



**UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL**

**INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI**

**THE SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING OF BLACK SELF-EMPLOYED WOMEN IN
SOUTH AFRICA: THE ROLE OF MULTIPLE ROLE STRAIN**

By: Silindokuhle Mkhize

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Social Science (Industrial Psychology), in the school of Psychology, in the
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Supervisor: Prof JH Buitendach

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work. All citations, references and borrowed ideas have been duly acknowledged. None of the present work has been submitted previously for any degree or examination in any other university.

Signature: *Bob McQuire*

Date: 14 February 2018

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ABSTRACT

A woman's ability to balance multiple life roles is related to her physical and mental wellbeing, her career performance and success. Through the theoretical framework of Spillover theory, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore self-employed women's conceptualisation and experiences of multiple role strain and its role in subjective wellbeing. The study consisted of interviews with 10 self-employed black women in various industries as there is limited research regarding the subjective wellbeing of this demographic group. Thematic analysis showed that while being at the helm of their organisations, they still bore the primary responsibility of caring for and nurturing their families. Central themes from the study were the perceptions of subjective wellbeing and multiple role strain, the roles performed, experiences of conflict, ability to cope, support structures and self-reliance as well as feelings of guilt. The study contributes to the limited knowledge available on the subjective wellbeing of black South African self-employed women, it also provides a unique cultural perspective to the understanding of multiple role strain and subjective wellbeing.

Keywords: subjective wellbeing, multiple role strain, spillover theory, self-employed women, thematic analysis

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The present chapter consists of the introduction, background to the study and the rationale for the research paper. An outline of the research objectives and goals that the study sought to achieve are listed. Finally, a summary of the various chapters for the research paper are provided.

The wellbeing of women has received much attention globally since the rise of women joining paid employment in the last few decades (Mostert, 2009). Even though a number of women have entered paid employment, their level of involvement at home as a mother/wife and in household responsibilities has not changed much (Higgins, Duxbury & Lyons, 2010). It can be said that perceptions of women's roles remain tradition bound (Rao, Apte & Subbakrishna, 2003). Though they may work outside the home, primary responsibilities of being a wife and a mother cannot be compromised (Mostert, 2009). Thus, in addition to paid employment, women may still have to bear their reproductive roles in the home and in society. As a result, women experience more conflict due to incompatibilities between work and home (Burke, 2001). The underlying premise is that the role of mother and wife is seen as a "natural" role and can therefore be accomplished without any difficulty. In contrast, the role of worker is seen as "unnatural" and highly demanding and thus causes stress (Barnett, 2004a). Moreover, research has shown concern that women's multiple roles may have harmful effects on their wellbeing (Barnett, 2004a; Rao, Apte & Subbakrishna, 2003; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015).

South African women have played and still further play an essential role in the country's development, both economically and socially in paid employment in industry and unpaid employment in the home (Booyesen, 1999). Global competition in organisations has caused increased performance pressures on employers and employees alike, as a result of increasing demands on time, energy and work commitment (De Villiers & Kotze, 2003). As such, women have the challenge to balance their multiple roles, at work, in the home and in society to ensure that they look after their dependents and that they are also able to look after themselves (Uys & Mclellan, 2009). This has implications for their physical and mental wellbeing, career performance and success (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003). Moreover, as a result of changes in South African society with regard to women's paid employment, education, fertility and gender-role attitudes, there is likelihood that many will continue having multiple roles in the future (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003). It is therefore crucial to have a deep understanding of the self-employed women's experiences in dealing with multiple roles with regard to their subjective wellbeing in a South African context.

1.2 Background and rationale

For women, trying to balance working outside the home, together with domestic responsibilities has become an accepted social norm (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). It is not surprising that the notion of engaging in multiple roles concurrently, arguably results in some form of distress. Numerous research have been conducted in western countries examining multiple role strain and its effects (Baruch & Barnett, 1986; Chrouser Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Coverman, 1989; Kulik, Shilo-Levin & Liberman, 2015; Rao et al., 2003). The initial debate was based on the depletion and enrichment hypotheses, whether participation in multiple roles was detrimental or beneficial to women's health (Barnett & Baruch, 1985). Early research questioned whether multiple

roles create more strain or create more satisfaction. Evidence seemed inconclusive as literature has given support for both the depletion hypothesis (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Goode, 1960; Hughes & Glinsky, 1994) and the enrichment theory (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Chrouser Ahrens & Ryff, 2006; Noor, 1995; Rao et al., 2003; Thoits, 1983). Even though there seems to be more support for the enrichment theory, consensus however points to the importance of the quality of the roles performed over the quantity of the roles (Barnett, 2004a; Long & Potter, 1984; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). The quality of the role is found to be a strong predictor of health states than the number of roles, however, the nature of employment, role combinations, decision making latitude, working conditions and compensation also have an effect on the outcome (Barnett, 2004b; Lennon, 1994; Pugliesi, 1995, Rao et al., 2003).

A gap in both the depletion and enrichment hypothesis is the fact that there is no differentiation among various roles. As explained, if the quality and nature of the role is the predictor of health states (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Lennon, 1994; Pugliesi, 1995) it is therefore worthwhile to gain understanding on the type or combination of the roles in question. Specifically for women, different roles may confer certain privileges and obligations such as unpaid domestic work versus paid employment (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). These roles may be viewed differently between the individual women and societal expectations (Barnett, 2004a; Long & Potter, 1984) which could lead to conflict as a result of incompatibilities.

Even though there is extensive international literature on multiple roles and wellbeing, in South Africa, such studies are still limited, especially those looking at self-employed women. This area is under researched as the trajectory of women in the workplace occurred much slower and later on than that of industrialised countries such as Britain

and the United States (Whitehead & Kotze, 2003). Studies in the field have focused on employee work-life balance (Bobat, Mshololo & Reuben, 2012; De Villiers & Kotze, 2003; Uys & Mclellan, 2009; Whitehead & Kotze, 2003), women in positions of leadership, coping strategies and mechanisms (Booyesen, 1999; Brink & de la Rey, 2001). Studies looking at multiple roles restricted the analysis of multiple roles to those of employee, wife and mother while ignoring other roles such as, caregiver, church member, organisation member or friend (Thoits, 1986; Uys & Mclellan, 2009; Whitehead & Kotze, 2003).

As self-employed business owners, these women are at the helm of their organisations where they are responsible for the daily operations and managing the associated risks of financial, administrative and social responsibilities (Witbooi & Ukpere, 2011). This facilitates meeting their career needs and the needs of their family members. The challenges faced by these women have a bearing and major implications on their success and wellbeing (Uys & Mclellan, 2009). Despite the challenges they face, they play a positive role in society. It seems probable that these women would experience high levels of subjective wellbeing due to their autonomy, designing and being in control of their own careers. It is important to gain meaning and understanding from these women in their own cultural context rather than making inferences from generally accepted western cultures.

It was the intention of this study to explore how the women experience multiple role strain in relation to their wellbeing. Specifically, these are the problems the study wanted to address: to understand and contribute to the literature, the black self-employed women's experiences of subjective wellbeing as a result of the multiple roles

they play, understand their coping mechanisms and how they facilitate effective functioning in their life domains successfully.

1.3 Problem Statement

Women have a vital role in society, that of contributing to the economic activity of the country as well as the reproduction and maintenance of society (Higgins, Duxbury & Lyons, 2010). Women go into business in order to supplement their family income because of the reproductive role they play (Mostert, 2009). For these women, their success is not in economic terms but they view success as being able to achieve a balance between their family and their work (Brush, 1992). Women are involved in the day to day running of their businesses, looking after their employees through coaching and mentoring, taking care of their families while being caregivers to others. Historically in South Africa, women have suffered from historical and cultural prejudice in accessing opportunities (Witbooi & Ukpere, 2011). Business owners face challenges such as, obtaining finance to start businesses and the cost thereof, access to markets, access to information on support services and access to training (Thabethe, 2006). It is thus important to understand how these and other factors affect their wellness and how they cope with such challenges. Such information in turn will inform health practices and health policies toward the improvisation of women's health issues.

The growth in the field of subjective wellbeing attests to the promotion of individual development and wellbeing in different domains such as physical and mental health, education, work and social integration (Fave & Massimini, 2005). Research shows that levels of wellbeing vary from one woman to the next and this could be attributable to their personality type, coping mechanism, emotional, social and practical support

(Uys & Mclellan, 2009). One study has shown how women are more susceptible in reporting high levels of role overload and strain (Higgins et al., 2010). This results from the women's dedication to primary responsibilities such as child care and domestic work. This study therefore aimed to further extend the growing body of knowledge regarding the understanding of multiple role strain with regard to wellbeing in a cultural context of South African black women. The research will further allow for comparison across cultures.

1.4 Research objectives

From the above study background and problem statement, the objectives of the study are to:

- Explore the women's conceptualisation and experiences of subjective wellbeing and multiple role strain.
- Identify the multiple roles occupied by the women as well as coping strategies used to maintain wellbeing.
- Understand multiple role strain and its role in subjective wellbeing.

1.5 Research questions

1. How do the women conceptualise and experience subjective wellbeing and multiple role strain?
2. What are the roles occupied and coping strategies used to achieve wellbeing?
3. What is the role of multiple role strain in subjective wellbeing?

1.6 Summary

The chapter has provided the background and rationale for the study. The problem statement has also been given which culminated into the research objectives and the research questions which the study aimed to respond to.

1.7 Structure and outline of the study

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter consists of the literature review detailing studies which have carried out research on subjective wellbeing and multiple role strain. It also includes the theoretical framework which has been used to underpin the study.

Chapter 3: Research methods

This chapter focuses on providing a detailed description of how the study was conducted. It covers the research design used, the sampling technique, data collection and data analysis methods. Ethical concerns which were considered during the course of the study are also discussed.

Chapter 4: Results

This chapter contains the resulting themes obtained from the research conducted using thematic analysis.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter provides feedback and discussion of the results obtained through the background of the literature discussed. This section responds to the study objectives and research questions.

Chapter 6: Conclusion, Limitations and Recommendations

The final chapter consists of the key findings arrived at, implications of these findings, limitations which have impacted the study as well as recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has discussed the background to the study and provided the research problem. This present chapter begins with a brief historical view of women in the workplace. It follows with a discussion of the constructs the study is focusing on, subjective wellbeing and multiple role strain, while also discussing the spillover theory as the theoretical framework which underpins the study. It concludes by addressing general findings relating to multiple role strain and its role on subjective wellbeing with specific focus to working self-employed women and their coping.

2.2 History of women in the workplace

Historically, gendered beliefs kept women out of the labour market (Barnett, 2004b). This comes from the adage that a woman's place is in the home while men belong in the workplace. Such beliefs have therefore shaped behaviour directly and indirectly through individuals internalising their gender roles and through socio-cultural norms of how men and women ought to behave (Preston, 2004). Prior to the industrial revolution, societies were predominantly agrarian and rural with both men and women engaged in the production of goods in the home. Women were involved in domestic work while men were involved in manufacturing (Hattery, 2001). With the advent of the industrial revolution, a distinction between paid and unpaid work was introduced, with women remaining in the unpaid domestic domain while men entered paid employment in factories (Hattery, 2001).

Women seen as being the weaker sex and men as the stronger sex propagated employers to refuse to employ married women and single women of marriageable age

as well as to fire women who married (Kessler-Harris, 2001). Resultant from women's gender roles, the women's job was to bear children and care for the family whilst the men's responsibility was to financially provide for the family. In 1900, about 40% of single women were employed compared to 5% of married women (Barnett, 2004b). This conflict between home and work was more evident in the teaching profession. Despite the fact that being a teacher was only one of the handful careers which educated women could go into in the early 1900s, it was not a family friendly occupation. The school system instituted bans against married women and pregnant women from being employed as teachers (Preston, 2004). This further cemented the belief that women were not suited for work outside the home.

World War II contested the marriage and pregnancy bans on women in the workplace when there was shortage of male labour due to the war (Barnett, 2004b). Restrictions on female labour were loosened where both married and single women, with or without children were employed for work which was previously reserved for men only who had physical manpower (Albee & Perry, 1998). After the war however, women were pushed out of the factories to make way for the returning soldiers as the return to the nurturing mother was re-introduced (Barnett, 2004b). In the 1970s as men's wages began to stagnate, more and more women entered employment fields previously thought to be fit for men only. A single income was no longer sufficient to support middle class lifestyles (Hattery, 2001). Women therefore continued to work out of economic necessity.

Changes in women's education have slowly eroded traditional ideas of female appropriate roles (Floro & Komatsu, 2011). More women are getting university degrees while an increasing life span and decreased fertility allows for more activities

separate from the home to take up a bigger proportion of the women's lives (Barnett, 2004b). Over the last two decades, as women's educational achievements increased, this however has not benefitted the women much nor improved their position at work (ILO, 2016). As women entered the labour market and throughout their working lives, they continue to face significant obstacles in gaining access to decent work as inequalities persists between men and women (Mostert, 2009). In many regions across the world, when compared to men, women tend to become and remain unemployed, with fewer chances of participating in the labour force, and when they do, accept lower quality jobs and earn less than men for the same job (ILO, 2016). Supporting this is the fact that from 1995 to 2015, the global female labour force participation rate decreased from 52,4% to 49,6% while equivalent figures for men are 79,9% and 76,1% respectively (ILO, 2016).

South Africa is no different from other countries as it has been argued that women's ability or lack thereof to secure work is closely linked with their gender roles, the unpaid housework they do and the care work which they do (Floro & Komatsu, 2011). However, the women's trajectory into the workplace is different because of the racial segregation which existed against black people (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005). The unequal power relations put white people in a privileged position while the black people were subjected to slavery and forced/unfree systems of labour (Terreblanche, 2002). Among other factors, government regulations such as the job reservation or job colour bar (categorising of jobs according to race) limited the opportunities that were available to black people. Moreover, discriminatory expenditure on education meant that blacks were at a disadvantage in terms of accessing employment (Terreblanche, 2002) as most labourers were unskilled. The pass laws further restricted movement in terms of

areas people were allowed to go to and those that they could not access, thus making job seeking difficult (Seekings & Nattrass, 2005).

In order to supplement family income, women had to find work outside the home. In keeping with women's primary role, they engaged in domestic work, agriculture and working in textile, retail and food processing factories (Tshoaedi, 2012). Resulting from the patriarchal South African society, the factory work structures were organised in such a way that men dominated and occupied the supervisory positions while women were concentrated in the lower grades where they were paid low wages (Tshoaedi, 2012). Working together in the factories and facing similar oppressions (patriarchy, capitalism, racism), women's resistance began through various coalitions of all races. Statistics on South African women participating in the labour force show that in 1960, 23% of women accounted for the labour force, by 1970 participation had increased to 32% and 34% in 1995, peaking at 41% by 2000 (Casale & Posel, 2002). The labour force survey in 2016 shows the labour participation rate of women to be 52,9% versus 65,7% for men (Stats SA, 2016). After the demise of apartheid, much of the growth in employment especially for black women has been in low skilled informal sector jobs. Such jobs may allow for flexibility in terms of working hours e.g. domestic work and street vending, however their income is low (Floro & Komatsu, 2011).

It continues to be a major struggle for black women to start, grow and strengthen their businesses (Thabethe, 2006) given their previous limited participation in the labour force. This is besides the government's black economic empowerment strategy which seeks to increase the participation of women and previously disadvantaged individuals in the economy (Thabethe, 2006). Women still face an added disparity of being women in a male dominated society (Witbooi & Ukpere, 2011). The glass ceiling

effect, discrimination, lack of education (Moleke, 2005), autonomy and balancing of work and family life (Annink & de Dulk, 2012) has been cited as part of the reason women start their businesses.

The unique challenges faced by self-employed women have a bearing and major implications on their success and wellbeing. Despite the challenges faced by women, they play a positive role in society. Hence if light can be shed on their experiences, how they navigate and negotiate multiple roles then we can understand how they facilitate effective functioning and maintain wellbeing in both their home and work lives successfully.

2.3 Subjective wellbeing

Subjective wellbeing is located within the field of positive psychology, which focuses on uncovering human strengths in an effort to promote optimal functioning (Lopez & Edwards, 2008; Kaufman, 2006). Positive psychology looks at the conditions which make people flourish in whatever they do. Furthermore, it moves away from focusing on only the challenges which individuals face and places focus on the strengths and positive processes that can lead to enhanced wellbeing (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). As a result, subjective wellbeing advanced in part as a response to the prominence of negative states studied in psychology. This is the common thread found in all positive psychology studies. Wellbeing is therefore a term used for a number of concepts relating to human wellness such as subjective wellbeing and happiness (David, Boniwell & Conley Ayers, 2013).

Subjective wellbeing refers to the evaluations of happiness and life satisfaction in an individual's life, i.e. an appraisal of life, balancing the good and the bad. This

encompasses people's emotional responses, general evaluations of one's life and satisfaction with important life domains (Diener, 2000). Subjective wellbeing and happiness overlap to some extent and at times have been used interchangeably. It should be noted however that these two constructs are not similar, they are different from each other (Diener, Napa Scollon & Lucas, 2003a). The nature of happiness has not been defined in one universal way but it can be understood as a positive emotional state which is general and not restricted to a specific circumstance or event (Diener, 2000). Both happiness and subjective wellbeing deal with emotional aspects of an individual, however what makes them distinct is that subjective wellbeing also looks at the cognitive domain and not only the affective domain as happiness does. This study focuses on subjective wellbeing and not on happiness.

Subjective wellbeing derives from two perspectives, hedonism and eudaimonism. Hedonism focuses on the human search for pursuit of pleasure and enjoyment while eudaimonism originates from Aristotle's fulfilment of a person's true nature, including self-actualisation, a commitment to socially shared goals and realising one's fullest potential (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Diener et al., 2003a). The hedonist view suggests that people want to be happy for the sake of being happy. Research has however shown that people do want their happiness to be justified. A review by Diener et al., (2003a) states evidence revealing that Asian and Asian American students were more likely to elect activities which their parents would approve of or tasks which lead to achievement rather than tasks deemed fun and personally enjoyable. Thus, at times, people may be willing to sacrifice positive affect for something else which they may value more.

Subjective wellbeing can be defined as a person's cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life, encompassing four characteristics, positive affect, negative affect, domain satisfaction and cognitive life satisfaction (Diener, Oishi & Lucas, 2003b; Veenhoven, 1994). Most importantly, subjective wellbeing emphasises the assessment of one's own life and is not based on an expert's judgement (Diener et al., 2003a). The affective evaluations are in a form of moods and emotions e.g. anger, sadness, joy, happiness. Furthermore, people's affective reactions give insight into how people evaluate conditions and events occurring in their lives. This is because pleasant and unpleasant affects are quite distinct from each other, they are not simply opposites of each other. Thus the absence of the one does not mean a presence of the other, such as eliminating pain does not increase pleasure experienced by a person (Lucas, Diener & Su, 1996). The cognitive mechanism is involved in comparison of notions of a good life, where one's life is and where one would like their life to be. Domain satisfaction on the other hand looks at domains valued by people such as work, marriage or health (Diener et al., 2003b).

The importance of subjective wellbeing has fuelled researchers to study and discover individual resources, strengths and potentials. Such information has been widely used to design intervention programs and promote various dimensions of wellbeing (Fave & Massimini, 2005). Subjective wellbeing is therefore important as it leads to benefits such as making it possible to assess quality of life thereby supplementing economic and social indicators (Diener et al., 2003a, Tay & Kuykendall, 2013). It also enables the processes that underlie subjective wellbeing and a recognition of the central role played by people's goals, coping efforts and dispositions (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999). Since subjective wellbeing reflects a general evaluation of a person's life, an individual can assess conditions or circumstances in their lives and consider their

importance thereof. They can then evaluate their lives as to whether they are satisfied or dissatisfied.

As has been explained above that the judgement requires cognitive processing. It has been argued that people do not always examine all aspects of their lives and weigh them appropriately to arrive at a judgement (Schwarz & Strack, 1999). Arbitrary factors may be used to come to conclusions about life satisfaction, such as the mood one is in at the time of making the judgement or by comparison against others. As such, it has been argued that marketers and advertisers can affect evaluations of wellbeing as they show imaginings of lives which are beyond reach for a typical person (Veenhoven, 2008). Furthermore, the social comparison theory posits that individuals compare themselves to others as a standard for evaluating their life satisfaction (Geldenhurys & Henn, 2017; Taye & Kuykendall, 2013). These are some of the criticisms of subjective wellbeing in terms of how life satisfaction judgements can be arbitrarily made. Refuting this is evidence stating how information used to make judgements remains stable over time for most people (Magnus & Diener, 1991).

Literature initially focused on external objective variables such as age, sex, income, race and education to investigate whether they had any influence on subjective wellbeing. The results were unfavourable and research thus focused on internal variables such as personality in explaining determinants of subjective wellbeing (Diener et al., 1999). Indeed, personality traits were shown to exhibit some of the strongest relations with subjective wellbeing (Diener et al., 1999). Personality traits tend to remain stable over time particularly those of adults and so does subjective wellbeing (Diener et al., 2003a). Even though people mostly use information that is pertinent at the time of the judgement, such as the current mood they are in (Diener

et al., 2003a), there is however evidence that information used to make judgements remains stable over time for most people (Magnus & Diener, 1991). So even though information used to make life satisfaction judgements may seem flawed sometimes, most times people use relevant and stable information which is strongly correlated with life satisfaction.

Individualism and collectivism has been one dimension of culture which is useful in understanding differences from the underlying processes of subjective wellbeing (Diener & Diener 1995). One feature is how people view themselves as autonomous and self-sufficient in individualistic societies where the focus is on how one can differentiate himself or herself from others. In such cultures subjective wellbeing is viewed from an individualistic point of view. On the other hand, collectivist cultures hold a different view to that of autonomy. An individual's independence, feelings and emotions are subordinated to those of the group. The focus is not how to be different from others, but to maintain harmony with the group. As such, the feelings about the self are not paramount in making life satisfaction judgements (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Diener & Diener, 1995). Oyserman, Coon and Kemmelmeier (2002) have posited that African countries are more collectivist societies than individualistic. Vogt and Laher (2009) have argued that this is changing in South Africa and is evidenced by a combination of both cohabiting couples in a nuclear of family type as well as extended families in one household. This dimension may thus have influence in how people view their subjective wellbeing.

With there being differences in how people experience subjective wellbeing (Diener et al. 2003a), Addai, Opoku-Agyeman and Amanfu (2014) as well as Ngoo, Tey and Tan (2015), have noted how more research on how people experience well-being has been

conducted in developed countries than in African contexts. However, with the increase of women in the South African workplace, studies examining wellbeing are increasing. One study has examined the demographic differences in the experiences of well-being of women in the workplace. Geldenhuys and Henn (2017) investigated the effects of age, race, marital status and educational status on life satisfaction, work engagement and work-family conflict amongst working women. The study found that marital status, race and educational status indicated high levels of life satisfaction. Mahadea & Ramroop (2014), upon examining the influences on happiness relating to subjective wellbeing in entrepreneurs and labour found that there is a close relationship existing between improved financial security and subjective wellbeing for black South Africans. Furthermore to this study, entrepreneurs were found to be happier than wage earners. Both studies above found a higher level of life satisfaction for whites when compared to blacks. This should however be understood from the backdrop of a society with income disparities resulting from apartheid (Botha & Booysen, 2014).

We can conclude that subjective wellbeing can therefore be understood as a broad concept which is multidimensional and suggests varying components which underlie wellbeing. It differs from woman to woman due to coping mechanism, personality, social and emotional support (Uys & Mclellan, 2009). Thus, people will react in various ways under similar circumstances and they evaluate conditions based on their own unique expectations, values and previous experiences (Diener et al., 1999). Subjective wellbeing can also change over the life course and can be improved upon with interventions (Tay & Kuykendall, 2013). Given cultural differences that exist and a history of limited resources which were shared with the immediate family and extended family members, it may be that the study participants may subscribe to the idea of a nuclear family but still be involved in the day to day lives of their extended

families. If this is true, it could result in having a broader outlook and understanding of wellbeing that goes beyond the individual. This may further have implications for additional multiple roles to those on the home and work domains.

2.4 Multiple role strain

Within the context of an organisation, people engage in multiple roles to fulfil job expectations as careers have become more complex (Rothbard, 2001). Certain jobs require people to travel which may place strain on family relationships. Some jobs require managing people within the organisation while simultaneously generating new business from external clients for the organisation, and this could lead to role conflict. With a number of women in leadership positions, interest in the relationship between work and non-work domains has increased because these women are seen as being torn between these domains (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer & King, 2002). Their competence is questioned as to whether they can be successful and do justice to both these domains.

Role strain can be understood as the difficulty in fulfilling role obligations, resulting from an interaction between role demand and role conflict, the difficulty in meeting role demands as well as conflicting role requirements (Goode, 1960). Role demand refers to resources that an individual requires in order to fulfil a role (Barnett & Baruch, 1985). These could be physical or psychological resources that assist an individual to be able to function optimally in a particular role. Role conflict on the other hand refers to differing expectations where satisfying one role is in direct conflict with the satisfaction of another role (Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark & Baltes, 2010). The multiple roles may then cause competing interests in a person's life. It has been argued that employed women with multiple roles experience an increase in self-esteem and have

more opportunities for supportive roles to be shared with others (Bala, 1998; Marks, 1977, Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). What is more, women with multiple roles showed better mental and physical health than those women with fewer roles (Barnett & Hyde, 2001).

From a South African perspective, a study by Opie and Henn (2013) showed that women who experienced conflict due to incompatible demands stemming from their work and family lives struggled to balance their multiple roles as a negative consequence. On the other hand, Booysen and Botha (2013) upon testing for differences in reported life satisfaction between married and cohabiting persons, found a number of explanatory variables. These included gender, age, race, education, income, health status, children, religious activities and decision making power. Of particular interest from this study is the fact that the explanatory variables (health status, children, marital/cohabiting partner, religious activities and decision making power) point to a different number of roles that a person would experience and deal with in the course of their day to day existence. These roles therefore affect the life satisfaction experienced by the person in terms of their subjective wellbeing. The overall results suggested that there is not much difference between marriage and cohabiting in terms of what they value as important for enhancing personal life satisfaction.

As women have multiple roles outside of the family and work such as leisure roles, community roles or religious roles (Thoits, 1986), the relationship between multiple roles and wellbeing becomes a much relevant issue for both individuals and researchers alike.

2.5 The relationship between multiple role strain and wellbeing

The relationship between multiple role strain and wellbeing can be understood through the historical work which guided organisational thinking on both positive and negative theories of multiple roles. They are the scarcity hypothesis (Goode, 1960) also known as role conflict theory (Barnett, 1998; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999, Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), and the role accumulation theory (Sieber, 1974) also known as expansionist hypothesis (Barnett & Baruch, 1985) or identity accumulation hypothesis (Thoits, 1983). The scarcity hypothesis highlights the negative nature of multiple role strain while the role accumulation theory highlights the positive nature.

2.5.1 The scarcity hypothesis

When Goode (1960, p. 483) formulated his theory about role strain, he put forth that the role relations are always in a state of "bargaining" where individuals are constantly choosing from the different role behaviours seeking to reduce role strain. This suggests that an individual could not meet all his or her obligations to the satisfaction of everyone in their network, and that the accumulation of various roles will result in conflicting obligations and personal exhaustion. He asserted that role strain was therefore normal as an everyday part of social life.

The hypothesis stipulated that people have limited energy to spend on various roles and when the accumulation of these roles exceeds resources an individual has available, this will lead to conflict (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). Slater (1963) extended this hypothesis to women and suggested that those who engage in multiple roles will experience more distress than women who engaged in fewer roles. The roles stem from people's positions and statuses such as those from a job or family (Barnett, 1998). Thus an individual's problem is how to manage all his or her roles to

reduce strain to a manageable level while structurally, the problem is to integrate all roles so that institutional activities can be achieved, (Goode, 1960; Slater, 1963).

Women, forming part of the workforce, families and society of different cultures have different multiple roles which make them vulnerable to conflicting and incompatible role demands. This has a huge effect on their psychological health (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Frech & Damaske, 2012). To counteract this, they would spread their resources thin without enough energy to fulfil all of their role obligations. Thus, the more roles one has, the more chances there are of exhausting time and energy as well as dealing with conflicting obligations that result in psychological distress (Barnett & Baruch, 1985). Moreover, engaging in multiple roles indicates different unfavourable effects on women's physical and mental health, including back pains, insomnia, loss of appetite and overindulgence (Hughes & Glinsky, 1994). It is most likely that women who are at the helm of their organisations have to channel their energies and skills into growing their businesses and ensure that they are successful. Over and above this, there are other societal roles which they also fulfil. From this perspective, it is probable that these women may have a hard time trying to fulfil and balance all their roles optimally. However, there are recorded positive outcomes from engaging in multiple roles.

2.5.2 Role accumulation theory

In response to Goode's theory that role strain is a natural consequence of multiple roles, alternative expansion hypotheses which are consistent with positive psychology trends came forth challenging this notion. Their common thread is that the engagement in multiple roles is psychologically beneficial for women (Michel et al., 2010) and that individual resources are rather expandable rather than limited (Barnett

& Hyde, 2001). Thoits (1983) postulated the identity accumulation hypothesis which acknowledges conflict as resultant from multiple roles. It however argues that there are also positive outcomes associated with multiple roles which tend to be overlooked (Barnett, 1998). This therefore indicates that research on multiple role strain should look at both positive and negative factors and not just deprivation or gratification. As much as wellbeing can be comprehended as a form of net gratification over deprivation so can multiple role strain (Thoits, 1983). Moreover, enhancement and conflict can co-exist as Poole and Langan-Fox (1992) indicated that even though a role can be the most stressful when compared to others, but can also be the most rewarding, e.g. being a parent.

The role accumulation theory postulates that occupying multiple roles can have a positive effect which focuses on rewards or advantages associated with those particular roles (Barnett & Hyde, 2001). Accumulating roles can increase social privileges and an overall sense of security. Such positive outcomes can act as a defence against negative effects of role strain experienced in other role obligations (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). Long and Porter (1984) found in their research that the psychological consequences of role accumulation do not only depend on the number of roles held but on the nature of the role. This is because different roles have different social values, privileges and obligations associated with them. Women have historically occupied roles which are different to men's. Moreover, the values given to childcare and domestic responsibilities are not valued the same as those of working men in paid employment (Barnett & Baruch, 1985). One can therefore infer that high values and important obligations ascribed by women to their roles and not by society may cause conflict from competing role interests between society and individuals.

Empirical evidence shows that women who perform multiple roles tend to put the need of others first before their own (Barnett, 2004a) and this may contribute to women ignoring potential contributors to stress (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). However, positive health outcomes are not necessarily a result of the number of roles, but rather a consequence of them as healthy women are the most likely to undertake multiple roles (Hyde, Klein, Essex & Clark, 1995). Furthermore, with the different roles the women occupy, the more resilience they have to face adversities as the roles become protective psychosocial factors (Barnett, 2004a).

Literature focusing on the psychological consequences of multiple role strain in women has highlighted the complexity of the findings from the expansion hypotheses/theories. It has been acknowledged that the number of roles alone do not account for the beneficial effects of multiple roles on women's health (Barnett, 2004a; Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). Instead a number of variables such as the quality of the roles, social support and job characteristics influence the psychological wellbeing of women (Barnett & Baruch, 1985). Low quality roles can thus be deemed to have negative effects on wellbeing while roles experienced as high quality may enhance wellbeing even though they may be multiple. A study by Baruch and Barnett (1986) suggested that when women perceive a role to be unsatisfactory and of low quality, it resulted in experiences of a lowered self-esteem, depression and lack of pleasure.

The balancing by women of their multiple roles has been captured in some South African studies, particularly those looking at how women balance their work and home lives. A qualitative grounded theory study by Whitehead and Kotze (2003) sought to infer a theoretical framework for the in-depth understanding of women's ability to balance multiple roles. They concluded that the balance seemed elusive and ever

changing with different life experiences. This was demonstrated by two life balance models. The first model demonstrated life balance as a holistic approach, consisting of self-awareness and a high level of consciousness. The second model consisted of external/supporting and internal/influencing factors within the experience of life balance. Similarly, Uys and Mclellan (2009) explored how self-employed women cope in balancing their dual roles and how this affected their wellbeing. The study found each of the interviewed women's experiences to be different from each other. However, they all converged to the fact that women's role in the home has not diminished to compensate for the increasing involvement in the workplace. Thus, various strategies were employed to achieve control and balance and they included effective planning and structuring of responsibilities, support systems and quality time spent with family.

While the depletion/enrichment argument captures the multiple role strain phenomena, the spillover theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2012) contextualises the experiences of multiple roles from different domains.

2.6 Theoretical framework: Spillover theory

The relationship between the domains of home and work has received much attention in the field of organisational studies (Mostert, 2009). Motivating people to be engaged in their work in organisations becomes complicated by the multiple roles people have, with attitudes, emotions and behaviours which spill from one role into another (Rothbard, 2001). Through exploring overlaps between work and family roles, focus must be shifted from emphasis on role conflict to emphasising how an individual fares in implementing their self-concept (Ruderman et al., 2002). The spillover theory posits that people's life domains are integrated, implying that well-being can be transferred

between one life domain to another (Radó, Nagy & Király, 2015). This framework offers understanding in terms of how women perceive and give meaning to their wellbeing and roles while simultaneously negotiating role strain. Furthermore, it allows for exploration of cultural contexts while providing for an understanding of how coping methods enhance wellbeing. As such it proposes a way of thinking about wellbeing as a subjective experience which changes over time.

Spillover theory is a construct covering interactions between home and work domains. It encompasses the positive outcomes of multiple roles (e.g. engagement, gains, enhanced functioning) as well as the negative outcomes (e.g. work-family conflict) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2012). This indicates an intricate relationship which varies from negative to positive and can possibly lie anywhere along the continuum. Bakker & Demerouti (2012) further elucidate that the theory emphasises the exploring of behaviours, moods and emotions both positive and negative that transfer or spillover between roles. The basic components travelling between the domains include, emotions, values, attitudes, behaviours and skills (Radó et al., 2015). It has been argued that spillover is not simply a cause and effect influence from one role to another, but a phenomenon of activities in one role benefitting individual activity in another role (Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson & Kacmar, 2007). The work family interface can thus be seen as an important influencer for health promotion (Grzywacz, 2000).

Spillover may be negative or positive. Negative spillover can be equated with the scarcity hypothesis in terms of when individuals are faced with work overload and high emotional demands, problems in combining work and family roles can become evident (Bakker & Demerouti, 2012). In such a case job demands can spillover to the home domain and interfere with family life from prolonged exposure to long work hours

thereby limiting time spent with family. On the other hand, positive spillover or work-family enrichment can be understood as the degree to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in another role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Work-family enrichment is defined as “the extent to which participation at work (or home) is made easier by virtue of the experiences, skills, and opportunities gained or developed at home (or work)” (Frone, 2003, p.145). The implication for these two polarities is that skills and opportunities gained by an individual through work may increase positive family relations, while experiences and support from family may make for a good engaged worker.

The inter-role enrichment can happen either instrumentally or affectively (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). The former can occur when resources such as skills and opportunities for self-growth gained in one role, directly improve functioning in another role. The latter affective enrichment occurs through a resource in one role producing positive affect such as positive emotions and energy which in turn improve individual functioning in another role (Wayne et al., 2007). Previous studies looking at negative spillover between work and family showed results of undermining individual health and wellbeing (Frone, Russell & Cooper, 1997), while Grzywacs (2000) found that high positive spillover between work and family was associated with better self-appraised health.

This study focused on multiple role strain and how it relates to wellbeing. It further sought to discover coping strategies used by the women to effectively manage their roles and deal with distress experienced as a result of their multiple roles.

2.7 Coping

Coping behaviour is an important moderator between distress and health outcomes while the awareness of coping styles can be utilised in preventing distress and promoting wellbeing (Rao et al., 2003). Coping can be understood as "constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific internal and/or external demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of a person" (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984 p.141). Generally, coping can be divided into problem focused coping and emotion focused. The former helps to solve the problem through behavioural and cognitive attempts to deal with challenges and/or change one's appraisal of the threat. The latter helps to reduce the associated distress through containing stressful emotions such as regulating emotions, applying self-control or distancing oneself from the problem (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Studies have found that women tend to use problem focused coping to the same extent as men. However, when it comes to emotion focused coping, women use more acceptance and religious coping while men prefer denial or avoidance and negative distraction techniques (Rao et al., 2003). Furthermore, women use more social support seeking than men (Higgins et al., 2010; Thoits, 1995).

Evidence from studies examining coping styles of women show that avoidance coping (type of emotion focused) is related to increased distress (Wanamaker & Bird, 1990, Higgins et al., 2010). Such strategies render individuals prone to depression (Boey, 1998). Some may be effective in the short term, but likely to have negative impact on health and wellbeing if continued in the long term (Cartwright & Cooper, 1996). Brink and de la Rey (2001) researched a hypothetical conflict situation to South African women in middle and senior management as well as business owners to identify the coping strategies they used. They found that the participants used emotional and

problem focused coping strategies in an integrated manner when dealing with a work-family interaction strain situation. In addition, religion was used to cope with work and family responsibilities. “Pray” was how several women described how they coped. Spiritual wellbeing is an important dimension of quality of life, because how someone is faring spiritually affects their physical, psychological and interpersonal states which contribute to overall quality of life (Phillips, Chamberlain & Goreczny, 2014).

As one of the objectives, the study aimed to identify the coping mechanisms used by the women to assist them effectively manage their roles and maintain wellness. This information is important in adding to the existing knowledge of intervention programs and wellbeing promotion.

2.8 Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of the literature associated with multiple role strain and subjective wellbeing as well as the theoretical framework. The constructs used in the study have been conceptualised and previous research findings have been highlighted. The following chapter addresses the research design used by the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents information on the process followed when the study was conducted. The methodology gives an indication as to the appropriateness of the methods chosen in conducting research based on the study objectives. The current study sought to explore the experiences of subjective wellbeing and in particular the conceptualisation of subjective wellbeing as well as a further understanding of the role of multiple role strain in a cultural context of black females. The design was exploratory and aimed to offer insight into this relatively unknown area of participants. The chapter gives details on the research design followed, the sampling techniques used to obtain participants, the data collection method and how the data was analysed. Ethical considerations relating to the study are also addressed.

3.2 Research design

The study was carried out using a qualitative research design. It was exploratory, seeking to gain an in-depth understanding of the perspectives and experiences of black self-employed women and to gain new insights into the problem (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2013). The philosophical underpinning was an interpretive perspective, with the aim to understand meaning which the women give to their circumstances, through qualitative inquiry (Myers, 2013). The interpretive perspective allows for the interaction between the researcher and participant to understand people's subjective experiences (Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). This type of inquiry allowed the researcher to understand views in their varying contexts (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2013). The qualitative method was appropriate in this instance because the nature of the data was in the form of narratives (Myers, 2013) which were

verbally delivered during interviews. Furthermore, as the study sought to understand the perspectives of the women, the direction of the conversation was guided by the participants themselves. Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2013) argue that researchers are not detached from their object of study. They have their own understandings, convictions and ways of looking at the world. Therefore the interviews were a collaboration on both parties and not just one party gathering information. The researcher asked probing and clarifying questions as well as follow up questions to get the correct understanding of the issues being discussed. The study was cross sectional as the interviews were done at one point in time due to time limitations and availability for both the researcher and participants. Through the interpretive paradigm, the study sought to describe meanings, personal world views and subjective experiences of black self-employed women on their multiple roles and subjective wellbeing.

3.3 Research method

3.3.1 Research procedure

The participants were obtained via a professional networking site LinkedIn. The search was conducted by searching for the following words on LinkedIn: owner, founder, self-employed, chief executive officer (CEO), and managing director (MD) in the Durban metropolitan area. Other participants were recruited through referrals. Referrals were requested at the end of the interview in order for more participants to be identified. Furthermore, 9 participants had been running their businesses for more than 5 years while 1 had just under 3 years. A longer term was ideal because these women would have valuable insights into the subject given the experience they would have amassed over the years.

The participants were contacted by sending direct messages on the LinkedIn platform while some were sent emails if they had their email addresses listed on their profiles. A participation request letter detailing the nature of the study was sent to the participants which included a consent form, (see appendix A and B). Appointments were made based on the availability of the participants. The interviews took place at the participant's work places while some were at the researcher's work place and they were approximately 1 hour to 1.5 hour. All interviews were voice recorded.

3.3.2 Sampling

The sample was drawn from a population of black females based in Durban who own their businesses. It was however not prescriptive that they must be married, be in a relationship, have children or that their children be of any particular age. The study was looking at the multiple role dimension and having children or being in a relationship formed part of a different role to that of being a business owner. The sample was selected using non-probability sampling technique of purposeful sampling and snowball sampling. Palinkas et al. (2015) states that purposeful sampling in qualitative research helps the researchers choose participants who have qualities that are unique to the research. Furthermore, non-probability sampling does not require the statistical principle of randomness but rather purpose (Creswell, 2012).

The current study intentionally sought business owners via a professional networking site LinkedIn and also by referrals (snowball sampling) from participants who had just been interviewed for the study. Snowball sampling was ideal because business owners know each other through professional bodies they belong to, business networking, social organisations, work collaborations and the like. The sample consisted of 10 women between the ages of 30 years and 50 years. Their businesses

are part of the Small, Medium and Micro-sized Enterprises (SMMEs) with interests ranging from professional services to health and beauty. The participants had been in business for a minimum of 5 years except for one participant who had a minimum of 3 years. 4 of the participants have always worked for themselves since leaving university while the others started their businesses much later in their careers. The minimum number of 5 years as a business owner allowed for rich insights as the participants would have gained invaluable experiences through challenges, opportunities, failures and successes in their lives.

From the total of the participants, 4 participants are married and have children including young children below the age of 10 years, 4 participants are single parents with children below the age of 13 years, and 2 participants do not have children. Some of the participants are in relationships while some are single. More than half of the participants are post graduate students completing PHD's, Masters, MBA degrees while 2 participants indicated their intention to study in the coming year. The participant's information is described in table 1 below.

Table 1*Participant's demographics*

Participant	Age	Business Type	Participant role information
Participant 1 (P1)	30 - 35	Construction and Social development projects	P1 has 6 roles: business owner; partner in a relationship; a single parent of three children, aged, 10, 7 and 5 years old; postgraduate student; extended family caretaker and involved in youth development.
Participant 2 (P2)	30 - 35	Health & Beauty; Personal wellness coaching and Image consulting	P2 has 4 roles: business owner; partner in a relationship; postgraduate student and church choir member.
Participant 3 (P3)	36 - 40	Service station franchisee; Supermarket and Liquor store	P3 has 2 roles: business owner and a divorced single parent of two children, aged, 13 and 9 years.
Participant 4 (P4)	36 - 40	Events management; Freelance voice over artist; Radio presenter and Events MC/Host	P4 has 2 roles: business owner and a Comrades marathon runner.
Participant 5 (P5)	36 - 40	Logistics; Information Technology and Health & Beauty	P5 has 4 roles: business owner; single parent to a child of 4 years; board member and a postgraduate student.
Participant 6 (P6)	46 - 50	Investments; Betting shops and a Boutique shop	P6 has 6 roles: business owner; partner in a long distance relationship; single parent to one child, aged, 7 years; board member; postgraduate student and an extended family caretaker.
Participant 7 (P7)	46 - 50	Training & Development and Events management	P7 has 5 roles: business owner; wife; parent of four children, aged, 21, 19, 17 and 10 years; community worker and involved in youth development.

Participant 8 (P8)	41 - 45	Medical laboratory	P8 has 5 roles: business owner, wife, parent of three children, aged, 21, 15 and 10 years; postgraduate student and a Sunday school teacher.
Participant 9 (P9)	41 - 45	Human Resource Consulting	P9 has 5 roles: business owner; wife; parent of three children, aged, 13, 11, 5 years; postgraduate student and an extended family caretaker.
Participant 10 (P10)	36 - 40	Medical doctor	P10 has 5 roles: business owner; wife; parent of two children, aged 9 and 5 years; postgraduate student and a teacher at a higher learning institution.

3.3.3 Data collection

The role of the researcher in qualitative research is important because as a primary research instrument (Patton, 2002), the research becomes an interpretive and subjective exercise. The researcher aimed to access rich in-depth personal and subjective experiences of the participants. As such, semi structured interviews were used as they offer a flexible way of collecting qualitative data (Creswell, 2012). It was essential that flexible interviews were conducted as it allowed the researcher to focus on the phenomenon studied to understand the processes that led to specific contextual outcomes (Maxwell, 2012).

The data was therefore collected via semi structured interviews with participants guiding the conversation into areas they thought were important and worth discussing. To conduct an interview, rapport and relationships must be established in the beginning as the purpose of the interview is to find out something about another person which is not known and cannot openly be observed (Maxwell, 2012). Open ended questions were asked in order to make the interviews conversational.

Furthermore, the researcher shared personal information with the participants in order to establish rapport and build a trusting relationship to enable the participants to freely talk openly about their lives, circumstances and experiences. There was no specified number of participants for the study as the researcher intended to stop interviewing once saturation of information had been reached. O'Reilly & Parker, (2012) state that data saturation is reached when there are no more new insights found, when further interviews reiterate what has been already said. The study consisted of 10 participants.

A major concern with subjective wellbeing research is whether self-reports are valid, as people may report that they are happy but may not truly experience high levels of it. Subjective wellbeing is an internal and subjective phenomenon and self-report measures are better placed to give information on this phenomenon (Diener, Oishi & Lucas, 2009). In support, Balatsky & Diener (1993), Sandvik, Diener & Seidlitz (1993) and Sumra & Schillaci (2015) have shown that self-report measurements do converge with alternative non self-report measures. Moreover, the information used to make judgements remains stable over time (Magnus & Diener, 1991). Comparisons of friends versus family informant reports demonstrated considerable cross situational consistency. Others included experience sample measures where feelings are recorded at random moments in everyday life and participant's memory for positive versus negative events in their lives (Diener, Lucas & Oishi, 2008). Due to time constraints and resources available for the study, only self-report measures via interviews have been used.

3.3.4 Data analysis

The aim of the data analysis was to reveal the experiences of the women, their conceptualisation of wellbeing, the role of multiple role strain as well as their coping strategies. The idea was to understand the lives of these particular women and not a generalisation of all women who fit this category. Inductive thematic analysis was therefore used complemented by NVivo qualitative software. Software programs facilitate data management e.g. storage, coding, comparing and linking while the researcher does the analysis (Patton, 2002). Thematic analysis is a flexible method because of its theoretical freedom, it can be applied to different theoretical approaches producing rich, detailed and complex account of data. As such it offers a more accessible form of analysis especially for researchers with little or no experience (Braun & Clarke, 2013). The importance of knowing how data was analysed assists in understanding the assumptions which informed the analysis. The research can also be evaluated and can be compared/synthesised with other studies on a particular topic.

The interviews were audio recorded and thereafter transcribed by the researcher to ensure accuracy. This process gave the opportunity for the researcher to become immersed in the data and be able to generate emergent insights by getting a feel for the cumulative data as a whole (Braun & Clark, 2013). Thematic coding is data reconstructed in a way which captures the most important themes within the data (Creswell, 2012). The data is categorised into different levels structured into basic themes (lowest order), organising themes (abstract principles) and global themes (super ordinate themes). The data is then presented as a web-like map showing the three hierarchical levels. As large amounts of data become available, the researcher

would reflect on the data, refine the problem and tighten the concepts into a draft model (Braun & Clarke, 2013).

The current study followed Braun and Clarke's (2013) process of undertaking thematic analysis. They state that the process starts when the researcher starts noticing and looking for patterns of meaning in the data as early as the data collection stage and ends with the reporting of the content. There was therefore a constant back and forth in the study between data collection and data analysis to begin identifying themes and facilitate subsequent data collection.

Phase 1: Familiarising yourself with the data. The initial stage was the transcribing of data where the researcher familiarised herself with the data through repeated listening to the interview recordings and typing verbatim. Furthermore, as the data was repeatedly read actively, it informed the early stages of reflection and analysis of the data (Bird, 2005).

Phase 2: Generating initial codes. After the researcher immersed herself in the data, an initial list of ideas about what was contained in the data as well as interesting facts about the data were noted using the actual words of the participants. All data items per interview were given codes which identified the raw data as well as data items which could form the basis for repeated patterns or themes across the data set.

Phase 3: Searching for themes. Potential themes were identified from each interview as it was important to collate the coded data extracts within the identified themes. Furthermore, recurring patterns were identified as well as new issues which were found in the data set (Creswell, 2012). The codes were analysed to form themes while some presented subthemes and others main themes. However, nothing was discarded at this stage. The themes identified were linked to the data collected. There

was no pre-existing coding frame identified by the researcher in which identified themes were to be fitted into.

Phase 4: Reviewing themes. This stage reviewed and refined the initial themes identified. Carefully considered judgements about what was significant and meaningful in the data were made (Creswell, 2012). Some of the initial themes were dropped as they did not have enough data to support them while some were combined into one theme. This was then presented in a form of a thematic map. The themes were then checked against the entire data set for coherence. Braun and Clarke advise that at this point, one should be able to have an indication of the different themes, how they fit together and the story they tell about the data.

Phase 5: Defining and naming themes. The next stage refined the final themes from the thematic map which are presented for the analysis. The themes at this stage defined the aspect of the data captured, what was interesting about it and why it was interesting. The final names for the themes used in the final analysis and write up were determined. Braun and Clarke advise that the names of the themes should be succinct and give the reader an idea of what the theme is about.

Phase 6: Producing the report. The write up aimed to show adequate evidence of the themes in the data which captured and conveyed the participants' perceptions of their experiences accurately. Most importantly, the analysis sought to provide a concise, coherent, logical and an interesting account of the story which the data tells within and across themes.

3.3.5 Validity and Reliability

Qualitative research has no universal established standard practice such as that found in quantitative research e.g. internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.7 (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Trustworthiness is an alternate construct used in

qualitative research to demonstrate reliability and validity in research as introduced by Lincoln and Guba (Morse, 2015). There are debates about how rigour is achieved in qualitative research. Some researchers have argued that validity and reliability is only relevant for quantitative research and not qualitative research (Altheide & Johnson, 1998), while some argue for the continued relevance (Morse, 2015; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002) and others devising new criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

It has been suggested by Morse (2015) that verification processes must be done at all stages during the course of the research rather than at the end. When the research is completed, it is often too late to correct threats to validity and reliability which could have been realised earlier in the research process but were not. The researcher of the current study has attempted to remain objective to achieve valid and reliable results by being reflective throughout the process and acknowledging her viewpoints, observations and interpretations. As qualitative research is iterative, moving back and forth between design and theory building (Myers, 2013), errors were constantly being identified and corrected as they appeared/found. Because qualitative research necessitates the researcher to take an active role in the collection and interpretation of others' meaning making, the researchers themselves must be honest and trustworthy (Shenton, 2004).

The study has employed strategies of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shenton, 2004). Credibility relates to how congruent the findings are with the views of the participants (Merriam, 2002). In other words, it is the confidence of how truthful the findings of the study are. The study adopted procedures which have been previously successfully used in other similar

studies (Creswell, 2012), such as questions pursued during data collection as well as data analysis. Peer review was also used to verify the plausibility of the themes arrived at (Merriam, 2002). This allowed for refining methods and strengthen arguments and explanations. Transferability is concerned with the extent to which findings of one study can be applied in other settings (Shenton, 2004). The study has given biographical information of the participants and their geographical location as well as any restrictions applied to the participants who contributed data. Furthermore, the number of participants involved, the data collection methods employed and the data collection sessions were specified. To caution, the results of a qualitative project are specific to a particular setting, however the researcher must ensure that the contextual factors provided are sufficient to enable the transferability (Yin, 2011).

Dependability in quantitative research refers to how similar the result of one study would be to another if the same research design was followed in the same context and with similar participants. For qualitative studies, it is how a researcher accounts for the varying nature of the phenomena studied and the context within which this happens (Shenton, 2004). He further posits that the processes followed in the study must be described in detail, thus the research design can be viewed as a “prototype model”. The current study has clearly described what was planned and executed in the research design. Moreover, the operational detail of data gathering has addressed how the data was collected and the questions asked (see appendix C). This ensured the consistency of the research process being carried out according to the conventions of qualitative methodology. Lastly, confirmability refers to the researcher’s objectivity, the fact that the study findings reflect the ideas of the participants and not the preferences of the researcher. The study has undertaken to explain reasons for the decisions made, methods adopted and weaknesses or limitations in the study.

3.4 Ethical considerations

A number of considerations were taken into effect in order to ensure that the study was conducted in an ethical manner. After obtaining approval and ethics clearance from the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, a letter was sent to the participants which explained the nature of the study. It further stated that their participation would be voluntary and the participants could terminate their participation in the study at any time should they wish to. The participants were further provided with an informed consent form which assured anonymity and confidentiality. Participant names have not been used in the study to ensure that the participants cannot be identifiable. Moreover any information which can be used to identify the participants by people who know them has been left out. The interview recordings would remain confidential with the researcher and the supervisor having access to them. The recordings will be kept in a locked cabinet for a period of five years at the University of KwaZulu Natal's Department of Applied Human Sciences. After the period has lapsed, the recordings will be destroyed. Lastly, participants were informed that as feedback, a final copy of the research may be requested or an individual feedback session may also be requested with the researcher. The final research paper will be handed to the University.

3.5 Summary

The chapter has given detailed description of the research design and the methodology followed by the research. Information on sampling, data collection and analysis was given followed by a discussion of the study's validity and reliability. Lastly, was a discussion on how the research adhered to ethical considerations. The following chapter discusses the results obtained from the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research study was to gain in-depth understanding about multiple role strain with regard to wellbeing in a cultural context of South African black women business owners. The study was informed by the following research questions (1) How do the women conceptualise and experience subjective wellbeing and multiple role strain? (2) What are the roles occupied and coping strategies used to achieve wellbeing? (3) What is the role of multiple role strain in subjective wellbeing? The research findings which the study reports on are based on the in-depth interviews held with the participants.

The following themes in table 2 were decided upon after the analysis and the understanding of the data through the links made. The themes are described as being separate, however, there is a significant overlap among them.

Table 2*Summary of themes*

Themes	Representative comments
1a. Perceptions of subjective wellbeing	<p>P5: Take time off and not feel guilty about it and be able to just listen to my body.</p> <p>P7: The spirit has got to be happy, that's my ultimate wellbeing.</p> <p>P6: There is a spiritual side of things and in the spiritual realm, the connection with the super being I think has got a role to play in terms of my wellness. Wellness to me also means doing the type of work that I like, something that I'm passionate about, something that helps build my identity, something that gives me purpose, something that helps me fulfil or maybe realise self-actualisation. Wellness to me also means this, I'm also linking it with the relationship with my son, having a good relationship with my family, my mother, my brothers and all that.</p> <p>P2: ...gym because that keeps me sane. Like it's not about weight loss anymore, but about mentally achieving the balance.</p>
1b. Perceptions of multiple role strain	<p>P9: Balancing all my aspects of life whether it's home front, whether it's work front, kids, relatives, all that. Balancing all those things that make me as a human being. Ya, that's my... If those things are not balanced, obviously they will cause some conflict in me, internal conflict.</p> <p>P3: I think there should be a balance somewhere. You can't always be at work and then the kids don't get time with you.</p> <p>P7: It's funny because at one point in my life, I felt like I had neglected myself. I had done so many things for many different people except for myself.</p> <p>P6: I think certain journey you have to travel on your own and I think some of them you have to make that decision that, this is not a journey that I'd like to travel. And it's making those tough decisions.</p>
2. Roles performed by the women	Business owner, mother, wife/partner, student, board member, extended family caretaker, community worker.

3. Experiences of conflict from the roles performed

P6: Internal conflict manifests itself, am I maximising my potential here? So you do get that internal conflict and I think it's important because it then becomes a turning point in your life in terms of where you are and where you want to go.

P2: For now, it helps that I don't have a kid or a husband to attend to. But there are other things that have to be put aside like personal relationships, because, if you are trying to build something with someone and you don't have time for them but you have time for the business it's like ok, you prioritise business more than me. So that's why that is suffering. I'm still building, it's foundation stages. You need to sacrifice, if I don't sacrifice now I'll never grow my business.

P5: My responsibilities as a mom were really taking strain over business.

P1: Sometimes it's tough, firstly, I feel I miss out on other things with my children as they grow up.

4. Ability to cope

P10: It's planning because even that spiritual time, if I don't plan I end up not having it.

P4: Like when I go out running you know, it's my time to meditate, and it...you know I'd just have a word with God, you know let him know where I am.

P6: It just teaches you that certain burdens you don't have to carry on your own. There are certain burdens that you have to take to the superpower.

P5: The first coping strategy I've had to learn is the realisation of my reality.

5. Support structure and self-reliance

P5: I could never cope without the support structure that I have. I have a very strong support structure and it's going a long way even at work...

P4: I have to know that I can depend on me. I don't have anybody else.

P1: I'm no different from a single mom because I'm not married, I don't live with my fiancé... but I just told myself that I'd have to pull up my socks and I'll do it on my own. I've got a helper that stays with me in the house.

P7: My family is close knit and I go to them whenever I need anything, babysitting or whatever. They are always there for me.

P8: My husband is very supportive eh in the few days that he is here (laughs) because he travels a lot but ya...

6. Feelings of guilt

P5: she's (participant's daughter) a very independent little soul that has had to be independent quite early in life, that I sometimes feel guilty about it.

P1: Because I'm not there, it was my fault. I felt that this needs me personally because I should be sitting down with her supervising her homework and checking it with her...

P3: And I always felt bad that at work usually the busiest time is in the late afternoon and I always felt bad that I'd have to leave when it gets busy and go back home because at home I'm expected to be back, I'm expected to cook. So there are those expectations from the home front.

P9: ...but this term I've been just working, my kids have been neglected and uhm, so now that I'm not, I'm just in a break up until January. I will try and make up...

4.2 Themes

4.2.1 Theme 1

Perceptions of subjective wellbeing

This theme provided the understanding of subjective wellbeing and multiple role strain as well as the participants' experiences. According to the participants' responses, it became evident that subjective wellbeing has different meanings to different individuals. However, there was consensus that it is about taking care of oneself holistically and at times, this may include family wellness as well. Wellbeing was understood as follows:

P8: ...the most important thing about wellbeing is that emotional wellbeing which comes with the spiritual wellbeing. You know I, I, I feel like if you can

have everything but if emotionally you are not okay, things will eventually fall apart. ... I try to go to the gym, ya, I try. I think for me the other thing is just looking good. It helps, you know, people will be like, where are you going? and I'm like no no I'm coming to work (laughing).

P2: *...gym because that keeps me sane. Like, it's not about weight loss anymore, but about mentally achieving the balance.*

P5: *Take time off and not feel guilty about it and be able to just listen to my body.*

P6: *There is a spiritual side of things and in the spiritual realm, the connection with the super being I think has got a role to play in terms of my wellness. Wellness to me also means doing the type of work that I like, something that I'm passionate about, something that helps build my identity, something that gives me purpose, something that helps me fulfil or maybe realise self-actualisation. Wellness to me also means this I'm also linking it with the relationship with my son having a good relationship with my family, my mother, my brothers and all that.*

P7: *The spirit has to be happy, that's my ultimate wellbeing.*

Some participants reported that they learned to maintain their wellbeing over time with experience, it was not something they had actively pursued. 2 participants had this to say:

P5: *For a long time my wellbeing was non-existent a non-consideration. My well-being was the business running. For a long time, I was well as long as my client was happy. Until again, you realise that ok! that's the wellbeing of the business that's not your wellbeing. So my wellbeing for a long time was linked to my business as well, until you realise you can't sustain it.*

P7: *I've learned things over the years... I've made my wellbeing a priority over time.*

For one participant, the tragedy of her father's death made her realise the importance of wellbeing in her life. For another participant, it was being bullied at school. They articulated their wellbeing as follows:

P3: *You know, wellbeing..., maybe I have changed my way of thinking, I don't know, but, at some point, shortly after my dad's passing I had a thing that...I had so much anger... I was a sad person. At some point, something changed that said there is really nothing I can do. I cannot bring him back. What happened, happened and it's the past, nothing can be done about it. I started waking up in the morning and appreciate the rising sun. I started looking at things like that because I don't think it is things that I used to look at before ... maybe try and be happy. You know being happy is not about having money, it's about you and your feeling and appreciating the things that you have and be thankful for all you have.*

P4: *Growing up I was, I was a chubby child, so I was bullied badly. I was bullied badly. So, growing up I was painfully shy, I'm this light skinned child and I, I*

just blush easily. So I used to get bullied badly for that and because I was this round person and I battled with that for so long you know. I battled you know with like body image, as much as it was never top of mind but it was always like I'm not as you know, nicely, you know ...I can't wear this and that like my friends do. And I would wake up and I'd go for a walk and I would start thinking, like map my way forward like now and that easily built into running and I was like I can do this. So when I started running and everybody is like are you running comrades this year? If only these people knew like this keeps me sane, I don't do it for anything but my piece of mind. I think that's why you know gym, yoga, running is so important you know, it's all part of me because when I'm stressed out and maybe I do an easy 5 km run and I come back home and things become so much clearer. Ok, I can tackle 123 this way, I can do this that way.

Participants 6 and 7 reported to be achieving subjective wellbeing in their lives, they indicated that they have had to strike a balance with their important life domains, failing this, they would experience conflict in their various roles. Thus their wellness includes taking care of their businesses and their families. P6 reported that she felt “super” satisfied with her life while P7 stated that she was “most satisfied” with her life. Most participants stated they are striving for balance in their different life domains. They used the words “content”, “fairly ok” and “satisfied” with their lives. One participant, P1, stated that she felt “unstable”, she was also not spending enough time devoted to herself and her family. She further stated that she suffers from nerve pain which is a serious health condition.

Perceptions of multiple role strain

On Multiple role strain, the participants indicated that a balance is important between the various domains, especially those of work and home as both of these are important. You cannot have one without the other, for both single and married women who choose to work. The participants had this to say:

P7: *It's funny because at one point in my life I felt like I had neglected myself. I had done so many things for many different people except for myself.*

P6: *I think certain journeys you have to travel on your own and I think some of them you have to make that decision that this is not a journey that I'd like to travel. And it's making those tough decisions.*

P5: *You sell time so you kind of have to balance your life whether you like it or you don't... So you kind of have to have to try and find balance and it's a cost really, it's really a cost, it's really across board. Conflict with any woman in a career actually, it's like we are not seen to be all those little things that you deem little that are important and they keep people around you, you'll get some right, you'll get some wrong. You just have to get over the guilt.*

P10: *The other committees I'm in are very stressful, but I've tried to offload and disinherit other roles.*

P9: *Balancing all my aspects of life whether it's home front whether it's work front, kids, relatives, all that. Balancing all those things that make me as a*

human being. Ya, that's my...If those things are not balanced obviously they will cause some conflict in me, internal conflict.

P3: *I think there should be a balance somewhere. You can't always be at work and then the kids don't get time with you.*

Participant 4 is single and does not have children, she indicated that work comes first as it is her livelihood even though at times this comes at the expense of having to sacrifice family time. One of the participants expressed her frustration from one of her roles, she conveyed it like this:

P9: *...in fact I end up getting abused by the family coz I try to take care of everyone so eh, even my cousins that are not interested in things, I find them work and I make sure that they are working so that I don't have to keep on giving them money. So, so, I'm a caretaker of some kind when it comes to family.*

The participants felt that there is success in how they are managing their roles. They stated that their success comes from spending time with loved ones, the hard work and dedication which materialises into realities, fulfilling one's purpose, achieving goals, family satisfaction and happiness.

4.2.2 Theme 2

The roles performed by the women

The following roles were identified by the participants as roles they hold both in their work and private domains. They are business owner, mother, spouse/partner, caregiver, student, church member, family member (daughter, sister, and aunt), board member, marathon runner and community worker. The one role which is shared by all the participants is that of business owner, while the others are not all shared equally between them (see table 1 for the roles). Furthermore, most (7) of the participants are involved in more than one business type for which they assume responsibility for.

The participants viewed the importance of their various roles differently, they prioritised them according to their life circumstance at a particular stage. Participants described how they experienced their roles:

P5: *I think in life it changes, in the different phases that you go through, it changes. So, I'm a mom to a 4 year old, since I've had that little girl, I'd say that's the role that has always taken precedence, before that, um, my role as a business person probably took priority over all the other roles.*

P2: *...it sounds great when you tell the tale [business success] but when you actually have to live it, it's like oh my I can't sleep, I'm so tired, I'm hungry I haven't eaten. But I have to keep it going.*

P3: *You know, I think maybe it helps to speak to your children and make them understand your situation that this is where I am, this is what I need to do. Leave me and let me do this because this I have to do. And then after that we*

can do stuff together and after that what do you want to do, so that we can then do the stuff that you guys want to do.

P10: *You have to make choices, some of them weren't active choices. Circumstances dictate...I needed to adjust my life to become a mom. I had that discussion with my then fiancé before we had children.*

The participants stated that there are still conflicting socio-cultural views about multiple roles and family roles for women. Societal expectations are still such that even though they work, the mothers are still responsible for the children, and household tasks. The married women indicated that their husbands do not play an active and true partnership role. The husbands will occasionally share the responsibility for the children if the mothers are not available to take care of these duties themselves. However, all the participants with children have housekeepers to whom they have delegated these activities to. Participant 10 stated that her husband is very much involved in their children's lives. She reported that he does more work than she does in relation to their children. However, he has more flexible work hours than she does, which makes him better suited to take an active role.

4.2.3 Theme 3

Experiences of conflict from the multiple roles performed

All participants indicated that they are constantly challenged by role conflict which is experienced in varying degrees over time. It was more so for the participants with young children who expressed that they constantly experience conflict with regard to work versus family roles. One of the participants (P3), stated that part of the reason for the dissolution of her marriage was due to the fact that her work is a big part of who

she is. Thus not spending enough time in her work role in favour of her family obligations and children caused the role conflict she was experiencing. Participant 10 on the other hand felt that her work is taking her away from her family. This is how she expressed it.

P10: *Actually I've heard people say, "you like your job". But, I don't really like my job, my theory is, because I have to go there, I have to work. So I can't go to work and not work. So the reason I end up working hard is because I've left my family already, so it might as well pay off. But it's not because I prefer work... so I end up doing a lot of work and trying to do my best but it's not because I really prefer or enjoy work that much.*

Other participants explained role conflict as follows:

P5: *[On her business travels, she reported], My daughter was starting to get grumpy and sick...I took it as a medical issue...That's where she [P5's mother] had to sit me down and say, listen, prioritise, decide. You decided to be a parent, so you have got to set your priorities in life. My responsibilities as a mom were really taking strain over business.*

P7: *The juggling becomes very challenging in terms of splitting yourself... Because that's what everyone expects us to do, just to juggle juggle juggle all the time, and work and pressure and family and everything. It's expected, it's how strong we are.*

P1: *Sometimes it's tough. Firstly, I feel I miss out on other things with my children as they grow up.*

P6: *Internal conflict manifests itself, am I maximising my potential here? So you do get that internal conflict and I think it's important because it then becomes a turning point in your life in terms of where you are and where you want to go.*

P10: *At the time I wasn't married, but looking forward and as I was discussing with my then fiancé and even just after we had gotten married, when we didn't have children, I just realised that I actually need to adjust my job to suit the lifestyle of a mother.*

P2: *For now, it helps that I don't have a kid or a husband to attend to. But there are other things that have to be put aside like personal relationships, because, if you are trying to build something with someone and you don't have time for them but you have time for the business, it's like ok, you prioritise business more than me. So that's why that is suffering. I'm still building, it's foundation stages. You need to sacrifice, if I don't sacrifice now I'll never grow my business.*

It seems the role conflict results from time or lack of time spent in particular roles. Self-employed women and business owners alike spend long hours working in their various roles, as P1 stated that if she does not work, she does not get paid as she would sometimes get home after midnight from work commitments. While one of the reasons for going into business for some women was to be able to spend more time with their children, this however ends up being a challenge in itself. One finds herself spending

more time trying to establish the business at the beginning, and as the business grows, still more time is required to service customers. This leaves little time for the satisfactory fulfilment of other roles.

4.2.4 Theme 4

Ability to cope

The participants used a combination of coping strategies to manage their wellbeing and challenges. The common coping strategy which the women attest to is their spirituality which forms an important part of their wellbeing. Even for participant 3 who reported that she is not a regular church goer, however during times of difficulty in her marriage she would pray for wisdom. The participants acknowledge the presence of God in their lives and also attribute their success to him. They have a personal relationship with God where they pray and meditate. They had this to say about their spirituality:

P4: *Like I speak with God, when I leave my place, when I get home, wherever I am, even no matter how good things are. Like you know, like even when I am running, the distance that I never used to do before like ..., God, look at you. And I really don't know where it comes from but I've seen how you know he's held my hand...*

P6: *...certain burdens you don't have to carry on your own. There are certain burdens that you have to take to the superpower. I know what I'm going through in terms of guilt, shame, anger and all that. Probably I can put it in perspective but I'm still gonna be angry with God. And I need a different avenue for that for God to help me make sense of what just happened you know.*

P1: *I know that for the difficulties I have been through, God has never abandoned me nor forsaken me. My things have always worked for the better even when I can see that all is finished...*

P2: *...that's the basis of what I'm saying that if you are fulfilling your purpose, God has a way of making things ok. Not even ok but making things work.*

P8: *I just look at my life and I'm like, wow God you're just too amazing. I never sat and prayed and said God I want... never. But God just gives you things...*

Other coping strategies shared by the participants include being realistic about one's situation, strategic planning, problem solving, exercise, periods of rest, dancing and laughter. Participant 5 indicated that being realistic about what you can and cannot do is very important in order to minimise stress for oneself. It is about realising your capabilities in that one cannot be an expert in everything and therefore should not be afraid to seek assistance or support. She further stated that women are expected to walk two to three steps ahead in order to prove themselves in the business world and it thus becomes very easy for one to want to become a superwoman. Participant 6 shared the same sentiments about being honest with yourself and knowing yourself so you can be realistic about things. She further stated that this has however come with maturity. It is also true for participant 5 who reported that she had burned her fingers a number of times before realising the importance of being realistic with oneself.

On structure and planning, participant 10 referred to the importance of planning her day including her spiritual time which is always the beginning of her day. She stated that if she does not plan for her day, she sometimes ends up not doing tasks she had wanted to do. Participant 1 and 10 put it like this:

P1: *I'm strategic, I plan a lot of things in my mind. I do a lot of planning in my mind, I don't have a scattered brain, I know that. Sometimes I feel like one but there is a lot of order here (pointing to her head) and protocol.*

P10: *It's planning because even that spiritual time, if I don't plan, I end up not having it.*

About going to the gym, participant 6 reported that gym to her is about consistency, perseverance and discipline. These are the same principles which she applies in her business and her life in general which have seen her through tough times. Furthermore as a previous practising psychologist, she asserts how much psychology and counselling has helped her to understand herself better. Problem solving is another important coping strategy used by some of the participants. This is what they had to say on problem solving:

P7: *The regret was wasting so much time on problems trying to change things I couldn't, resolve, I shouldn't have...*

P3: *And I've started telling myself that today's problem must not go into tomorrow, I must let it pass and get ready for a new day and let me not complicate things. What we cannot change, we cannot change. Let's look at solutions rather than being stuck at this as it has happened. What's the way*

forward because remaining in this situation, talking about this over and over is not really helping. We'll keep circling the problem, but where is the solution?

A general coping theme shared by the participants is that of talking things over with an external party who is not related to the situation. The external party includes friends, family, pastor and a spiritual mentor. Some participants explained their coping by their personalities. They stated that they are calm people who do not stress about situations, they do what they can to alleviate the problem and do not worry about what is beyond their control.

4.2.5 Theme 5

Support Structure and self-reliance

The findings of the study on support structures identified the need for support both at home and at work. The participants agreed that they could not do it alone without their support structures which consist of their live in house keepers, family members, friends and work assistants. One participant however, stated how she has to be self-reliant because she has no partner nor family nearby as she relocated to Durban quite early to complete her studies. She said this of her marathon running:

P4: *I don't ...like because I don't have a partner or family here that's gonna drive me to to to a marathon. You know some marathon start at one point and end at another. I have to know that I can depend on me. I don't have anybody else. I've always..., it's always like I have me to depend on. If you know, like if I really, the moments if I really get stuck I call my mother. That is the one person, everybody else, we will help, ya... and you wait!*

Participant 4 further reported to have always been independent and strong-willed since she was young. This is evident in her business interests, freelancing voice over artist, functions/events MC and radio presenting which requires little or no input from external parties. She is personally responsible for most or all the work she does.

Participant 2 lives with her divorced mother at home, whom together with their housekeeper form part of her home support structure, while at work she does not have enough support. She acknowledged how much she appreciates her home support as her long hours keep her working until late in the evening. She mostly appreciates coming home to a warm home with a cooked meal. She reported that she is able to keep the long hours she puts in at work because of this structure. She had this to say:

P10: *And I find myself outsourcing other people... and I have to hire other artists to assist because I can't be everywhere. So, you don't rest. If I was married and had children, I don't know what I would do.*

From her last sentence, she alludes to how societal expectations shape the way women understand their roles against the backdrop of socio-cultural norms in their environment.

The participants with young children have full time, live in housekeepers, or housekeepers who work 5 days a week to assist in the household. They said this about their support structures:

P5: *I could never cope without the support structure that I have. I have a very strong support structure and it's going a long way even at work...*

P1: *I'm no different from a single mom because I'm not married, I don't live with my fiancé... What I do, and I know I don't have a mother, I know there is no grandmother but I just told myself that I'd have to pull up my socks and I'll do it on my own. I've got a helper that stays with me in the house and I have a lady who helps me at the office. My helper leaves at month end and there is another helper who comes in at month end only to relieve her (laughing).*

P7: *My family is close knit and I go to them whenever I need anything, babysitting or whatever. They are always there for me.*

From the 4 participants who are married, 3 stated that their husbands are supportive but they are not involved in the day to day upbringing of their children and household duties. The participants are responsible for the children themselves even though they may delegate some duties e.g. fetching of children from school, supervising homework or taking the children to their extra-curricular activities after school. Participant 10 reported that her husband shares equally, sometimes even more in the bringing up of their children due to his flexible work hours.

The participants agreed to the importance of work support as well from their assistants to even contractors that they use from time to time. With the realisation that they cannot do everything by themselves, they attested to using services of others for work which they have no expertise in nor enough time to do, e.g. administration work, accounting and tax advisory services. Participant 1 and 2 reported how appreciative they are of such business support services as they started their businesses when they were still university students. Participant 1 stated how she had lost everything she

had worked for due to non-compliance with statutory requirements. Her business success however gave her the determination to start all over again after obtaining business support which enabled her to comply and carry on with her dreams and be where she is today.

4.2.6 Theme 6

Guilt feelings

The participants expressed that they are imperfect in some of their roles especially that of being a mother. As a result, they do harbour feelings of guilt about not being able to fulfil their roles to the best of their ability. Participants expressed it like this:

P5: *So the fact that I'm a mother means I'm imperfect, I drop it, I pick it up and I move on... The fact that now my daughter is at school, obviously allows me more time to spend with my work and she's a very independent little soul, that has had to be independent quite early in life, that I sometimes feel guilty about it.*

P1: *Because I'm not there, it was my fault. I felt that this needs me personally because I should be sitting down with her supervising her homework and checking it with her.... I feel it's me who didn't give my undivided attention you see.*

P3: *And I always felt bad that at work usually the busiest time is in the late afternoon and I always felt bad that I'd have to leave when it gets busy and go back home because at home I'm expected to be back. I'm expected to cook. So there are those expectations from the home front.*

P9: ... *but this term I've been just working, my kids have been neglected and uhm, so now that I'm not, I'm just in a break up until January. I will try and...*

The guilt feelings experienced seem to stem from not being able to attend to all things relating to children as a full time non-working mother would do. Certain duties like homework supervision end up being delegated to other people or activities are missed such as sports matches, concerts etc.

4.3 Summary

This chapter has provided the results as obtained from the study conducted through semi-structured interviews. The six themes were identified and discussed. The following chapter synthesises the results obtained and discusses the findings of this study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine the understanding and perceptions of self employed women with regard to having multiple roles and how this informs their subjective wellbeing. This chapter reviews, analyses and discusses in light of the relevant literature the study findings.

5.2 Themes discussion

5.2.1 Theme 1

Perceptions of subjective wellbeing

The participants demonstrated significant awareness into themselves as individuals, and as part of a family unit, as well as their development both professionally and personally. One participant expressed it well when she commented that her wellbeing is about her spirituality, the connection with a super being, the connection with her family, doing work that she is passionate about and realising self actualisation. The ability to know and understand oneself is most likely a key issue in helping the participants to successfully balance their life roles and experience wellbeing (Annink & den Dulk, 2012). Furthermore, being able to balance life roles is not only an indicator of wellbeing but it also influences the survival of the business (Myrie & Daly, 2009; Williams, 2004). Below is a summary drawn from the study results in defining subjective wellbeing:

- Mental, emotional, spiritual and physical health; family and financial wellness
- Taking time off for yourself and not feel guilty

- Being happy, appreciating and being thankful for what you have
- Doing what you enjoy the most
- Importance of real connection with people and not virtual connections e.g. social media
- Maintaining balance in all spheres of life

The meaning and understanding of subjective wellbeing may be different from one participant to the next, but taken together, there is convergence to a holistic view of wellbeing. This attests to the various dimensions of wellbeing (White, 2010) incorporating physical, social and psychological dimensions. For most participants, their views about subjective wellbeing are not limited only to themselves, but they include their families, work and all other life domains which they view as important in their lives, contextualised by their experiences. Moreover their meaning is understood from their socio-cultural context in terms of how they view the world. As a result, they have a broader outlook of subjective wellbeing which looks past the individual. This may be as a result of African culture's communal ethos (Amoateng & Heaton, 2015). According to Amoateng and Heaton, there is currently no single dominant family system in South Africa, however, the extended family system is more common among black Africans. Some participants live with extended family members either because they are putting them through school or providing them with work, while also supporting extended family they do not live with. The participants in turn get a form of support structure from the extended family members they live with. Thus family wellness (immediate and extended) forms an important part of their wellness.

Participants who described their life satisfaction as super and most satisfied are the participants who had learned over time through bad experiences the results of not looking after themselves well. They had tried to be “superwomen” as one participant explained it, but realised how unrealistic and unsustainable that was. Superwomen is a term used to describe the experiences of women who have multiple roles and seek to perfectly achieve the performance of these roles (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). These women are seen to have it all, excelling both in traditional feminine (emotional, love and support provider) and masculine roles (economic provider). It is not surprising that these were the oldest participants in the group, as the realisation of looking after oneself was a process which happened over time. This is consistent with previous studies which found that subjective wellbeing can change over the life course and can be improved upon (Tay & Kuyendall, 2013). One of the reasons for this points to the early career stages when women are building up their careers and businesses. More work hours are required at this investment stage which leaves little or no time for individual time as well as for starting a family which is usually done at a later stage (Clair & Dufresne, 2007). It can therefore be concluded that at this time, business owners are consumed by building up and growing their businesses that they spend most of their time working while deferring their wellness to a later time. Subjective wellbeing is therefore high in young people, declines in middle age and rises again in old age (van Hoorn, 2007). The older participants have gone through the different life stages, had life lessons and learned from their experiences and as a result are at a stage where they are most satisfied with their lives.

The majority of the participants in the study are content with their lives and are striving for satisfaction in their life domains, especially the family and work domains. From the work domain, they find their careers rewarding and they enjoy the flexibility and

independence afforded by being at the helm of their own businesses. Similarly, research has found that self-employment offers autonomy and flexibility which increases a person's ability to balance work, personal and family life (Prottas & Thompson, 2006). By doing the work that they like, they found that they became good at what they do. This is consistent with the results of previous research stating that the quality of the role is a predictor of wellbeing rather than the number of roles experienced (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015). There is satisfaction derived from the purposefulness, self-fulfilment, self-esteem, self-identity and being challenged intellectually from their work and learning things about themselves (Barnett & Baruch, 1985).

Education has been found to be a predictor of wellbeing. Research shows that individuals with more education may have enhanced wellbeing because they have greater access to resources, employment, and supportive environments (Geldenhuys & Henn, 2017), enabling them to deal with multiple roles more effectively. Consistent with this evidence is that all participants have university degrees with post graduate qualifications. Moreover, financial freedom as another dimension of their defined wellbeing allows them the ability to afford additional services which help them manage their roles e.g. child minding services, tutors, home care nurses for the elderly, being a benefactor etc. Overall, the resources available to the participants from the work domain potentially become protective psychosocial factors according to the role accumulation theory (Barnett, 2004a).

While most participants felt positive about the status of their wellbeing, one participant indicated being unstable and not achieving wellbeing. She stated how her social development projects which are mostly funded by government contracts are not a

reliable source of income. As a single parent with little or no support, she is solely responsible for her family. This can place enormous pressure as work becomes an important part of fulfilling one's duty as a parent. Looked at this way, the integration of the work and home roles become indistinct (Poole & Langan-Fox, 1997). This participant further reported to suffer from a somatic symptom which results in nerve pain for which she has not found out its origin. This may be a psychosomatic condition resulting from all her responsibilities and the long hours she keeps. She reported that she drives to distant places and returns home very late, which by that time, her children are sleeping. Time pressure is a reality which working women deal with. She most likely experiences negative spillover (Bekker & Demerouti, 2012) from home to work given the long hours she spends at work, which limit the time she spends with her family. Moreover, her daughter had not been doing well at school and she blamed herself as she felt she was not spending enough time at home. The participants' experiences of wellbeing seemed to be linked to whether participants spent time on roles which they considered important to themselves or not and whether they were being effective in them or not.

Subjective wellbeing is something that the participants do not measure but they do actively think about. One participant indicated that there is no standard against which to measure herself and as a result for her it becomes stimulated by a new year; not coping, planning or even illness. Subjective wellbeing can still be experienced even when individuals are only satisfied with some of their life domains and not all domains (Ozmete, 2011).

Perceptions of multiple role strain

The study findings have pointed to the fact that the participants experience pressures and challenges in their effort to balance their multiple roles and maintain their wellbeing. Work and family are the two most important life roles and hence they are critical in understanding how people become invested psychologically in multiple roles (Rothbard, 2001; Geldenhuys & Henn, 2017). This emphasis on family rather than other non-work roles is justified in that the family is a primary group with emotional ties where family problems are significant for individuals (Kulik et al., 2015). Similarly, the participants' multiple role strain emanated from the home and work domain. The other social and self-development domains did not cause undue distress. Balancing roles from the home and work domain simultaneously is a reality for most women throughout their lives (Sumra & Schillaci, 2015), rather than following a transitional sequence from one role to another, they perform an accumulation of roles simultaneously. Looked at this way, the integration of the work and home roles become indistinct (Poole & Langan-Fox, 1997).

From the home domain, research has postulated that women tend to put the needs of others first before their own (Barnett, 2004b). This may be linked to the nurturing mother role especially for the women who have children. The participants attest to the importance of the mother role. Once they become mothers, they try to arrange their work commitments in such a way that there is minimal disruption in their lives stemming from work and home. This is a challenge they constantly have to deal with. The participants indicated that the area most neglected by them due to the multiple roles is the time devoted to themselves for their personal wellbeing and at times their families. This is likely to predispose individuals to forms of distress (Burke, 2001).

From the work perspective, the participants felt that family responsibilities should take priority over work, but at times, work takes precedence over family. Similarly Uys and Mclellan (2009) in a South African study of self employed women found that, the participants felt unsuccessful as mothers and that they were not in control when work priorities took precedence over the family. The participants felt distress at not being able to balance their roles successfully. Work schedules and work orientation produce pressure to an extent that working mothers reduce working hours or move into less demanding jobs (Uys & Mclellan, 2009). For some women, this may not be an option to be exercised as some are single parents solely responsible for the social and financial welfare of their families.

The balancing of the different domains requires constant juggling of the different roles. Life is constantly changing with the different life stages individuals go through that there can seldom be a perfect time for all domains to be aligned just perfectly. As working women and mothers, multiple roles are a part of life which have to be managed well in order to manage multiple roles and maintain wellness.

5.2.2 Theme 2

The roles performed by the women

The different roles occupied by the participants reflect roles from different life domains. There is the family domain represented by roles of spouse/partner, parent, daughter and sister while the work domain is represented by roles of business owner, board member, and mentor. The domain of self-development is represented by the role of student and the hobbies they pursue. Lastly, the social/community domain is represented by the religious, charity, youth development and care giver roles. There is an integration of the roles experienced as they overlap with each other. Some of

the roles are fluid, changing with time and with different life stages, e.g. marriage and children (Poole & Langan-Fox, 1997). It is important to view the roles within the context of the participants' life course as at different stages, there are influential situational factors which affect the different roles. The life course perspective states that life and work are fluid and dynamic (Hutchinson, 2007). It therefore makes sense that the different roles are experienced simultaneously and at different life stages, priorities may change and roles would accordingly change. The different roles would then be compartmentalised as to the importance thereof as well as time spent on each.

It is important to look at the socio-cultural norms that influence how the participants view their roles. Even though most mothers work, they are however responsible for domestic duties and the children (Mostert, 2009). In order to fulfil this role, the participants have delegated these duties to their housekeepers and child-minders/au pairs while they are at work. In cases where children are sick at school, the mothers are the first to be contacted to attend to their children. Only if they are not available, are the fathers contacted. This is the social norm where women are held responsible for their primary duty of motherhood (Higgins et al., 2010). The participants stated that they prefer to take care of their children, however work is also an important part of their lives and it also helps them provide for the family. Thus the challenge of balancing both of these roles. In contrast to conventional wisdom, some studies have argued that motherhood is an important role causing the most stress for women with young children (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Posel & Casale, 2015). The role of mother was found to be related with role strain. However, once women have children, the overarching role in their lives becomes that of motherhood as stated by the participants. They however feel that they are not perfect in this role, they are not

always doing it to the best of their abilities as they have to split their time between work and family.

The increase on the value of self-actualisation (Sagiv & Schwartz, 2000) has people investing in activities such as self-development, further education and altruistic activities (Ogilvie, 2004). The majority of the participants have postgraduate qualifications while some are completing their postgraduate degrees. They are further involved in youth development projects such as funding poor university students and doing charity work. Closer to home, they take care of other family members such as finding them jobs or putting them through school and living with them to alleviate pressure from other family members. Greenhaus & Powell (2006) have stated that when people engage in multiple roles, they may feel like they are realising their potential and this can foster their sense of self-worth and meaning in life. It is likely therefore that the participants get to develop themselves through work and further education while acknowledging being part of the community around them and doing what they can to assist in developing and uplifting others in the community. In this way, they may be working towards realising their dreams and self-actualisation.

5.2.3 Theme 3

Experience of conflict from the multiple roles performed

The infiltration of family responsibilities into the domain of work and vice versa shows problems from one domain that spillover to another domain (Radó et al., 2015). The most conflict experienced is from the home and work domains. One dynamic which influences the experience of role conflict was when an unbalanced amount of time was spent on a role which the participants felt was important. Cook (1994) indicated that the amount of time and energy spent on a role determined the role's significance. One

participant stated how her work was a big part of who she is and not spending enough time at work because of other roles caused high levels of conflict in her marriage. This supports the findings of Wayne et al. (2007) when they said conflict arises when an individual who values a particular role is forced by situational constraints to spend less time than she would like to on that role. Role centrality or role salience (Thoits, 1992; Cooke, 1994) is the degree to which an individual identifies with that role as a way of defining oneself. Thus individuals gain meaning and purpose from fulfilling such roles that result in positive effects. The inverse is also true in that distress experienced from a role that is central to an individual's definition of self may be threatening to psychological wellbeing (Wayne et al., 2007).

The participants with young children seemed to experience more conflict, giving support to Higgins et al., (2010) when they posited that more role conflict is experienced by women with younger children. One of the reasons for the participants having gone into business was so they could have enough time to spend with their children. However, this becomes a challenge as they found that they started spending more time at work, defeating the purpose of having gone to work for themselves. The order of their priorities changes, in that family has to come first, but at times work ends up taking the most priority. However, this is another way where the participants fulfil the duty of being a parent who has to provide for the children, especially for the single mothers. In addition to this, most women advocate for equality between the sexes (Connell, 2005) and there is the unintended pressure to perform and prove that women are just as able as their male counterparts in the working world. Thus there is pressure to ensure that the business is successful while they maintain healthy relationships at home.

Through exercising their agency, the participants have had to learn to have boundaries in terms of what they commit themselves to so as to maintain balance in their lives. As a result, the participants are able to choose roles they want, even roles that are inherited such as the responsibility that comes with being a first born in the family (taking care of younger siblings), they deal with them on their own terms. Their choices have to be convenient for them. Positive spillover (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) from work to home is experienced in different forms such as resolving different problems and challenges at work, empowers the participants to be able to handle problems and challenges encountered in the home domain. There is success in how the participants are managing their roles. Their success comes from family satisfaction and support, spending time with loved ones, the ability to do the work they like doing, and being happy and satisfied with their lives in general.

5.2.4 Theme 4

Ability to cope

From the challenges of balancing multiple roles, the participants have various coping methods which assist them to deal with the onset of distress. They include emotional, mental, social and physical forms of coping. The participants in the present study seemed to be aware of the realities of their life situation and have accordingly made compromises and adjustments so that they can successfully manage their lives. The most commonly used method of coping is spirituality, which is an emotion type based form of coping. This form of coping has been found to be used as a form of psychologically coping with stress (Phillips et al., 2014). As an emotional coping strategy, spirituality regulates emotion during times of change or circumstances that are beyond an individual's personal control (Brink & de la Rey, 2001). Spirituality is an inner belief system helping individuals to find meaning and purpose in their lives

(Saad & de Medeiros, 2012). The participants understood their lives as fulfilling their purpose for being alive through using their God given talents. As such, when they are faced with difficulties, in combination with other coping strategies, through their internal locus of control they are able to be resilient and look forward with hopefulness.

Wisdom comes with maturity as one of the participants stressed the importance of being in touch with one's reality. The decreased use of denial as a coping style has been found to likely increase levels of wellbeing (Rao et al., 2003). One participant mentioned how women should not subscribe to the superwoman ideal as it is not realistic and women may set themselves up for failure. As working mothers, striving for perfection in all roles can only be an ideal as proved by the experiences of the participants. To the best of their abilities, they try to embody all that mothers, spouses and workers should be, but as one participant eloquently put it that as a working mother she is imperfect and has gotten comfortable with that knowledge.

Problem focused coping assists in solving problems through behavioural and cognitive attempts in dealing with challenges and/or changing the appraisal of the threat (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This involves mentally looking to the future, visualising the goals one wants achieve as well as how to go about achieving them. The strategic planning and problem solving is used by the participants most often in their day to day lives. This is especially necessary for a business owner who must chart a course for the growth and expansion of an organisation. From the home domain, planning and problem solving is used in the participants' juggling of the multiple roles. One participant had a conversation with her fiancé prior to marriage about her work hours, anticipating that they would eventually start a family. This long term planning assists individuals to keep track of where they are going and how they will get there. The use

of problem focused coping and social support are more adaptive rather than the use of avoidance coping or self-blame which leads to greater psychological distress (Sahu & Misra, 1995).

Socially, the participants further used their support networks in terms of talking things over with external parties such as friends, family and spiritual leaders. Women with a wide variety of networks and role partners are able to make up for relationship failures by relying on other successful relationships (Chrouser Ahrens & Ryff, 2006). Physically, activities such as exercising (running, attending gym, yoga, dancing, laughing), relaxation and restful periods enable the participants to distress and have time for themselves. Moreover, commitment to physical exercise is not only about losing or gaining weight but a healthy lifestyle. This further links to positive spillover in that principles that one uses for exercise such as consistency, perseverance, hard work and discipline are the same principles which apply in a business scenario as well.

5.2.5 Theme 5

Support structure and self-reliance

Empirical evidence has shown how in both personal and work domains, the availability of a support structure is a significant predictor of wellbeing (Frone, 2003). The participants in the study enjoyed a well-integrated support network consisting of assistants at work, child minders/housekeepers at home, family members, in-laws and spouses. With spouses however, all married participants but one, reported how their spouses do not play a true equitable partnership role when it comes to raising their children. It is only the younger generation where men are more involved in household tasks and in childcare than they were in the past (Kulik, 2013 in Kulik, Shilo-Levin & Liberman, 2015). The participants therefore tend to use their parents, in-laws or

housekeepers when they are not able to personally fulfil their motherly duties. One participant goes to the extent of having 2 housekeepers to replace each other when they take time off so she is never left without help.

When there is lack of support, individuals are left with only themselves to rely on. One participant lives far from her family and has had to be self-reliant as a result. Furthermore, her work is of such nature that she cannot delegate it to anyone and it became easier for her to do things for herself so as not to be disappointed by others. By relying on oneself and not having support means that one may struggle to meet role demands, thereby not effectively balancing or fulfilling responsibilities. Support structures further moderate role conflict (MacEwen & Barling, 1988) and act as buffers against the negative effect of stressors (Barling, 1990). This participant reported that she suffers from insomnia during stressful periods in her life. One can therefore infer that the participant's insomnia is a result of not having enough support structures in her life to support her deal with life stressors. She however has running which assists her when she is highly stressed and this helps her put things in perspective. Another participant who lost both her mother and grandmother and has no maternal support for her children also relies on herself more and her 2 housekeepers. Her circumstance attests to the traditional gender segregation when demands are made on parental time such as taking care of a sick child, the women as opposed to men take on this responsibility (Connell, 2005).

There is strong appreciation for this support as it allows the participants to balance their roles as self-employed working mothers. This appreciation is also linked to the understanding of the socio-cultural norms around societal expectations and the internalising thereof as to what is expected of motherhood. A participant explained

this clearly when she commented on how she would not be able to keep her long work hours if she were to get married. This was an indication that even though women work and they have developed their own support structures, there are still responsibilities that fall on their shoulders such as domestic duties and raising children (Higgins et al., 2010). The participants are also in a position which allows them to access various support services they may need to reduce household demands and work demands on their time and energy. This is by virtue of being professionals who have some degree of financial independence (Uys & McLellan, 2009). With the various support structures the participants have available to them, they however still hold themselves responsible for the primary responsibilities of child care and domestic work.

5.2.6 Theme 6

Guilt feelings

The needs of young children and challenges related with bringing up teenagers are fuelled by the sense of duty or obligation that mothers have for the health and welfare of their children. Regardless of employment status, mothers experience high levels of role overload and conflict than childless women do (Barnett & Baruch. 1985, Coverman, 1989). Motherhood may thus be an important source of stress in women's lives. The participants in this study who have children experience feelings of guilt from combining work and family. Working mothers viewed themselves as "imperfect mothers" because the consequence of a working mother despite best intentions, results in the inevitable outcome of less time spent with children and the family. The mothers however make time in their schedules where they get to make up for the missed moments with their children, e.g. driving children to school in the morning on the way to work or opting to attend a child's important activity when it happens. In order to have these moments, schedules have to be co-ordinated so as to get time to

attend to motherly responsibilities and appease the guilt felt. Barling (1990) found that working mothers tend to spend less time with their children, and as a result they compensate by establishing a specified time to interact with their children as did the women in this study.

The guilt of working mothers is resultant from the motherhood role of having to provide love and emotional support to children and spouse (Conlin, 2000). This is especially important in the foundation phase and intermediate phase of school as the children are learning their independence and finding their place in the world. Guilt was not resulting from work commitments but at not being able to meet their children's needs or attend to motherly responsibilities. This was perceived as an imbalance in their roles which led to the guilt. The participants were most happy when they felt that they were able to fulfil their children's and family needs.

5.3 Significance of findings

The prospect that women will continue to occupy multiple roles in future (Uys & Mclellan, 2009) points to the importance of understanding as well as further research in this domain. This is crucial to women as they have an instrumental role in the reproduction of society and an economic need to provide for their families. The findings of this study provided valuable information in terms of understanding how the participants viewed their wellbeing as a subjective experience. The fact that wellbeing is seen not only as an individual aspect but goes beyond the individual has implications for designing health policies and interventions to improve women's health. Furthermore, it has given insights into how women can empower themselves to improve their day to day functioning and wellbeing in general. Having a deep understanding of oneself has shown to be influential in balancing one's multiple roles

(Annink & den Dulk, 2012) and the participants' insights demonstrate this knowledge. Moreover, the various coping strategies facilitate in handling the challenges and opportunities encountered in the different life domains. It is therefore important for women to be reflective of themselves and their lives to maintain their wellbeing in all life stages because of the different important roles they play in society.

5.4 Summary

This chapter has provided a discussion of the results synthesising them with the literature as the background for understanding the views, feelings and perceptions from the participants about their lives and worldviews.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary and conclusion of the study conducted. It further outlines the limitations of the study and implications of the findings while showing the potential impacts for women who struggle with subjective wellbeing. This chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.

6.2 Conclusion of the study

The present study aimed to understand and contribute to the literature, the black self-employed women's experiences of subjective wellbeing as a result of the multiple roles they play, and to further understand their coping mechanisms and how they facilitate effective functioning in their life domains successfully.

Although subjective wellbeing can be simply defined as how people evaluate their lives, this simplistic understanding contradicts the complicated and multifaceted nature of the construct. Subjective wellbeing mirrors a wide range of different elements and to get an entire portrait of one's wellbeing, one needs to look at how people evaluate their lives. The study found that the participants look at their roles from the important life domains and consider how successful they are in those roles they deem as important. This would determine their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their lives at that particular moment.

Apart from playing the roles of business owner (worker role) and parent (family role), the participants occupy other sets of roles linked to the community and self-development. The home and work domain however are the most important and that

is where the most conflict is experienced. Findings from the study attest to the nature of the role or role centrality as an important factor in understanding subjective wellbeing. The participants have stated how not spending enough time on roles considered as important caused distress. This was further understood through socio-cultural norms and what they have internalised as expectations of them by society and what they expect of themselves. Balancing their multiple roles is something that the participants deal with throughout their lives and is experienced in varying degrees from woman to woman. Benefits from multiple roles resulted in an increase of resources the participants have at their disposal such as financial and social resources. Furthermore, the spillover theory illustrated how success in one domain is transferred to another domain, while distress from one domain is also transferred to another domain. Moreover, having multiple roles helps compensate for failure in another role due to successes elsewhere and therefore alleviate feelings of failure from other roles.

A key differentiator from the study between participants who experienced subjective wellbeing versus those who did not is the availability of support structures which contributed to their subjective wellbeing. Trust in their support structures enabled the participants to be able to focus their energy and time on important roles. The participants who lacked support indicated that they suffer from physical health symptoms (insomnia and nerve pain). These signs seem to indicate that the participants are not effectively balancing their roles well. However, personality is another important dimension which is a predictor of wellbeing (Diener et al., 1999; Uys & Mclellan, 2009) that has not been covered in this study. Thus personalities of the participants possibly have a role to play in their experiences of wellbeing. Self-awareness and the use of adaptive coping mechanisms further facilitated subjective wellbeing for the participants.

6.3 Limitations

The results of this study must be viewed in light of its limitations. One of the limitations with the study was the time frame for the completion of the research, which was a year. This limited the study to a cross sectional data collection. Furthermore a mixed method could not be used in terms of data collection. A multi method battery is recommended to supplement and validate the information gained via interviews or self-reports. The study used a qualitative research design which lacks generalisability to other contexts, and the participants were located in one metropolitan area and therefore cannot represent a national sample of self employed women. Lastly, thematic analysis was used for analysis which has been largely described as subjective. The researcher has however attempted to be reflexive during the course of the study and only reported on the participants' views.

6.4 Recommendations

In addition to economic and social indicators such as remuneration, crime or health, subjective wellbeing offers another way of assessing quality of life. It has the ability to measure aspects which the other measures cannot. Thus future research using multi methods (self and non-self reports) including quantitative methods to replicate this study over a large national sample, is recommended to provide additional information necessary to evaluate subjective wellbeing in society. Longitudinal studies would further improve the understanding of subjective experiences over time.

The findings of this research study prompt practical recommendations for counsellors and other professionals alike, to motivate women to partake in multiple roles considering that they are beneficial to wellbeing and are a source of satisfaction. The results can also be used by local governments to encourage entrepreneurship among

women for the creation of sustainable jobs. The element of self-employment however must be contextualised as not all self-employment means the same thing. Differences exist between different professional services e.g. doctors and freelance workers e.g. an artist versus owning a logistics company with 50 employees will have various implications for subjective wellbeing.

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Participation Request Letter

Dear Participant

RE: REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

Silindokuhle Mkhize requests your participation in a research project on “The subjective wellbeing of black self-employed women in South Africa: The role of multiple role strain”. I am an Industrial Psychologist Masters student at the University of KwaZulu Natal.

I would appreciate an opportunity to interview you regarding my study. The study is based on your work and home life and it seeks to gain insights into your views about the multiple roles you occupy and their effect in your life. The study is only for academic purposes.

Please note that your participation in this study is voluntary and there is no reward for participation or penalty for not participating. Involvement in this study requires your participation in a semi structured interview of approximately 60 - 90 minutes which will be scheduled at a time and place that is suitable for you. You will not be obliged to answer any questions which you are uncomfortable with and therefore have the option to decline to respond to any questions asked. You will also have the option of terminating your participation at any stage that you choose.

All data collected through the interview will be treated with strict confidentiality. You will remain anonymous in which case all transcripts and reports will be appropriately coded to ensure that your request is fully respected.

The results of the research will be submitted to the university as part of the course requirement.

If you are willing to be interviewed, please indicate (by ticking as applicable) whether or not you are willing to allow the interview to be recorded by the following equipment:

Appendix A

	Willing	Not willing
Audio equipment		
Photographic equipment		
Video equipment		

If you feel that you have concerns regarding the study or if you require any additional information, please contact me, my supervisor or the research office.

I can be contacted at:

Email: sssmkhize@gmail.com

Cell: 0829946680

My supervisor is Professor Joey Buitendach who is located at the School of Human Sciences, Howard College of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Email: buitendach@ukzn.ac.za

Cell: 0842707487

You may also contact the Research Office through:

P. Mohun, HSSREC Research Office

Email: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za

Tel: 031 260 4557

Thank you for participating in this research.

Kind regards,

Silindokuhle Mkhize

DECLARATION

I (full names) _____ hereby confirm that:

I have been briefed on the research that Silindokuhle Mkhize is conducting on 'The subjective wellbeing of black self-employed women in South Africa: The role of multiple role strain'

- ❖ I understand what participation in this research project means,
- ❖ I understand that my participation is voluntary,
- ❖ I understand that I have the right not to answer any questions that I do not feel comfortable with,
- ❖ I understand that I have the right to withdraw my participation in the research, at any time, If I so choose, and
- ❖ I understand that any information I share will be held in the strict confidence by the researcher.

Signed on _____ at _____

(Participant signature)

Appendix C

Interview Guide

Name:

Location:

Date & Time:

Background (Name, surname, age, education, children, relationship status, family)

1. Tell me about yourself and what you do.
2. What are your roles that you occupy?
3. If you were to rank them in order of importance, how would you do it?
4. How much time do you spend on each?
5. Describe your typical working day or week, what is it like?
6. What is your experience of conflict from the multiple roles you occupy, if any?
7. How does this affect your life?
8. Do you have any support structure in your life? Explain
9. Let's discuss your understanding of subjective wellbeing. What factors do you base it on and how do you evaluate it? If you do.
10. How would you describe success in your life? Do you consider your life successful in the space you are in right now?
11. What are the factors which contribute or take away from the success?
12. Which aspect of your life gives you the most and least satisfaction?

Appendix C

13. What coping strategies do you use to help you manage your roles effectively?

14. How satisfied are you with your life right now?

15. Other: anything you may want to add that you feel is relevant to this discussion and we have not touched on it?

16. Should you think of anything later, please let me know and we can have a follow up interview in case I need to clarify some things as well.