0.955	0.214	0.969	0.875	Normal
W_FSUM	0.972	0.568	0.851	0.044	Non-normal
POSSUM	0.927	0.037	0.948	0.613	Non-normal

Table 6: Nonparametric Test: Mann-Whitney:

	U	Z	p-level
ACSUM	117.500	-1.516	0.129
CCSUM	104.000	-1.902	<b>0.057</b>
NCSUM	148.000	-0.644	0.520
SUPMSUM	112.000	-1.674	<b>0.094</b>
SUPCSUM	71.500	-2.832	<b>0.005</b>
W_FSUM	127.500	1.230	0.219
POSSUM	156.500	-0.401	0.689

For **Marital Status** the results are:

Group 1: Married

Group 2: Divorced, Single, or Other

Table 7: Marital Status

	Mean Group1	Mean Group2	t-value	df	P
AC	19.075	19.222	-0.079	47.000	0.938
CC	18.706	24.000	-3.189	47.000	<b>0.003</b>
NC	14.967	16.667	-1.173	47.000	0.247
SUPM	10.475	9.667	0.668	47.000	0.508
SUPC	11.034	11.778	-0.890	47.000	0.378
W_F	38.756	38.667	0.047	47.000	0.963

POS 17.203 19.000 -1.193 47.000 0.239

Table 8: Test of Normality

	GROUP 1		GROUP 2		Distribution
	W	P	W	p	
ACSUM	0.968	0.318	0.880	0.157	Normal
CCSUM	0.956	0.126	0.944	0.633	Normal
NCSUM	0.964	0.243	0.877	0.148	Normal
SUPMSUM	0.944	0.048	0.933	0.508	Normal
SUPCSUM	0.958	0.152	0.902	0.265	Normal
W_FSUM	0.956	0.125	0.921	0.403	Normal
POSSUM	0.954	0.107	0.948	0.664	Normal

Table 9: Nonparametric Test: Mann-Whitney

	U	Z	p-level
ACSUM	179.500	-0.013	0.990
CCSUM	71.500	-2.801	0.005
NCSUM	148.500	-0.813	0.416
SUPMSUM	163.500	0.426	0.670
SUPCSUM	155.500	-0.633	0.527
W_FSUM	161.500	-0.478	0.633
POSSUM	143.000	-0.955	0.339

The ANOVA results for the Number of Children

Group 1: No children (Pregnant Women)

Group 2: 1 Child

Group 3: 2-3 Children

Table 10: Number of Children

	F	p
AC	0.831	0.442
CC	1.954	0.153
NC	1.893	0.162
SUPM	0.534	0.590
SUPC	1.491	0.236
W_F	1.181	0.316
POS	1.892	0.162

Table 11: Test of Normality

	GROUP 1		GROUP 2		GROUP 3		Distribution
	W	P	W	p	W	p	
ACSUM	0.962	0.826	0.953	0.362	0.962	0.536	Normal
CCSUM	0.890	0.355	0.969	0.690	0.941	0.209	Normal
NCSUM	0.888	0.346	0.958	0.450	0.964	0.583	Normal
SUPMSUM	0.949	0.730	0.918	0.070	0.923	0.090	Normal
SUPCSUM	0.902	0.421	0.974	0.795	0.952	0.354	Normal
W_FSUM	0.832	0.145	0.918	0.070	0.924	0.096	Normal
POSSUM	0.868	0.256	0.957	0.430	0.952	0.352	Normal

**Table 12: Nonparametric Test: Kruskal-Wallis**

	H	df	P
ACSUM	1.756	2.000	0.416
CCSUM	3.587	2.000	0.166
NCSUM	4.191	2.000	0.123
SUPMSUM	0.667	2.000	0.716
SUPCSUM	3.365	2.000	0.186
W_FSUM	0.927	2.000	0.629
POSSUM	2.666	2.000	0.264

University of Cape Town

**UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN**  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL IN HUMANITIES**

**DECLARATION BY CANDIDATE FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER IN THE  
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES**

I, *(name of candidate)*

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Of *(address of candidate)*

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do hereby declare that I empower the University of Cape Town to produce for the purpose of research either the whole or any portion of the contents of my dissertation entitled

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in any manner whatsoever.

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CANDIDATE'S SIGNATURE

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DATE

