



UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**UNDERSTANDING INDIVIDUAL WORKFORCE RESILIENCE OF WOMEN IN
SELECTED DURBAN ORGANISATIONAL SETTINGS**

By

Núria Leandra de Jesus Cadete

211560754

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**College of Law and Management Studies
School of Management, Information Technology and Governance**

**Supervisor:
Dr Shaun Ruggunan**

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

BACKGROUND: Over the past decades there has been an enormous increase in scientific research publications, targeting resilience of women within the workplace environment. Despite the potentially adverse effects that women may experience following adversities within their environments, many of them thrive through exercising mindfulness, self-efficacy, coping skills, while trying to manage the effects of neuroticism. Given the overall aim and purpose of this study vis-à-vis: to understand individual workforce resilience of women in selected Durban organisational settings; these factors are presented in terms of a 'Biopsychological Model of Resilience' indicating their connections to promoting psychological resilience. Further in the thesis, women experiences are discussed in light of feminism tenets to uncover their significance to resilience in the context of experiences of women beyond the workplace settings. **METHODOLOGY:** The study applied a qualitative approach, supported by the social constructivism paradigm. Ten women were chosen to be an instrumental part in this study, and were sourced based on preliminary set of criteria using purposive and snowballing sampling methods. Participants were interviewed to allow comprehensive collection of baseline insights and experiences on resilience over life history interviews. All interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analysed thematically. A pilot study was performed to address potential challenges to the achievement of the study prior to the launch of the research process. **FINDINGS:** The multi-dimensional constructs of resilience and feminism theories reviewed, have indicated a good fit with the analysed findings, regarding the participants' perceptions toward resilience. Overall, the findings supported the hypothesis that biopsychosocial dimensions influence the development of resilience. By not displaying resilience qualities, adverse experiences had greater undesirable impacts on women. Women reported experiences of different kinds of adversities including domestic violence, divorce, workplace harassment and discrimination, breast cancer, and death of a loved one. Despite experiencing challenges women reported using different strategies which helped them cope with setbacks. The findings revealed that the attribute of resilience can be exhibited by nurturing and applying resilience knowledge toward adverse experiences. Overall, the study facilitates knowledge sharing on resilience of women which may be insightful or increase awareness to different audiences regarding the theoretical underpinning of resilience. **CONCLUSION:** A biopsychosocial model of resilience was used to understand how factors such as mindfulness, self-efficacy, coping, neuroticism influenced resilience of women. Moreover, the association between resilience of women and feminism is evident in this study,

and serves to highlight how the experiences of women from diverse personal and organisational backgrounds fit into the model of resilience. **IMPLICATIONS:** The study provides initial understandings of the multidimensional nature of psychological resilience which may throw new light into how women in circumstances of adversity can thrive more effectively. The Human Resource Management [HRM] should deepen understanding of individual workforce resilience to develop and implement meaningful policies to encourage resilience. Further studies should be conducted to explore the actual effect size of the individual resilience model toward mitigating the outcomes of adversities.

Keywords: Psychological resilience, working women, biopsychosocial model, neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy, coping, adversity, feminism, HRM.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

What does it mean to be resilient? This is not just a philosophical enquiry, or a motivation to reflect upon our own individual psychological resilience. Whilst the subject of resilience regarding human-beings has been extensively conceptualised as an inborn trait by some, and as a process or an outcome by others, resilience describes “the ability of a person to recover, re-bound, bounce-back, adapt or even thrive following misfortune, change or adversity” (Garcia-Dia, DiNapoli, Garcia-Ona, Jakubowski, & O’Flaherty, 2013). As a recognised multidisciplinary subject, resilience has been proposed in a variety of different disciplines including psychology, sociology, religion and more recently the discipline of human biology (Atkinson, Rodman, Thuras, Shiroma, & Lim, 2017; Rees, Breen, Cusack, & Hegney, 2015; Shrivastava & Desousa, 2016; Taggart, McMillan, & Lawson, 2010). Although most current literature on resilience place emphasis on older adults, the theory of ‘human resilience’ has originated from longitudinal studies on children who were born into adverse conditions and considered to be at-risk (Garmezy and Masten 1984; White et al., 2015). The prominence of uncovering the principles of resilience has been significant during the past few decades whereby resilience can be seen to go beyond children facing significant adversities (Agnafors et al., 2016; Campbell et al., 2015; Gorman, 2005; Hornor, 2017). Not surprisingly, research about resilience of adults often establish a good rapport with the subject of adversity (Ong, 2008; Rees et al., 2015). Given this backdrop, an increasing number of empirical research and applied practice literature concede resilience as a fundamental prerequisite for working individuals – more especially people who are confronted with profound difficult experiences (Bandura, 2006; Garcia-Dia et al., 2013; Rees et al., 2015; World Health Organization, 2017).

A myriad of studies analysing the development of resilience is available; however, many of the theories formed around resilience fail in proving useful methods that assist in endorsing psychological resilience skills. This is predominantly because many of these theories tend to focus on a single resilience factor to conceptualise resilience as opposed to emphasising multiple factors.

Researchers have objectively yet comparably reached conclusions that psychological resilience cannot be approached from a one-dimensional perspective (Shrivastava & Desousa, 2016). In contrast, as a dynamic process, resilience involves thoughts, attitudes and behaviours and actions. Even though research suggests that some people are more resilient than others, resilience can also be learnt because of the human brain ability to grow, change and retain knowledge.

In the context of the above principle, this study assesses a multi-dimensional perspective of resilience by exploring the influence of biological¹, psychological² and social³ factors to psychological resilience of working women. These multiple factors comprise of four prominent concepts namely neuroticism⁴, mindfulness⁵, self-efficacy⁶, and coping⁷, and are expansively discussed within the literature review sections ahead.

1.2 Background of the study

Psychological resilience is considered an essential strength for many of us, women and men who seek to maintain optimal health through adversities in life. Indeed, traces of women's historical and traditional concerns indicate that women's experiences of adversity surpass men's experiences of adversity. Despite its recognised importance to people wellbeing, resilience theories tend to be substantially insightful toward women in modern life. There are still some concerns that modern

The following three considerations should be noted with regards to the bio-psycho-social factors narrated in this thesis [biological, psychological, social]:

¹ The biological construct which is addressed in the current thesis refers to specific familial and genetic predispositions of human-beings to certain mental health conditions such as anxiety, stress and depression. It does not intend to reflect the study of plants or animals whatsoever.

² The psychological construct for the purpose of this thesis, conveys attitudes and behaviours affecting human-beings in a given context. It does not intend to dissect the human mind development process.

³ The social construct of the model reflects social systems in which people live in or are a part of, and aims to explore the impacts of social systems to the quality of life of human-beings.

Please note that the definitions of these constructs and their theoretical narratives were adduced to explain their capacity to influence resilience [Refer to chapters two and three for a comprehensive overview on these constructs].

⁴ Neuroticism occurs when a woman goes through ongoing undesirable emotions such as anxiety, stress, anger and depression as frequently, intensely, readily, and for a longer time frame.

⁵ Mindfulness reflects the quality or the state which occurs when a woman is conscious or aware of events in her life that can lead to meaningful or unfavourable experiences.

⁶ Self-efficacy manifests when a woman has developed a sense of understanding of her personal strengths and limitations by transcending self-limiting beliefs, and believing in her own abilities to influence meaningful experiences in life.

⁷ Coping occurs when a woman develops inspired attitudes and takes meaningful actions towards more favourable experiences in her life.

working women still undergo difficult periods or life experiences due to unresolved traditional barriers within the world of work (Africa Gender Equality Index, 2015; McKinsey & Company, 2016; World Health Organization, 2017).

While challenges may be encountered in any type of profession, it is generally accepted that the extent to which women can overcome adverse experiences is greatly determined by their willingness and ability to display resilience. In relation to the present study, resilience describes the inner strength which women deem indispensable but which not many women may be aware of possessing [or even aware that they can develop the ability]. This study aims at exploring the subject matter through the eyes of women whose experiences of work-life adversities may offer important insights on lived experiences of women in Durban.

As it is evident in the work of Albert Bandura, a psychologist and well-known expert in the field of self-efficacy, resilience does not necessarily represent a personality trait that a person either have or not (Bandura, 2006). Bandura's academic works have consistently revealed that psychological processes such as resilience require the involvement of thoughts, behaviours and actions so that it can transpire. Furthermore, several resilience studies defend that when individuals develop positive resilient attributes, such individuals are likely to display more stress-resistant attitudes than people who fail to exhibit this quality (Jackson, Firtko, & Edenborough, 2007). This suggest that resilient individuals are more likely to stand their ground during times of difficulties. Rees et al., (2015) further describe resilience as rather two-dimensional construct whereby resilience implies a person's exposure to any form of adverse outcome which is successively superseded by positive adjustment outcomes. The literature review chapter two contemplates the notion that the development of resilience qualities is facilitated through multiple biopsychosocial factors. Thus, a biopsychosocial model of psychological resilience to promote resilience underpins this present study of women in the context of Durban organisational settings.

1.3 Research problem

A common theme in resilience studies is that stress or adversity greatly influence the building of character and resilience of individuals. However, as much as this can be a supported factor, coping well through adversities is predominantly determined by a person's mental attitude during

experiences of profound challenges (Smith, Saklofske, Keefer, & Tremblay, 2016). All things considered, whether within the professional domain or other contexts in the life of an individual, significant adversities can be one of the biggest hurdles that a person may have to deal with. In terms of the subject of this study, thanks to greater strides made by feminism movements women are increasingly entering fields of work which was unimaginable few decades ago. Women make important positive contributions to their workplace settings and the development of their families and communities. Even though more and more women are moving out of the traditional households confounds into the professional life, women continue to face serious demands because they still expect to undertake multiple roles outside of the career life. Given that life-changing situations and adverse conditions may potentially influence women's ability to perform their life roles optimally; in understanding resilience from the lenses of women, one should note that women and men vary inversely with adverse experiences. Hence the focus of female individuals in this study.

1.4 Key participants under investigation

Drawing from qualitative methodology and life history interviews, ten female candidates were sourced through purposive and snowballing sampling instruments to take part in this study of resilience. Much of the resilience research in the context of working women has focused on a single workplace setting, however undertaking this study made it possible to target women who worked in distinctive workplace settings, and industries [namely: Haircare, Retail Healthcare, Hotel & Tourism, Skincare, Town Planning, Medical Healthcare, Management of Companies and Enterprises, Restaurant, Aviation, Real Estate], and whose communalities in terms of this study is reflected within the set of criteria established in chapter four.

1.5 Research questions and objectives

The literature review seeks to better understand the constructs of psychological resilience and provide a context of its influence on working women. More specifically, the study is organized around six central research questions and six research objectives which have been formulated around the psychological resilience model illustrated in the literature review chapter two.

1.5.1. Research questions⁸:

- ◆ What is mindfulness and how it contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace?
- ◆ What is self-efficacy and how it contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace?
- ◆ What is coping and how it contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace?
- ◆ What is neuroticism and how it influences psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace?
- ◆ What is psychological adjustment and what psychological adjustment strategies do resilient women deploy to cope with adverse conditions in and out of the workplace?
- ◆ How can the HRM promote positive organisational behaviour such as psychological resilience?

1.5.2 Research objectives⁹:

In line with the research questions afore mentioned, the following objectives of this study are:

- ◆ To understand the extent to which mindfulness contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace
- ◆ To understand the extent to which self-efficacy contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace
- ◆ To understand the extent to which coping contribute to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace
- ◆ To understand the extent to which neuroticism influence psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace
- ◆ To determine what psychological adjustment strategies working women, deploy to cope with adverse conditions in and out of the workplace

⁸ Different sets of sub-questions which feed into each of the main research question and which guided the research interview process are appended to the Appendix A [Refer to Appendix A: Interview Question Guide].

⁹ A background of the primary research objectives expounding secondary research objectives is indicated in chapter four, sub-section 4.6.2. Additionally, an outline detailing how the research questions and research objectives were addressed is given on Table 4, chapter seven.

- ◆ To establish ways in which HRM can promote positive organisational behaviour such as resilience

1.6 Significance of the study

Numerous scholarly studies have shown that women benefit substantially from expressing resilience qualities in their different domains of life (Aazami, Shamsuddin, Akmal, & Azami, 2015; Campbell et al., 2015; Doubell & Struwig, 2014; Favero & Heath, 2012; Waterhouse, Hill, & Hinde, 2016). Given that the quality of a person's life is remarkably influenced by political, economic, social and technological dynamics; to ascertain how women in Durban are impacted by resilience it is necessary to investigate women's lives through these general dynamics. By acquiring knowledge of women's experiences of resilience, this study will shed light on the extent to which the conceptualised building blocks of psychological resilience are pertinent to women in Durban working settings. It is fundamentally against this background that undertaking the present study is expected to be expedient in three predominant levels:

First, this research intends to encourage the acquisition of new knowledge about resilience. Further, by exploring existing knowledge of resilience, this study may provide either positive or negative reinforcement to individuals in general, and women who might approach the study to inform their knowledge. The readers may be any individuals experiencing adversities within or outside of the workplace environments, and who could benefit from scientific perspectives on multiple factors on resilience.

Second, it is my vision that the Human Resources Management discipline may gain new insights of the diverse concerns that women from distinct workplace backgrounds experience. It is vital to establish knowledge how women thrive, and ascertain the need to establish formal guidelines that encourage resilience of women using the necessary platforms. The supplementary aim of the study is therefore to encourage positive change within workplace settings in Durban, taking into consideration that some of the most impacting stressors may originate from the workplace. This study therefore may provide key indicators which can be contextualised into resilience guidelines or strategies to adequately improve women experiences within or outside of the workplace environment.

Third, this research applied a qualitative approach to tap into the knowledge of women in Durban and aligns with the research objectives of the study. Much of qualitative research work which investigates resilience of working women focus on the healthcare profession [palliative care] such as nursing jobs. However, this study emerged out of interest to understand resilience of women whose careers were beyond the healthcare profession. This direction presents more diversity into the current study and consequently may be more insightful to providing needed guidelines that can influence resilience of women in general. Ultimately, it is anticipated that the results of this study will add positive contributions to the existing body of knowledge of qualitative research. That is, it may prompt the interest of academics in the field of HRM and beyond to undertake resilience research using the model of resilience which is reviewed in this study or other models of resilience, more creatively and objectively.

1.7 Rationale for conducting this study

The rationale for conducting this study is evident in the introduction and significance of the study outlined above. Amongst the possible outcomes after people are exposed to profound adversities, resilience remains the common positive outcome observed in human-beings, whether these are adversities that occur in childhood or in adult life. Therefore, studying such a central construct is complex as it pushes us to develop scales to measure different internalising and externalising indicators of resilience that ultimately influence people's ability to cope with big or small adversities. Essentially, resilient women may readily recover from unfavourable outcomes such as stress or fatigue, and depression or other undesirable sequels of adversities. Whilst a theoretical framework of resilience and feminism literature discussed in the chapters ahead are critical in informing the present study, in terms of the building blocks of neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping, this study may provide insights into women experiences. In addition, this study may detect cues that may prompt proactive measures toward minimising the negative effects that adversities may have on working women.

1.8 Important terminology used in this study

The key terms and associated definitions used in this study are listed below:

- ◆ **Adversity:** a difficult or unpleasant experience undergone by an individual.

- ◆ **Discrimination:** the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex:
- ◆ **Domain:** an area of life in which a person is directly or indirectly involved in such as workplace, family and personal.
- ◆ **Emancipation:** the fact or process of being set free from legal, social, or political restrictions
- ◆ **Man:** An adult human male
- ◆ **Oppression:** the culture of injustice; unjust exploitation, or domination of others.
- ◆ **Patriarchy/patriarchal:** social organization favouring males on every level; rule by men.
- ◆ **Protective:** a variable that increases the probability of a future positive outcome favouring an individual.
- ◆ **Resilience model or model:** a multi-dimensional representation or a proposed structure of resilience which individuals and workplaces can employ in practical terms.
- ◆ **Risk factor:** a variable that increases the probability of a future negative outcome against an individual.
- ◆ **Role model:** a person looked to by others as an example to be imitated.
- ◆ **Sexism:** A form of prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination against women, based on their sex.
- ◆ **Sex vs. Gender:** Sex is the biological aspect of one's identity; gender is the social construction of sexuality [that is: male or female], the ways in which society perceives us or in which we perceive ourselves [the state of being male or female]
- ◆ **Thesis/dissertation/paper:** used interchangeably to indicate this research study.
- ◆ **Woman:** An adult human female
- ◆ **Workplace setting:** a formal place where people work such as an office, a pharmacy, restaurant, or hospital.
- ◆ **Thematic analysis terms used:**
- ◆ **Data corpus:** all comprehensive data collected in the research. For example, all interviews transcriptions.
- ◆ **Data extract:** an individual coded chunk of data that has been extracted from a data item. For example, a meaningful coded section of an interview.

- ◆ **Data item:** an individual piece of data collected which can be analysed on its own. For example, one interview.
- ◆ **Data set:** a subset of the data corpus that is selected for a for a special analysis. For example, specific records around topic such as mindfulness which is reflected in different parts of the data corpus.

1.9 Overview of the dissertation

Given that the research questions and research objectives described in section 1.5, reflect the overall aim of this study, this present study is organised into seven chapters, in the following way:

Chapter one: Introduction

This chapter introduces the subject of this study providing a supplementary background of the study, outlines the research problem, research questions and research objectives, and subsequently lays out the significance and reasoning behind the study.

Chapter two: A Multi-Dimensional Model of Resilience: Implications for Women Within and Outside of Workplace Settings

As the cornerstone of this dissertation, this chapter first literature chapter, reviews collective theories on psychological resilience. Importantly this chapter revolves around a recognized biopsychosocial model of resilience, of which important concepts enshrined in the model namely neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping are critically explored to contextualize this subject of this study (Rees et al., 2015). In addition, the chapter also delineates further theoretical dynamics from a philosophical; psychological and organizational perspective.

Chapter three: A Feminist Perspective on Resilience of Women

A feminism perspective on resilience of women is introduced in this second literature chapter. This section outlines theories from different forms of feminism including Liberal; Radical, Cultural, Socialist, Women of Colour, and African Feminism which constitute an essential part of this paper, which is evident by the women-focused orientation assumed by this current study. Accordingly, both workplace and non-work issues experienced by women including career challenges, organisational conflicts, family issues, or health issues, are studied through feminism literature.

Chapter four: Research Methodology

The methodology chapter provides sufficient details about the methodology and methods of research which are applied in this study to address the research objectives. The sections described in this chapter include but not limited to: the research design, sampling technique and criteria, life history data collection method, data quality control, thematic analysis method, and ethical considerations.

Chapter five: Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter outlines the findings emerged from the data collection process in order by the research objective and the relevant research question. The findings are analysed thematically and the extracts have been coded are presented in terms of themes and subthemes.

Chapter six: Discussion of Findings

The findings and results presented in chapter six are interpreted and discussed in conjunction with the literature. Further discussions of limitations of interpretation and implications of the findings which may be discussed.

Chapter seven: Conclusion

The study is summarised briefly in the conclusion chapter by outlining the overall research aims, purpose, objectives and questions underpinning this study. Ultimately, the researcher proposes and stipulates scholarly recommendations for future research, as well as practical recommendations for organisations or workplaces.

1.10 Conclusion

The introductory chapter has outlined the aim and purpose for this study of Understanding Individual Workforce Resilience of Women in Selected Durban Organisational Settings. It has discussed the study background, research problem, significance and rationale around this study. It has also listed in the chapter, the research questions and study objectives which are addressed in different sections of this study.

Further to the introductory points proved above, a more germane and comprehensive exploration on the building blocks of resilience will be given in following literature review chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

A MULTI-DIMENSIONAL MODEL OF RESILIENCE: IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN WITHIN AND OUTSIDE OF WORKPLACE SETTINGS

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to address existing dynamics and implications of multiple factors of resilience to working women. A theoretical assessment of positive psychology provides the basis of the phenomenon of resilience. Several theoretical literature contributions within the context of biological, psychological, and social dynamics of human-beings are reviewed to inform knowledge about the process whereby resilience is developed. The chapter proposes an evidence-based and research informed resilience model that working women and their organisations can use to strengthen women against significant stressors at the workplace. Some of the discussions pondered in this chapter highlight key constructs of adversity in relation to resilience with emphasis on promoting personal health of women. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to systematically review resilience literature that evaluate the effectiveness of resilience promotion factors affecting women in different domains of life.

2.2 Positive psychology in the context of resilience

Resilience is broadly known as product of positive psychology due to its instinctual survival design found in human beings in general. The term psychology refers to the scientific study of the human mind and its functions, especially those affecting behaviour in each context. The term “positive” is somewhat subjective and can imply something else based on the context in which it is being applied. In terms of individual psychological resilience within the workplace environment, individuals who exert more constructive, optimistic, and confidence characteristic in the face of adversity are denoted as being more resilient individuals (Bandura, 2006; Bolier et al., 2013; Cohrs, Christie, White, & Das, 2013). Conversely, individuals who come across as vulnerable and seen as not having the ability to display positive qualities, are regarded as non-resilient individuals (Back, Steinhäuser, Kamal, & Jackson, 2016a; Haracz & Roberts, 2016; Morote, Hjemdal, Kryszyska, Martinez Uribe, & Corveleyn, 2017).

Moreover, it is worth noting that a positive mind set provides a major stimulus to individuals in pursuing of goals that connect to the objectives upheld by their organisations (Morote et al., 2017; Rogerson, Meir, Crowley-McHattan, McEwen, & Pastoors, 2016). Thus, positive psychology interventions may promote employees' health in a way that support the interests of workplaces, especially in situations where challenges associated with the nature of the job are likely to debilitate a person's power to perform optimally. Furthermore, a person's adverse experiences may introduce poor health outcomes and impact the individual work performance. Positive psychology as Bolier et al. (2013) noted, is as a central requirement for complementary health approaches aimed at promoting and treating mental health issues.

According to the World Health Organization [WHO], mental health is a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, and is able to make a contribution to their workplace, families and communities (Bolier et al., 2013). Under this definition, positive psychology is a core function of resilience, not only for its basis of subjective wellbeing homeostasis which causes people to maintain a sense of personal wellbeing and optimal mental functioning, but importantly its mediating function which moderates the effects of depressive symptoms (Kent, Rivers, & Wrenn, 2015).

2.3 The evolution of resilience

The subject of resilience has been investigated in the common disciplines including psychiatry, psychology, nursing and business (Bernabe & Botia, 2016; Cortina et al., 2016; J. Gray, 2012). The context and application per each academic discipline toward the implications of resilience may vary. This may also justify the lack of a universal consensus on the meaning of resilience. In fact, having multiple explanations may offer multidimensional perspective of the subject but may also raise misinterpretations when resilience is not approached in terms of its given context.

The past few years devoted to studies of resilience have given us variations of food for thoughts on the subject. Researchers have long been intrigued by what contributes to positive adaptation and outcomes associated with the resilience (Bandura, 2006; Garcia-Dia et al., 2013; Jackson et al., 2007; Ong, 2008). As previously stated, despite the growing recognition regarding the

implications of resilience within the workplace environment, researchers purport that resilience theories grew out of studies that explored children's adaptation to profound adversities and their strengths despite the presence of adversities (Garmezy and Masten 1984; Mallak & Yildiz, 2016; Morote et al., 2017; Ong, 2008). Studies on children examine several issues [such as dysfunctional families, alcoholic or mentally ill parents, hostile environments, poverty, sexual abuse], and the extent to which these issues impacted children's health (Agnafors et al., 2016; Beard et al., 2010; Buchanan, Flouri, & Ten Brinke, 2002; Cameron, 2008; Campbell et al., 2015; Gorman, 2005; Sapienza & Masten, 2011; White et al., 2015).

The significance of resilience in connection to stressful settings in people's lives has ignited the interest of researchers in the past few decades, by providing a pool of insightful perspectives of the subject of psychological resilience that can apply to both children and older adults (Bandura, 2006; Borucka & Ostaszewski, 2008; Broekman, 2011; Buchanan et al., 2002; de Terte, Stephens, & Huddleston, 2014; Garmezy & Masten, 1984; Jackson, Firtko, & Edenborough, 2007).

Broekman (2011) asserts that earlier experiences that a person may have had in the childhood, may still affect people at a later stage in their lives. This view rests on the assumption that first memories experienced early in childhood may still be affected in adulthood, especially memories that have been unconsciously repressed due to experiences of extreme stress or trauma (K. M. Edwards, Probst, Rodenhizer-Stampfli, Gidycz, & Tansill, 2014; Ong, 2008). On that basis adult resilience research requires determining occurrences that were earlier on lived or experiences lived in the person past as to calculate cases that may provide basis on aspect into how individuals' resilience developed.

In the onset of research on resilience, Mazur and Tabak (2008) found that two-thirds of the 2287 children and adolescents who were exposed to similar stressful situations, were later found to exhibit destructive behaviours including extensive substance abuse, or otherwise engaged in anti-social behaviours. However, one-third of the subjects who exhibited more constructive behaviours and could thrive well and accomplish well academically. In terms of resilience of adults, specially working individuals, research has progressed from the need and interests to uncovering protective processes which explain people adaptation to sustainable positive states following adverse

conditions (Bandura, 2006; Buttram, Surratt, and Kurtz, 2014; Fida, Laschinger, and Leiter, 2016; Havlinova, Tomasek, Brichacek, and Kodl, 2006; Murray, 2003; Roh et al., 2015). Reflections from the literature point in the direction that failure to positive adaptation to stressful events in business environments can be devastating. Knowledge regarding the influences of possible risks versus protective factors, suggests that pressures within business environments should not be undermined and to achieve adaptability requires rather deeper individual efforts and commitment by those people directly affected by adversities.

2.4 Resilience: An inherent attribute, a dynamic process or an outcome?

Resilience is often described as a complex issue due to the various interconnected factors involving biological, psychological, and social-cultural dimensions of human beings (Rees et al. (2015). Conversely, separate views of resilience as a trait, a process or an outcome exist. The view of resilience as a trait may encourage the notion of resilience as an intrinsic quality or characteristic imparted to selected number of people. Although some people may exhibit more natural characters of endurance than others, the generalisation of resilience as such creates misconstrued beliefs that defeat the real meaning and purposefulness of resilience. Regardless of whether resilience is described as trait or a process, the fact remains that displaying such ability is advantageous to individuals in several contexts. Not being resilient may increase the propensity to experiencing prolonged symptoms of high neuroticism. Indeed, Agnafors et al., (2016) agrees that low resilient individuals are more likely to experience the effects of adversity more often than people that possess higher levels of resilience.

There is ample evidence that people displaying characteristics of bravery, courage and thriving during adverse conditions are more likely to make choices that will aid ease the suffer and make rational decisions not to become victims of unfavourable conditions which they may have to experience (Cleland, Ball, Salmon, Timperio, & Crawford, 2010; Davydov, Stewart, Ritchie, & Chaudieu, 2010; Jackson et al., 2007; Kent et al., 2015; McDonald, Jackson, Vickers, & Wilkes, 2016; Pipe et al., 2012).

Some views lend support to the claim that resilience is an ordinary rather than extraordinary phenomenon. These researchers claim that any ordinary person who is challenged by everyday

difficulties of life may be able and capable of discovering personal resilience abilities. This suggest that the inability to demonstrate strength against a significant life pressure should not be indicative of the absolute absence of psychological abilities to thrive. As such resilience is far from being a special or rare ability. Shrivastava and Desousa (2016) defined resilience “as a human capacity to adapt swiftly and successfully to stressful/traumatic events and manage to revert to a positive state”. They also posited that it is in human’s spiritual nature to find contentment, satisfaction, enthusiasm and flexibility in life as part of cultivating well-being.

One usual misconception may abound that resilient individuals are free from stressful experiences. In terms of the traditional workplace environment where positivism is not encouraged for example it can be quite common from unenthusiastic people to lean towards destructive life experiences and engage in vicious behaviour towards colleagues that may display optimistic attitudes. All things considered, optimistic people seldom engage in unproductive and negative behaviour. Whatever the case may be that may prompt some people to thrive, endure and embrace life events more positively than others, every individual may be exposed to a form of adversity.

Physical and emotional pain and sadness from adversity or distress encountered in the working environment and private lives are shared by resilient people irrespectively (Fida, Laschinger, & Leiter, 2016). In fact, the road to resilience is likely to involve considerable emotional distress in which the involvement of behaviours, thoughts, and actions are required from the person to create space for a rewarding learning journey to developing active rather than passive attitudes and behaviours.

Developing resilience thus becomes a personal journey. People do not all react the same way to traumatic and stressful life events. In the same manner, an approach to building resilience that works for one person may not necessarily work for another. This is not a case of “one size fits all” approach. The good thing about having options is that people may opt to use one approach over another that suits the person contexts, since people are affected by a variation of factors unique to them, based of culture, life history, values, and beliefs, educational backgrounds, ethnicity and gender orientation. A person’s culture can influence on how that person communicates feelings and deals with adversity. For example, the intensity of pressures may reduce and even be

eliminated when a person living a physical and emotional difficulty can connect with people in family or associates in the workplace openly and get the correct support from the relevant network structures. Such variations are details inculcated in the conceptualizations of individual resilience.

2.5 General associations of individual psychological resilience

The terms resilience, individual resilience, and psychological resilience, are often used interchangeably in the field of psychology (Bolier et al., 2013; Cohrs et al., 2013; Everly, Davy, Smith, Lating, & Nucifora, 2011). The constructs therefore, lend full perspectives to the humanistic field to studying human-beings. The word “psychological” is an attribute of the subject of psychology, and describes the mental and emotional state of a person. Resilience is the English word from the Latin language *Resiliens* describing a pliant or able to spring back into shape object like an elastic (Ledesma, 2014).

A range of emerging researchers within and across academic disciplines have provided specific operational definitions of resilience to reflect the contextual dimension of interest. In terms of this current study, the approach to studying resilience reflects the disciplinary branch of Psychology which underpins the study of human mind and its functions. This branch is relevant to understanding specific factors which influence the behaviour of people in society (Bernabe & Botia, 2016). While this study recognises the usefulness in the definition of resilience adopted by Sturgeon and Zautra (2013) as a “prolonged positive adaptation in the face of significant stressful situations”, the definition of resilience as *“the ability of a person to recover, re-bound, bounce-back, adapt or even thrive following misfortune, change or adversity”* (Garcia-Dia et al., 2013), is most suitable to this study of working women.

From these definitions, the constructs of positive adaptation and significant adversity are noted as attachments of phenomenon in that resilience cannot be determined exclusively of adversities and positive adaptation. These definitions also imply resilience an essential attribute that any person needs to optimally deal with demanding occurrences. Thus, emphasis is placed resilience as a process rather than individual trait.

The concepts of recovery, sustainability and growth are three leading qualities of the concept of individual resilience that surface when academics portray resilience as a successful adaptation to stressful situations. Firstly, ‘Recovery’ refers to a return to a normal state of health, mind, or regain of strength from the stressful situation. Secondly, ‘Sustainability’ indicates the capacity to maintain work, family and life dynamics by keeping disturbances from these domains at a certain rate or levels without causing emotional strain. And thirdly, ‘Growth’ is the individual process of developing physically, mentally, or spiritually after exposure to a stressful experience and the continual application of positive information of active responses (Kent et al., 2015; Sturgeon & Zautra, 2013). While historically a model of resilience reflected a one-dimensional construct, more recent models of resilience focus on a broad assessment of the nature and impact of resilience. Scientists call such model as the ‘bio-psycho-social’, which allows multiple dynamics of the resilience process to be considered (Agnafors et al., 2016; K. M. Edwards et al., 2014; Kent et al., 2015).

2.6 The model of individual workforce resilience: A biopsychosocial perspective

A biopsychosocial overview of resilience is part of the branch of positive psychology that explains dimensions of human behaviour following adversities (Kent et al., 2015). Therefore, to recognise when resilience occurs, it is important to uncover the relationship between resilience and its biopsychosocial building blocks [neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping]. In essence, a biopsychosocial perspective of resilience presumes that people will at some point experience adversities which can elicit adverse outcomes. In terms of this study, an adversity is simply conceptualised as an unpleasant experience sustained by a person at some point in life.

To complicate matters, undesirable experiences can come towards us from all kinds of different life domains – from our job, family, community, and sometimes from within ourselves [i.e. personal]. Even though adverse experiences may generate unfavourable outcomes, individuals can usually avoid enduring undesirable outcomes if they can exhibit the attributes of resilience. As has been previously indicated, the model [Figure 1] posits the importance of the convergence of three processes that determine resilience [i.e. biological, psychological, and social dimensions]. It should be noted that while biological, psychological, and social dimensions are relatively autonomous, they should be handled together as a body of empirical literature of resilience (Haracz

& Roberts, 2016; Hornor, 2017; Rees et al., 2015; Shrivastava & Desousa, 2016). These dimensions are especially important, since the process dynamics which instigates and dissipates many of the negative outcomes of adversities [burnout, depression, anxiety, stress, compassion fatigue] is often attributed to the interaction between these three dimensions.

The biological dimension occupies the central position of the biopsychosocial model of resilience (Rees et al., 2015). It undertakes that the tendency of a person to experience adverse outcomes as strong or mild may be because of their genetic make-up and therefore may run in the family of the individual. One of the genetic components which highly influences a person tendency to be vulnerable to negative outcomes is the component of neuroticism (Rees et al., 2015). This essentially implies that people may inherit a tendency to be tense and uptight towards certain life experiences, which is explained by the theory of neuroticism. This also implies that following adversities, individuals [especially the mostly vulnerable individuals] may be unable to control their emotions, or tend to react inadequately to the situation, or take longer time to cope or adjust to the situation. It should be noted that such a tendency may differ from individual to individual.

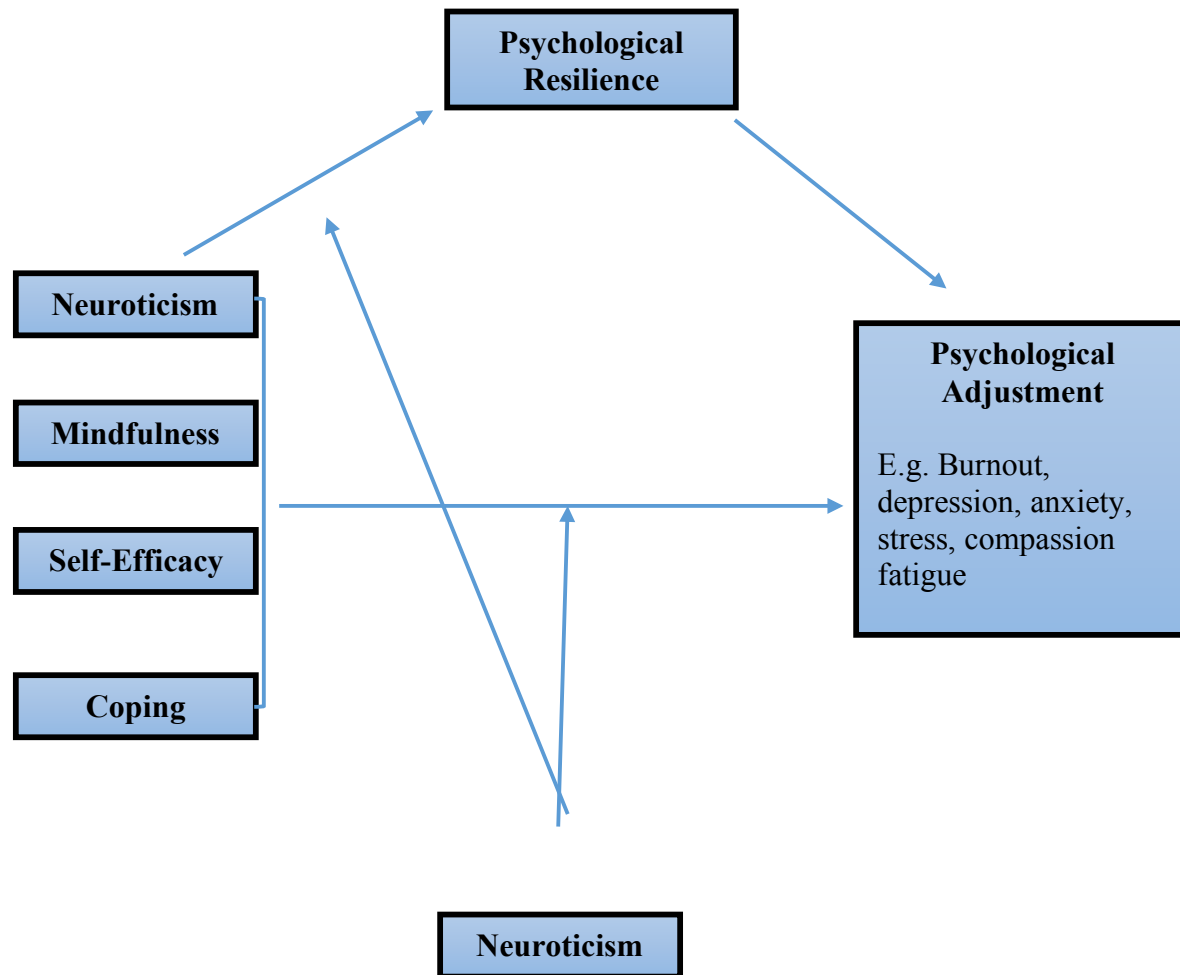
The psychological dimension governs the cognitive patterns of human beings, which contributes to a person's perceived sense of control over their environments. These cognitive patterns refer to a persons' thoughts, beliefs, and perceptions about their experiences, their environment, and themselves. These cognitive patterns also influence how people assess and interpret events in their environments as either threatening or non-threatening. For example, people with a genetic tendency to feel depressed, to constantly panic, and feel anxious about events or challenges, may display negative thinking patterns that can put them at risk of meaningful health problems (Shrivastava & Desousa, 2016). Alternatively, a person's psychological patterns can exacerbate a genetic predisposition, by putting a genetically vulnerable person at risk for other destructive behaviours (Bolier et al., 2013; Lian & Tam, 2014). By engaging in one or a combination of positive psychosocial practices [i.e. mindfulness, self-efficacy and coping], behaviours that tend to cause a person to become more responsive and sensitive toward adverse outcomes can be restrained timeously. Rees et al.,'s (2015) leading factors of resilience therefore suggest that the workings of the body, mind and the environment all affect each other when it comes to human psychological resilience.

As far as the social dimension is concerned, as human beings we tend to acquire and apply knowledge gained from their social environments [including their family, their professional, and their community circles]. It is this enhanced human capacity for building resilience that this dimension addresses. Indeed, a great contribution of resilience theory has been to help us understand the effectiveness of the relationship among social, biological, and psychological dimensions toward resilience (Bandura, 2006; Broekman, 2011; Shrivastava & Desousa, 2016; Sturgeon & Zautra, 2013; Rees et al., 2015; Woods-Giscombe & Black, 2010). Moreover, the social dimension of the model directly triggers, shapes and strengthens a person's biological or psychological vulnerability to suffer a specific adverse outcome. Despite the general interplay between these dimensions, a growing trend in research is to examine a person's social dynamics in terms of risk and protective factors, which are outlined later in the next section. Consequently, it is suggested that a person's social dimension can facilitate health-promoting behaviours such as positive self-efficacy and coping.

The above discussions regarding the application of biopsychosocial dimensions confirm that one-dimensional approaches are not very effectual and instructive toward understanding resilience as a process. Therefore, a multi-dimensional perspective to examining resilience is much edifying to our knowledge about the factors that contribute to resilience. Thus, in terms of the model in figure 1, resilience is likely to ensue when biological vulnerabilities are minimized while the psychosocial factors are maximized.

This provides the foundation of the necessity of information regarding biopsychosocial factors that can impact psychological resilience. Accordingly, the next subsections discuss the factors of neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy and coping as distinct, yet interdependent factors that contribute conceptually to the model of individual workforce resilience.

Figure 1. The Model of Individual Workforce Resilience¹⁰



¹⁰ Refer to reference source: Rees, C. S., Breen, L. J., Cusack, L., & Hegney, D. (2015). Understanding individual resilience in the workplace: the international collaboration of workforce resilience model. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 6, 73. doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2015.00073

2.6.1 Neuroticism and resilience

As one of the cornerstone of the “big five traits of personality” namely: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness; neuroticism is increasingly being recognised as a strong biological base for resilience of human-beings (George, Helson, & John, 2011). Whereas neuroticism represents central factors associated with a person’s biological vulnerability, observed by emotional predispositions; the rest of the resilience-related processes and constructs [mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping] are factors associated with psycho-social influences.

The biological dimension is an indispensable component of the model of resilience, and therefore plays a twofold role in terms of the model (Rees et al., 2015). Firstly, it can be solid enough to influence how the rest of the resilience-related processes operate, because of its biological emotionally grounded characteristics which influence a person’s emotional vulnerability to experiences independent of the threatening context. Secondly, it moderates the extent to which other components in the model contribute to forming psychological resilience, and eventually leading to psychological adjustment. Neuroticism, also referred to trait anxiety, negative affect or trait negative affect refers to the tendency to experience ongoing undesirable emotional conditions such as anxiety, guilt, anger and depression more frequently, intensely, and readily, and for a more enduring period (Rees et al., 2015). It is the basic proposition that individuals may at some point, be exposed to either acute or chronic stressors, that are likely to interfere with their ability to achieve psychological adjustment (Waugh & Koster, 2014).

Besides that, as indicated, neuroticism has been described as an attribute strongly genetically determined. Some of the typical facets of neuroticism include burnout, depression, anxiety, stress, compassion fatigue, sorrow, and pain – all of which are characterised as emotional disorders – and are also otherwise viewed as symptoms or indications of Neuroticism (Rees et al., 2015). Few scholars have almost a decade ago, reviewed the correlation amongst these constructs, and established that when in its extreme point, this biological dimension is highly associated with significantly unpleasant and unfavourable emotions which cause deep opposing psychological effects to the person in that undesirable state of mind (Kohen et al., 2008; Lee, Brown, Mitchell, & Schiraldi, 2008). Moreover, the process whereby resilience takes place is strongly dominated

by this factor as it reflects strong and often negative human emotions which trigger a combination of behavioural responses - often unidentified or unobserved by individuals themselves (Bolier et al., 2013; Cortina et al., 2016; Fahlgren, Nima, Archer, & Garcia, 2015; Haracz & Roberts, 2016; Hegney, Rees, Eley, Osseiran-Moisson, & Francis, 2015).

Studies about neuroticism indicate that higher levels of neuroticism are related to lower levels of psychological resilience (Hsieh, Hung, Wang, Ma, & Chang, 2016; Rees et al., 2015; Schibalski et al., 2017). In other words, people that score high on neuroticism have higher tendency to become more sensitive and unstable when faced with undesirable circumstances. Rees et al., (2015) asserts that a negative correlation exists between neuroticism and psychological adjustment, and that neuroticism mediated the relationship between psychosocial factors of resilience to psychological adjustment. Although the work of Rees et al., (2015) attempts to expand on the negative correlation between the mediation properties of neuroticism and negative affect towards resilience, other current literature on negative affect, abounds with patterns of the negative associations of this component with neuroticism that may lead to resilience (Fahlgren et al., 2015).

Sturgeon and Zautra (2013) explains that people with a higher level of neuroticism are more prone to experiencing anxieties and displaying emotional sensitivities whether issues are considered extreme or even minor. Such negative predispositions are linked to stress hormones in human-beings which may increase as people experience higher levels of neuroticism, and lead to negative actions and behaviour including auto-medicating, using of drugs or alcohol as an attempt to relieve the undesirable symptoms (Rothbaum et al., 2014). As a result, when the level of neuroticism is high it is likely that the level of resilience will reduce. Neuroticism also said to be one of the more obvious predators of increased physical health conditions in adults and decreased occupational or marital satisfaction.

In other recent workplace-based studies, neuroticism was found to be a much stronger predictor for stress compared to the dimension of extroversion for example, which tended to influence the mount of involvements that an employee had on the job (Hsieh, Hung, et al., 2016; Rees et al., 2015). At the opposite end of the spectrum, lower level of neuroticism patterns may reflect a calmer and more composed individual, and consequently reflect a more emotionally stable person. That

said, one should not assume that low levels of neuroticism as suggesting that positive emotions are present. This is due to the nature of neuroticism as the focal point which hosts negative emotions, and the fact that positive emotions are associated with the trait of extraversion (George, Helson, & John, 2011). That said, one should note that since neuroticism may increase people's oversensitivity toward undesirable outcomes, a certain moderate level of neuroticism can in some cases, drive individuals to an increased level of productivity in areas of life.

Therefore, despite disadvantageous connotations attributed to this resilience factor, neuroticism is not all negative (Brandstatter, Job, & Schulze, 2016; Lian & Tam, 2014). The **view** that support neuroticism as being a stimulus which assists individuals prepare for undesirable conditions is limited. However, the idea conveyed by this view, is that neuroticism may also serve the purpose of warning indicators alerting people of the presence of stressors by prompting them to formulate, change or adjust strategies to help them survive similar challenges.

In practice, researchers agree that considering the application of neuroticism exclusively as to promote resilience is rather unproductive (Hsieh, Hung, et al., 2016; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015; Sturgeon & Zautra, 2013). A way to increase the development of endurance is to strike a balance between neuroticism and another positive resilience-related process, to more positively cope with the effects of adverse experiences. By displaying high levels of both neuroticism and other processes such as mindfulness, self-efficacy and coping for instance may prove that people can indeed be healthy neurotics. The scope of the component of neuroticism, however, broad, provides evidence that resilience interventions benefit people affected by profound adversities.

2.6.2 Mindfulness and resilience

The concept of mindfulness has its origins in Zen Buddhist tradition. The basis of the concept underpins awareness, focus, attention and concentration, and are nonetheless connected with religious or spiritual matters (Kent et al., 2015). Mindfulness refers to a tendency to experience and express mindful or cognizance qualities such as non-judgment qualities, and behavioural qualities such as acting with awareness rather than without attention (Rees et al., 2015).

The degree of psychological awareness and ability to be mindful varies from individual to individual. Low mindful individuals tend to feel rather helpless and unable to detach themselves from self-destructive behaviours. To complicate matters, individuals whose mindfulness levels are below average, tend to be more unaware that they are emotionally engaged in time-consuming and unproductive activities (Woods-Miscamble & Black, 2010). Therefore, these individuals are more likely to let themselves get overwhelmed by the smallest of concerns and get immersed in everything which may be occurring around them. For instance, people may show a more reactive response to events in their lives, but instead of displaying a more proactive attitude they are more likely to display negative thoughts and emotions while reacting to the event.

Reacting to stressful situations without an open attitude to the possibilities of positive outcomes, may lead to wrong judgements, and introduce actions which could only exacerbate the situation. Haracz and Roberts (2016) argues that people that are poor in mindfulness tend to hesitate regularly and lose strength and momentum when the need to manage with difficulties arise. A study by Viladarga et al., (2013) which investigated the relationship between level of mindfulness, workplace variables such as workload and co-worker support, and burnout, among a sample of 699 addiction counsellors in the United States, has found that mindfulness was the strongest predictor of burnout in the sample, compared to the variance of the workplace variables.

In the context of the background of mindfulness, to promote individual resilience, researchers place emphasis that by acting with higher awareness a person may be able to influence their experiences whereby the individual can mentally take a step back to reflect on what is happening around them (Garcia-Dia et al., 2013; Rees et al., 2015; Thompson et al., 2011). By taking a mental step back, the individual would be able to make reasonable calculation on the solutions which could be raised to mitigate the situation at hand. A favourable mindful state therefore, produces more desirable results which may enhance people overall outlook on daily experiences. Further, as a result of a healthier state of mind, an emotionally stable person is more capable to demonstrating behaviours which reflect a calmer and controlled attitude, all of which can also impact performance within the workplace domain. Thompson et al., (2011) research on mindfulness and individual resilience to trauma suggest that there is higher probability that people

who have greater awareness of the on-going experiences in their lives to better deal with trauma. Such mindful attitude promotes psychological resilience.

Conversely, by focusing wholeheartedly on negative experiences, a person's level of confidence about positive experiences is challenged, and the adverse process itself may require as much effort and time as when a person would be experiencing positive events instead (Atkinson et al., 2017; Bandura, 2006; Fahlgren et al., 2015; Rees et al., 2015; Woods-Giscombe & Black, 2010). Various scholars of in this area of resilience suggest that person's state of emotional exhaustion associated with significant adversities may dissipate a person physical, psychological, and mental energy and the individuals continually demonstrate signs of unhappiness (Atkinson et al., 2017; Fahlgren et al., 2015; Rees et al., 2015; Woods-Giscombe & Black, 2010).

Research indicating resilience as fundamental ingredient to achieving work and career success and fulfilling the basic needs to a satisfied life, emphasises that the onus is ultimately on individuals to influence the outcomes of the experiences they have at work to be on their favour of achieving objectives (Garcia-Dia et al., 2013; Rees et al., 2015). Resilience or lack thereof will also influence determine the success a person has in each stages or area of their lives. Whether a person has suffered a major crisis or has never experienced one significant event, resilience determines who succeeds either from work demands, to improve a mental or your physical health or improve the quality of your relationships with others.

2.6.3 Self-efficacy and resilience

Self-efficacy is the personal belief that one can perform a selected task or produce a desired result. As per the seminal work of Bandura (2006), self-efficacy underpins whether a person will be prompted to engaging to an approach to complete tasks and the efforts used in engaging in the approach. In terms of workplace environment, self-efficacy is considered one of the major components of workplace resilience. It is reported that employees who reported having higher levels of perceived self-efficacy have been found to have lower levels of anxiety, better coping skills as well as lower intentions of leaving their workplace.

Therefore, psychological resilience and self-efficacy are greatly correlated factors (Li and Nishikawa, 2012). It is also widely acclaimed that resilience training be developed and systematically approached as a pertinent approach to enhancing self-efficacy (Leppin et al., 2014; McDonald et al., 2016; Pieters, 2016; Rees et al., 2015). The subject self-efficacy is impacted by a few factors in the life of an individual including a person's past experiences, their core beliefs, their spiritual beliefs and so forth. All these determine how individuals attempt to manage adversities which may come in their way. Managing difficulties effectively reflects the importance of self-efficacy which is directly connected with the theory of coping in the next subsection.

2.6.4 Coping and resilience

Coping has been described as the process of adjustment subsequent an adverse event in a person life. It is the ability to effectively handle and manage a challenging situation so that one can thrive or even survive. Lian and Tam (2014) categorized coping strategies as either problem-focused which involves addressing the practicalities of a situation, or emotion-focused, aimed at reducing the psychological and emotional impact of a stressor. These coping mechanisms can assist reduce mental obstacles that affect women's health, and rather promote women's ability to achieve positive results within their different life domains (Smith et al., 2016).

Organizations can support women by creating programs to ease the burdens women may be facing. These programs include, day care for women who have young children, offer wellness care services or make available therapy rooms at the workplace or other convenient sites to help destress and reenergize the female workers. Other small initiatives may include entertainment vouchers; regular staff get together events may help women socialize with co-workers and the management on a different workplace setting. The use of active coping has been found to be positively associated with psychological resilience and a mediator of the relationship between self-efficacy and individual resilience (Li and Nishikawa, 2012).

Consequently, self-efficacy and coping go hand in hand when it comes to resilience. If a person does not believe that she/he is capable of conquering something [Low-self-efficacy], chances are that the individual will engage in passive coping like avoidance and substance use. Alternatively, individuals that believe they can do somethings about a current undesired situation [High-self-

efficacy], they will promptly engage in active coping activities or strategies such as seeking social support, problem-solving, and the use of cognitive-reappraisal being the coping approach most effective in the face of a stressor (Rees et al., 2015).

As the brief explanation, above, it is evident that each of the four builds of resilience influence one another. For example, individuals that have high level of self-efficacy may have better coping skills while high levels of mindfulness may level the effect of neuroticism on individual levels of mental disorders such as anxiety. Each of the four traits may promote psychological resilience separately if a balance is established. While the increase of levels of mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping should most certainly influence a rise in the level of the other psychosocial factors – the levels of neuroticism [Biological factor] should decrease so that resilience can be established and reflected through a person's behaviour. The interpretation of and reaction to these four bio-psycho-social factors is especially important to resilience, for how people attain psychological adjustment to life experiences.

2.6.5 Psychological adjustment and resilience

Psychological adjustment refers to the adjustment process of harmonizing and balancing ones needs against the obstacles presented by the environments one is part of. As far as the model is concerned, psychological adjustment reflects the results attained from balancing the key variables of the model in contrast to triggering symptoms derived adversities in the environment, such as stress, depression, anxiety, burnout, and compassion fatigue – as the model suggest.

The application of the resilience model is simplified in terms of illustrating how these components affect the other variables. An exemplar given by Rees et al., (2015) whereby it is predicted and assumed the possibilities that there is a significant negative relationship between neuroticism and psychological adjustment; a significant positive relationship between mindfulness and psychological adjustment, self-efficacy and psychological adjustment and coping and psychological adjustment. Assuming that these relationships are effective, it can then be presumed that psychological resilience will act as a mediator to these direct relationships. The element of neuroticism has an additional determinant function in the model in that it acts as a moderator variable that comes to influence the formation basis of resilience which impact on psychological

adjustment based on predominant resilience psychological constructs [mindfulness, self-efficacy, coping].

The above discussed multiple factors reflect fundamental building blocks of resilience. In addition, although a person strength in each factor will vary per individual, these elements are most effective when individuals can consistently maintain them as per suggested model over a period. That way positive levels of resilience permeates a person innermost beliefs and reflects more naturally their behaviour on experiences of an adverse nature. The connections between resilience and the human adaptation to life adverse experiences occurs through and are explained by risk and protective factors (Bandura, 2006; Mallak & Yildiz, 2016).

2.7 The impacts of risk and protective factors to resilience

Resilience may give people the opportunity to express emotions and attitude. Risk factors and Protective factors are relevant subjects that can assist explain the adult individual resilience abilities current level of psychological adjustment from a comprehensive outlook of their life.

By risk factors, academics refer as the existing characteristics that increase the prospects of poor mental health occurring (Borucka & Ostaszewski, 2008; Mallak & Yildiz, 2016). Such risks vary and include factors associated with biological, psychological characteristics of the individual, and may also relate to the circumstances of the individual's family, the broader community, social conditions and the educational contexts. Some of common examples of risks associated with the individual include experiencing earlier significant negative life events relating to loss, trauma and abuse in childhood, youth or recently in adult life; lack of affection by parents/relatives; experiences of discrimination and bullying; limitations to accessing support and socio-economic disadvantages.

It can be agreed, at least in principle that challenges are unavoidable dynamics of life, and so having one or few risks factors does not necessarily qualify a person as a candidate for physical and mental health distress (Rothbaum et al., 2014). It is however the extent of such risks that are likely to cause barriers for positive development. In such cases the person may attempt to reduce

the damages caused by risk factors by deploying and mitigating the effects of risk factors or reinforcing the protective factors.

Protective factors are also resources which build on human strengths, and which instead of increasing the prospects of poor mental health, create obstacles to reduce the likelihood of individuals suffering from poor mental health regardless of whether a risk factor is present (Buchanan et al., 2002). They are optimistic factors and are equally connected with biological, psychological characteristics of the individual, and can be related to the various circumstances within the individual's family, the broader community, social conditions and the educational contexts of the person.

Overall, the effects of protective factors may provide people with the needed physical and mental strength to endure in the face of adversities. Protective factors in this regards may include a person's high level of optimism, positivism and seeking for support, positive parents or positive career affiliates and relationships, support structures that promote positive behaviour, economic security and access to support services (O'Shea & Dickens, 2016). Further the presence of protective factors not only maximise the optimal development of resilience skills, but are vital to the understanding of the associations between resilience and adversity in the life of humans. In the next section the discussion targets the role of adversity in the context of resilience

2.8 Resilience perspectives of adversity

It has been established that adversity and resilience are concepts that are closely interconnected. It is therefore appropriate to unpack the nature of the concept of adversity. The term adversity and other terms such as adverse conditions; unfavourable situations/circumstances; demanding experiences are often used interchangeably in scholarly works around the subject of resilience within and outside of a workplace domain (Bernabe & Botia, 2016; Cortina et al., 2016; Jackson et al., 2007; Kent et al., 2015; McDonald et al., 2016)

Stress within the context of workplace domain, refers to the state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from or significantly arduous occurrences (Bernabe & Botia, 2016; Cortina et al., 2016; Jackson et al., 2007; Kent et al., 2015; Lian & Tam, 2014; McDonald et al., 2016). The

business environment may bring about diverse forms of pressure. Depending on the type of job and responsibilities a person carries out and the person's disposition to stress, stressors may be experienced as much or little relative to these factors not to mention the influences that associative factors of previous experiences may have on the behaviour of the individual. At the same time, a person private life may be great source of stress especially when ensuring quality of health and responsibilities for financial affairs and other specific personal demands rely on efforts of the person experiencing career issues.

Stress permeates any type of profession, and can challenge any individual person regardless of whether the individual is a superordinate or subordinate within the workplace setting (Aazami et al., 2015; Rees et al., 2015). Escaping from the dynamics of stress in the business environment has proven to be a daunting task for any the working class. In the health/medical service delivery for example, the potential for stress is frequent. One of the most stress inciting type of occupations popular to women is that of Palliative Care [PC] clinicians since these individual's daily jobs is to take care of people who may often come with serious illnesses and can put their own health at risk during duties.

Back, Steinhäuser, Kamal, and Jackson (2016b) posit that, in as far as PC clinicians are concerned, having resilience skills is as important as communication skills and symptom management as foundations of expertise due to the direct human-to-human contact and connection exchanged with patients from different causes of physical or emotional illness. Not only PC require skills to keep themselves mentally strong, they often need to convey an optimistic attitude towards people whom they look after, provide support and encouragement to surpass personal health barriers. It can however not always be easy to predict whether a person will find their way around difficulties and emerge as resilient if things turn badly. According to Broekman (2011), there may be times when a person may display more resilient qualities more readily and effortlessly than other times when stressful experiences distress and negative emotions manifest. All things considered, even through periods of extreme distress, negative emotions and poor functioning, human-beings may be able to thrive due to the natural ability to reason which can assist people to emerge resilient in such adverse occasions.

Researchers across different academic disciplines, have explored the underlying impacts of adversity from a more positive stance (Cortina et al., 2016; Fahlgren et al., 2015; McDonald et al., 2016; Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Panter-Brick, & Yehuda, 2014). They support the notion that whilst significant adversities may be unfavourable to a person's overall wellbeing, those who displayed resilient behaviour in the face of significant adverse experiences tended to make more conscious proactive choices to face adversities with positive attitudes, and therefore were described as resilience individuals (Fahlgren et al., 2015; Southwick, Bonanno, Masten, Panter-Brick, & Yehuda, 2014). Such positive attitude of people to choosing to acknowledge their difficult situations, and deciding to experience the process with a more proactive outlook may result in people living more positive lives through experiences which otherwise could overwhelm and discourage them to thrive. The gravity of adversity cannot be single-defined and given single solution because of the diversities involved that are unique to the individual. When issues occur all necessary bits of the problem including its' causes, must be looked at subjectively. Overall the person in the situation has a great deal of responsibility to manage the situation.

On the other hand, the person may have choices available and choose to acknowledge difficult barriers constructively but instead take a passive approach on adversities, and may allow themselves or to become neutral about what is going on or to submerge into the problems to the point of no return. In such cases, it is advisable to refer the person to appropriate qualified body of professional who may have right tools to mitigate the issue accordingly.

Regardless of the social, financial, and academic status that individuals may hold, at some point of a persons' professional or private life a situation that could challenge that person and require emotional engagement from them may arise. Emotions are feelings that can be strong and can derive from a person circumstances, mood, or relationships with other people. A person's ability to take charge of their emotional responses to life's stressful events constructively is of utmost importance in any type of business occupation.

The work of Bandura (2006) on human behaviour, indicate that people absorb knowledge from daily habits irrespective of being perceived a productive or unproductive. Habits are regular practices or tendencies that may often be difficult to give up because such conducts can easily

transform into strong patterns and become long-term memories that translate into everyday automatic and spontaneous behaviours that distinguish individuals. Habits form overtime and because an individual engages emotionally while creating patterns of association habits become hard to break.

It is appropriate at this point to consider the adage “you cannot teach an old dog new tricks” (Budilovsky, 2017). Using a psychological perspective in work with human-beings acknowledges the idea that learning something new might be harder to people as they reach a certain point in their lives, but does not support the idea that people cannot fit new information into their brains as they grow older (Bandura, 2006; Deluca et al. (2010). This tenet also asserts that changing habits can be difficult to change because of strong long-term associations formed with whatever recurring experiences people go through (Bandura, 2006; Budilovsky, 2017). Moreover, growing views maintain that it is indeed achievable to teach young or old people new tricks [habits], and that habits can be broken-down however difficult they may appear to be. All of this is possible provided that the people in question are able to make an affective connection whereby they perceive the new behaviour/change as a credible and practical resource for them. Thus, it can be determined that the same application for developing skills in the context of resilience is highly possible even in people whose circumstances may indicate otherwise (Pieters, 2016). Consequently, it is critical that elements to foster resilience skills are used to inform knowledge and to cultivate in people a habit to adapt to healthier practices and being flexible.

Studies investigating psychological disturbance (Highland et al., 2015; Kent et al., 2015; Rothbaum et al., 2014), found that a person experiencing increasing stressful events had higher chances to being affected psychologically. Although the magnitude of adverse consequences cannot be entirely projected in the literature, based on the implication of work pressures recognized as predators to mental health, it may be implied that in most cases of substantial demanding stressful experiences, and the failure to allocate resources towards the early signs may lead to post-traumatic stress disorders [PTSD] (Rothbaum et al., 2014).

However, there is lack of clarity implying that such stage may only occur in the presence of radical events. There are facts proving that even the smallest of incidents which may go unnoticed, if

unmanaged and if recurrent, may subsequently amount to highly stressful experiences to that person (Bernabe & Botia, 2016; Cohrs et al., 2013; Everly et al., 2011; Haracz & Roberts, 2016). Based on these reflections it can be agreed that pressures can swiftly cause a breakdown to the human functioning which and ultimately puts individuals in danger of fulfilling personal career goals.

In the subject of extreme stress, Garmezy & Masten (1984) emphasises that such pressures from challenging home conditions and socio-economic factors results in chronic or acute stressors. According to this classic perspective, the intensity and duration of the stressor that a person may experience will determine what matters most when it comes to resilience (Garmezy & Masten, 1984). Part of that may be because chronic stressors are shaped by experiences that are cumulative and endure for a longer time or are constantly repetitive that may as well interfere with the ability of a person to cope and adapt. Other issues on the other hand despite being perceived as significant challenges by people, may be merely acute stressors and nonetheless be experienced more intensely but for a shorter time duration. Consequently, although chronic stressors may be lower in intensity, they tend to have greater implications to a person's mental health compared to acute stressors.

Sturgeon and Zautra (2013) noted that studies on human resilience are substantially motivated by the extent to which individuals perceive and experience pain, whether pain is acute or chronic. Pain is mostly perceived as something physical when it is talked about, however, it is nothing but recognized ailment with different strengths and which can cause potential harm to the body and mind and be regarded as psychological or emotional pain in such cases making traditional treatments to be efficient.

In considering the views by Arbisi (2016) and Roh et al., (2015), it can be absorbed that protecting individuals against unhealthy stressors or risk factors can at times be intimidating (Arbisi, 2016; Roh et al., 2015), but nonetheless it is a undertaking that may certainly be attained provided proper interventions are taken into account (Matula, 2013; Montpetit & Tiberio, 2016). In the process of preparing people to be in control of difficulties, some suggest the pre-exposure of stress or guidance under stress conditions to be an indispensable ingredient in the journey to resilience. As

far as the need to develop or maintain emotional challenges over a longer period and better quality of life resilience allows a person uncovering capacities some inherent or taught and absorbed to confront more positively to adversities and possibly grow into a more resilient lifestyle.

2.8.1 Adversity and stress links

From a physical perspective, a person may have symptoms of headaches, upsetting stomach, breath shortness, hypertension and heart palpitations. From a psychological perspective, a person may have symptoms of anxiety, acute periods of depression, fear, boredom and the like. The mind and body are entities that work most effectively when each is functioning normally - undesirable physical symptoms may produce psychological disturbances and vice-versa.

Unhealthy stress may decrease mental activities and invoke specific signs also noted in the above resilience models – Burnout, Depression, and Anxiety (Rees et al., 2015). Burnout for example is a typical symptom describing physical or mental collapse caused by overwork or stress. Depression is a mental condition characterized by feelings of severe despondency and dejection, typically also with feelings of inadequacy and guilt, often accompanied by lack of energy and disturbance of appetite and sleep. An employee may go through depression when they experience inequalities at work or barriers to career fulfilments and accumulate undermining demeaning thoughts about themselves that may require treating.

Additionally, the term anxiety denotes a feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome or also known as a nervous disorder marked by excessive uneasiness and apprehension, typically with compulsive behaviour or panic attacks. Stress as was reviewed is something that causes a state of strain or tension in people. A strain is a state of tension or exhaustion resulting from severe demands on one's inner strength or resources (Broekman, 2011). A stressor related with the workplace and the work activities performed by the individual may be attributed to role overload, role conflict and role ambiguity.

2.8.2 Harmful stress and implications to staff and workplaces

Stress in the workplace has serious implications on the quality of an employee's overall work performance and their personal general psychological functioning. Research investigating the

relationship between psychological resilience and workforce outcomes has consistently shown psychological resilience to be strongly related to levels of psychological distress Rees et al. (2015)

Stress reduces the levels of robustness in persons experiencing significant workplace stress who may have trouble managing emotions, thinking straight and concentrating on the most minimal of work tasks. Such hindrances affect performance, morale, and creates tension between relationships at the workplace. Workplaces that fail to put measures to manage stress can also suffer from such difficulties because high levels of stress can increase feelings of tiredness and disengagements which translates into more sick leave, more employee turnover and less productivity.

Although work can contribute to immense gratifications in peoples' life, the workplace can at times be overwhelming with pressures. It is norm of society and organizations to develop and implement rules and policies to regulate social behaviours. Consequently, within the internal workplace environment, personal issues may be displayed within the confounds of the company's policies. Such confounds may include the displaying of only behaviours that may be defined as suitable to promoting organizational objectives – such rules may often not be accommodating of personal non-work related behaviours or emotions (Deluca et al., 2010; Oyeleye, Hanson, O'Connor, & Dunn, 2013). While emotions are the foundation of the optimal human functioning, conforming to the rules that may inhibit the natural process of being human is simply an impossibility. The basic premise of this is that employees cannot simply put aside their emotions and personalities before going to work from home and vice-versa. This can certainly be a recipe for extensive unproductivity in the long run for both individuals and workplaces. The obvious alternative to ensuring that adversities are kept at bay, is to encourage resilience which to assist staffs and their workplace settings thrive.

2.9 The importance of individual resilient at the workplace

On the very elemental level, a general view can be asserted that organizations are constituted by a network of different individuals where everyone is bestowed with specific targets to reach common objectives. On this grounds, it is reasonable to suggest that organizations that are recognised as resilient enjoy and may capitalise same qualities of human beings.

On the other hand, workplaces that invest resources to promote resilience may experience lower levels of turnover higher levels of increased productivity, and lower cost on health care demands. Employees that are physically and psychologically prepared present more optimistic characteristics that allow them to become more engaged in their work responsibilities, improve productivity, have better relationships and most importantly can respond to workplace or life stressors more actively.

Workplaces have a dynamic relationship with their environment. So, while stressors in the environment viz. technology, economic instability, globalization and changing workforce demands may create a window of opportunity to the stakeholders of the business they can present threats to employees as well. That's why, having mechanisms of adaptability from challenges in the environment from the lens of individual capabilities is imperative for a stable workplace.

In terms of the workplace environment, working pressures due to workloads, long hours, stressors for reasons of unavailability of resources, and competitiveness are just some of the influencers in workplace settings. Workers are expected to cope with longer hours, increased workloads, and pressure to do adapt to do more with less.

With regards to how successful and organization may function and conduct operations, Southwick et al. (2014) maintains that a single-issue based approach to improve hardiness skills will be misguided. It is no question that humans are key resource basis for their organisations. Further, the fact that organizations are impacted by and may impact the dynamics in the environments emphasise its requirements to accommodate sustainable methods of managing adversities at the workplace. Keeping in mind that the environment may impose all sorts of threats and opportunities incubated in such trends of globalization, economic instability, and changing workforce demands, among others often inherent in the very nature of any corporate business.

Any organisation should be committed to get a return in investment, or otherwise workplaces could head to forfeitures (Back et al., 2016a; Rogerson et al., 2016). Thus, it is common sense that efforts which attempt to influence overall goals and objectives within workplace settings, are to be adduced together with resilience strategies. Conducive workplace arrangements must be in place

to support the responsibilities that employees should do day-to-day. Capacitating employees both in their areas of expertise is vital for overall goal achievement. Managers and supervisors or the Human Resources have critical roles in ensuring that employees are well fit for their jobs. Employees on the other hands, have duty to give their best and mitigate issues that come their ways. Altogether, resilience is a joint effort.

Over and above that, the possibilities of disturbances that may put people off balance and disrupt the achieving of goals should be given a thought by individuals themselves and institutions. Organisations of any size may face problems that impact the well-being of employees. It is often when supporting structures are not in place that initial stressors may become more challengeable, and when the allocated structure responsible to direct human resources and made decision demonstrate a lack of the preparedness in the area or are ineffective applying the right knowledge to tacked distresses. This is a one of key reason that individuals need resilience competence resilience.

2.9.1 Resilience interventions: An individual and organisational perspective

Whether there are support systems available or not, the important step for consideration is for people to become aware that there is something that can done in the eventuality of stressful challenges. Even individuals that already demonstrate such ability may also get extra benefits when broadening and reinforcing knowledge of what they may already know (Atkins, Colville, & John, 2012; Deluca et al., 2010; Fida et al., 2016; Hsieh, Chen, Wang, Chang, & Ma, 2016; Lian & Tam, 2014; McDonald et al., 2016; Rothbaum et al., 2014; White et al., 2015; Yoshikawa, Nishi, & Matsuoka, 2015).

From the level of the individual, a subjective approach may be fitting to establish individual levels of resilience while an all-inclusive consideration with regards to the past and present experiences, and the existing work demands must be given attention to. Deluca et al. (2010) also indicates that Work-based education [WBE] is one of the most frequently recommended interventions for organisations of all sizes and can serve as a protective mechanism to encourage resilience throughout different organizational levels.

2.10 Conclusion

In conclusion, the above discussions on resilience point out almost exclusively that resilience promotes a person's ability to positively deal with a great degree of adverse outcomes of life. It has been established that adversities can originate from people's jobs, families, communities, and sometimes from within themselves. Workplace and personal stresses may also substantially impact a person's psychological and physical health and result in poor self-advancement, unproductive experiences, and in some cases, may lead to post traumatic stress disorders [PTSD]. This chapter demonstrated that the biological, psychological, and social dimensions of resilience are fundamental to the process which causes humans to display a capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events or situations.

Based on the model of resilience provided, it can be asserted that positive emotions and negative emotions can co-occur side-by-side [i.e. resilience and adverse outcomes]. The connection between resilience and adversity constructs is vivid in the interaction between the elements of neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping. Although comparing the number of studies with results of the application of Rees et al., (2015) model of resilience has several limitations, it is worth noting that studies that investigated the elements of resilience separately have been consistent in describing the significance to promoting positive outcomes through these elements.

If women are to benefit from this resilience model, they should put efforts toward understanding the resilience factors and the underlying notion of adversity. Although this study focuses on working women, the literature discussed encourages workforces in general to employ resilience skills to deal with aversive experiences of daily life. In addition, it became obvious that workplaces are also responsible to assist their women staff to display resilience abilities, thus adaptive management systems which enable the development of resilience-promoting programs can strengthen women's ability to cope with future workplace adversities and improve organisational productivity.

This literature review chapter also distinguishes factors which may encourage individuals to emerge more resilient during undesirable occurrences. Evidence of literature has also suggested that by demonstrating resilience attributes in one domain or at one point in life is not necessarily

an indicative that the individual will bounce back progressively in subsequent stressful events. This chapter has explained that the probability for women to be affected by the effects of adversities such as stress, depression, and anxiety is high. It further noted that resilience capacity is not solely determined by how effectively women have handled a past adverse event, but rather whether resilience has become part of women cognitive behaviour.

In general, the theoretical review presented in this chapter underlined the importance of resilience to working women. It is evident that working women are challenged by an array of pressures which can reduce when women exhibit resilience. When positive supports or protective factors are reinforced [through HR/managerial initiatives, family and friends supports], risk factors are minimised and women's ability to cope with adversities is enhanced. If women can display resilience at work, it will only benefit their organisation [i.e. improved productivity, lower absenteeism due to health issues and improved employee engagement]. Some of the direct benefits of resilience for women are that it can positively influence women's experiences at work and at home, and promote mental health and job satisfaction.

The next literature review chapter is about gaining clarity of what it means to be resilient women in the context of distinctive feminism theories.

CHAPTER THREE

A FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE ON RESILIENCE OF WOMEN

3.1 Introduction

The wide-ranging issues demanding individual resilience of women in the employment environment embody concerns raised by feminists. Throughout history women have faced adversities which challenged employment advancement and well-being in the employment environments. The purpose of this chapter is to explain theoretically the feminism concerns that affect resilience of women in the workplace. Understanding the different life trajectories of women through the lens of feminism theories, are essential to promote resilience of women within Durban organisational settings. Feminism theories are relevant due to the potential to encourage women to recover from profound undesirable experiences, whilst improving women's experiences at various areas of life. Feminists views conflate several different political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental issues that pose serious setback for women's advancement. Thus, this chapter reviews adversities that may affect women's self-development and their ability to function optimally. This chapter distinguishes global perspectives of feminism from African perspectives of feminism to inform our understanding of the implications of resilience to women. This chapter also draws on reviews of empirical research to highlight the impacts of resilience toward managing issues such as negative emotional predispositions of women, work-life balance, and career inhibitors that affect women negatively.

3.2 A global feminist perspective on women's concerns

The last recent years there has seen an upsurge of resilient working women who challenge adverse conditions within the professional domain positively. Women are exceedingly appreciating that it is ultimately in their hands to take proactive steps towards overcoming life adversities to thrive and maintain normal human functioning. Although gender inequality is commonly the focus of discontentment of feminism theories, feminism ideology aims to address the intersectionality of gender, race, ethnicity, religion and class in shaping health and well-being of women in the world of work (Favero & Heath, 2012; Miguda, 2010; Turner & Maschi, 2014), feminism involves

individual and collective efforts in the acting, speaking, writing, and advocating on behalf of women's issues and rights and identifying the subjects which may disadvantage the female gender in society (Miguda, 2010).

The concept of resilience has long been on the very brink of both men and women. In recent years, researchers have come to put great emphasis on research subjects on women which widely recognise barriers that affect women and their contributions to society (Browder, 2015; Favero & Heath, 2012; Hicks, 2014; Miguda, 2010). Prior to that women have systematically been oppressed particularly by societies who viewed them as inferior physiologically and intellectually. Such attitudes consequently reinforced the exercise of power by men associated with a particular society, political interests, cultural force, and economic power over less influential individuals such as women. This is also known as Patriarchy (Abbas & Mama, 2014; R. Edwards & Holland, 2013; Hicks, 2014; King, 2017).

Although most countries track representation of women's undesirable experiences, French, United States of America and the UK countries are some of the first countries that have witnessed the rapid intensification of feminism movements (Turner & Maschi, 2014). The 19th century for example, marked the suffragette of the right for women to vote which through organised protest led to the approval of women right to vote, initially for women over the age of 30 who later were given full rights of voting (Hicks, 2014). Feminists supporters made great efforts to changing disadvantageous conditions which did not favour women in the past. Perceptions of women as minority influenced some of the historical problems that affected female gender the most. Not only did women prevailed, women have had to surpass great difficulties in times of substantial oppression.

Moreover, the term 'minority' does not necessarily refer to a group's numerical strength in the population but to groups that are marginalized or disadvantaged. This implies that feminists and post-feminist earlier in history contributed to the emancipation of women across nations that allowed them to enjoy sovereignties of human civilisation and social industrialization. Despite several men emphasising the issues raised and participating in the campaigns meant to represent women interests for the most part, several distinct women have influenced and changed realities to promote exclusive causes.

The capacity to influence one behaviour is brought into focus as socially rooted explanations of women's adversities in society. In the Scandinavian research in line with the subject of male domination, it is asserted that male and female differences are founded on two principles. That is the principle of dichotomy, which stipulates that male and female concerns are to be kept separate, and the principle of hierarchy, in which male values are the norm. These two principles generate the male norm of superiority and the corresponding female norm of subordination (Hicks, 2014).

Feminists usually associate organizational hierarchies with the patriarchal system and organizational structures that favour males since the traditional work settings were created from the perspectives of male gender and because modern occupations/jobs and those associated with women such as nurse, social worker, help-desk, may still be gender biased considering the gap of female leaders on the top of hierarchies (King, 2017). From that vantage point, it could be argued that women find themselves in organizational systems where it is normative and beneficial to be male workforce, although it is often the case that the mainstream of personnel in these occupations/jobs are women, and which is morally and legally incorrect, at least in the eyes of feminists (Hicks, 2014; Miguda, 2010; Turner & Maschi, 2014).

As far as the prominence of feminism movements and the basic principles underpinned, it was only in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth - centuries that feminism movements become more popular. Although several other forms of feminism theories exist, most documented forms of feminisms recognised broadly are Liberal, Radical, Cultural, Socialist and Womanism¹¹ (Browder, 2015; Collins, 2000; Favero & Heath, 2012; Hicks, 2014; Miguda, 2010; Tadiar & Davis, 2005; Tong, 2009; Turner & Maschi, 2014). A review of these movements in the next sections explicates the prominent concerns of women in the context of these specific feminism.

¹¹ These feminism movements are the most prominent types of feminism which are comparatives with African feminism. However, more types of feminism movements exist to represent specific regions, countries and contexts. For example the Chinese Feminism (Miguda, 2010). In addition, please note that this is not an exhaustive summary of the background of the feminism movements discussed in this study, but serve to indicate the scope of women concerns which feministic perspectives attempt to address.

3.2.1 Liberal feminism and women's concern¹²

In a political context, the term liberal indicates the favouring of individual rights and freedoms (King, 2017). As the Women's Liberation movement of the late 1960s, Liberal feminism sustains that the road to achieve equality for women is through legal avenues and social transformation (Sperlich & Geyer, 2015). It promotes the need for men and women to enjoy equal rights in society. This view can be challenged by social factors and political systems that contest the application of liberal principles to non-liberal societies. Thus, Liberal feminism advocates women to aspire to equality, but nonetheless feel coerced to following liberal goals such as the right to own a property, the right to be educated, to work etc. Importantly is that systems within society or organisations should allow women to reach the desire end of establishing equality, and that liability is taken following choices undertaken.

3.2.2 The Radical feminism and women's concern¹³

The ideology of Radical feminism as opposed to Liberal feminism, believes that major issues against female gender such as prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination is deep-rooted in patriarchal systems (Abbas & Mama, 2014). Radical feminists associate traditional family systems with sexism, and believe that solving women obstacles may require a broad eradication of gender as a concept since the underpinning of gender demerits women prospects in areas of professional development. They claim that due to sexism women may be deprived from beneficial progression in domains of life within the professional life for example, due to experiences such as pregnancy which results in women needing to miss work for motherhood and child care time.

¹² For more information on Liberal feminism, please also see:

- ◆ The variety of feminisms and their contribution to gender equality: <http://diglib.bis.uni-oldenburg.de/pub/unireden/ur97/kap1.pdf>
- ◆ Hillary Clinton is the embodiment of liberalism, not feminism: <http://www.feministcurrent.com/2016/08/02/hillary-clinton-embodiment-liberalism-not-feminism/>
- ◆ The 1950's and the 1960's and the American woman: the transition from the "housewife" to the feminist <https://dumas.ccsd.cnrs.fr/dumas-00680821/document>

¹³ For more information on Radical feminism, please also see:

- ◆ The variety of feminisms and their contribution to gender equality: <http://diglib.bis.uni-oldenburg.de/pub/unireden/ur97/kap1.pdf>
- ◆ Why I'm a radical feminist (but not THAT kind of radical feminist): <https://www.anthonyskewspolitics.com/blog/2017/9/19/why-im-a-radical-feminist-but-not-that-kind-of-radical-feminist>

3.2.3 The Cultural feminism and women's concern¹⁴

The core proposition of Cultural Feminism is to create a more female-oriented culture that commits to traditional values and norms as opposed to change and innovation. Cultural feminists also believe in the range of biological differences between women and men without favouring one gender as better than the other. It emphasizes that, to eliminate oppression and sexism, women should focus on highlighting and celebrating the individual characteristics and qualities that make them who they are as unique individuals rather than succumbing to subordination. For instance, women tend to be more empathetic in the face of moral issues and tend to show better capacity to understand and share feelings of another by seeing the problem in its context. On the other hand, men's approach to moral problems may take a more pragmatic standpoint that is based on practical rather than theoretical considerations.

Although conversely the ideology of Feminism may confuse individuals who may have little or no understanding of the underlying basis the subject of feminism. It is contested that the similarities of the terms Feminism and Feminine to be the primary reason for the misconception of the ideology, and largely because of the traditional domestic roles of women. For the same reasons the ideology of Conservatism which postulates that traditional roles of each gender should remain dominant, is associated with Cultural feminism as the ideology conceptualized by non-feminists or at least attributed by feminist to women who do not recognize themselves as feminists or were simply uneducated on feminism ideologies that focus on the differences of the sexes.

3.2.4 The Socialist feminism and women's concern¹⁵

Socialist Feminism recognizes patriarchy to be a substantial source of oppression for women. Furthermore, this tenet argues that women's failure to succeed in their living domains to be

¹⁴ For more information on Cultural feminism, please also see:

- ◆ Why women still can't have it all: <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/>
- ◆ Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory: <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/abs/10.1086/494426?journalCode=signs>

¹⁵ For more information on Socialist feminism, please also see:

- ◆ Socialist feminism—Definition and Comparisons: <https://www.thoughtco.com/socialist-feminism-womens-history-definition-3528988>
- ◆ The basics of socialist feminism: <http://www.feministezine.com/feminist/modern/THE-BASICS-OF-SOCIALIST-FEMINISM.html>

fundamentally due to the uneven balance in wealth that forces women to relying on males for financial support and been forced to conform to the male rulers in society. Socialist feminists argue that wealth should be controlled and owned by society and community as a whole and by separate privileged fragments of society to bring economic and cultural sources of women's oppression to an end.

Scholars contest that these movements [liberal, radical, cultural socialist movement] focus predominantly on the deliverance of white females with regards to issues ranging from equal political representation, formal education, child care, to employment and equality in the workplace (Browder, 2015; Favero & Heath, 2012; King, 2017; Turner & Maschi, 2014). These issues do not necessarily represent the general concerns that women of colour claim to experience. These issues include sexism, poverty, racism, and ethnocentrism that women and man of colour faced, particularly influenced by slavery and domestic violence experiences of women colour (Butler, 2013). It is primarily consequential to non-addressing of these concerns that the 'Woman of Colour Feminism/Womanism' movement has emerged (Miguda, 2010).

3.2.5 The Woman of colour/Womanism and women's concern¹⁶

Considering the above reviews, it is important to emphasised that although Women of colour feminism aimed at addressing barriers to better conditions for black women, its focus underpins women of colour in the context of African-American women. This form of feminism movement emerged out of widespread rises of views that supported women of colour concerns, and due to lack of acknowledgement for the diversity of challenges particularly involving women of colour which were not reflected in other forms of feminism movements classified and 'white women feminism' (Butler, 2013; Mani, 2015).

Womanism recognizes the specific concerns women of colour might face in patriarchal/sexism society, and assesses the belief that women of colour experience issues of poverty, racism, and ethnocentrism. According to Tadiar and Davis (2005), because womanist feminists recognize the

¹⁶

For more information on Woman of colour/Womanism feminism, please also see:

- ◆ Womanist: <https://www.thoughtco.com/womanist-feminism-definition-3528993>
- ◆ Womanist Theology: Black Women's Voices: <http://www.religion-online.org/article/womanist-theology-black-womens-voices/>

existence of multiple oppressions, they do not necessarily view men of colour as the fundamental oppressor, and may choose to ally themselves with men of colour and join forces to deal with undermining neologism.

So, while different directions and views can be noted from feminism philosophies, each have undoubtedly made important contribution to changing realities of undesired conditions of women, and therefore to pin down feminism as a monolithic perspective defeats the view of recognising women human rights above all differences. The objective of contextualising feminism theory in the context of women in the workforce is not necessarily to highlight the limitations within each forms of feminism, as it may lead to an unintentional disregard diversity that exist between women from the Western countries and African countries. The goal is not to promote the idea of women against men or other women but instead to build societies where individuals are cognisant of different social, cultural, political and belief structures of other people and treat one another with dignity and respect (Favero & Heath, 2012; Miguda, 2010; Turner & Maschi, 2014).

The above reviews of feminism movements establish the broader theoretical framework in which this study of individual resilience of women is exposed to. This shifts the focus from western feminism to African feminism which is paramount to the aim of this study.

3.3 The African feminism movement¹⁷: A resilience perspective on African women

African feminism, also referred to as Black feminism is a type of feminism innovated by African women that specifically addresses the conditions and needs of continental African women (Orakwue, 2017). Despite the lack of consensus widely eminent in feminism thoughts concerning African feminism, a modern perspective on African feminism aims to advocate a global consciousness of African feminism. This perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of African women through past histories, present realities and future life expectations such as the

¹⁷ For more information on African feminism, please also see:

- ◆ A brief history of African feminism: <https://www.msafropolitan.com/2013/07/a-brief-history-of-african-feminism.html>
- ◆ Feminism: Africa and African Diaspora: <http://www.encyclopedia.com/history/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/feminism-africa-and-african-diaspora>
- ◆ African Feminism Driven by African Women: <http://www.ngopulse.org/article/african-feminism-driven-african-women>

“Maputo Protocol”¹⁸ on the rights of African women, as adopted by the African Union in 2013 (Anumo & Bah, 2017).

Using an African feminist perspective in reflecting resilience of women in the African context, acknowledges feminism interjects which reminds feminists across the board of the need to learn more about African women and their experiences to address challenges and better living experiences. Preliminary tenets in the African feminism have focused on correcting misconstructions surrounding the African feminism movement which have been conveyed in Western feminism narratives (Tadiar & Davis, 2005). In her enquiry into African feminism, Sachikonye (2010), claimed that a feminism that is distinctly African and considers the needs and interests of African women needed more thoughtfulness. Emphasis is placed on the agency, strength and potential of African women, elusively conveyed in conventional feminism to reflect the contextual experiences and conditions lived by African women, but instead African feminism is reflected as powerless and confused movement. An even greater source of argument amongst African feminists is rooted in the historical narratives which suggest that feminism is ‘unAfrican’ (King, 2017; Mohapatra, 2009). While this tendency to conceptualising feminism tenets in uniform terms may omit the past veracities of significant adversities which African women have experienced traditionally, this view may suggest a disregard of the African continent as heterogeneous with its vast feminism movements across territories.

3.3.1 African feminism versus global feminism

While Western literature on feminism remain brief and vague on the fact that the African continent is a vast continent [with different territories, specific tribes, cultures and religions] (Gaba, 1994; King, 2017; Mani, 2015); the focus of many African feminists during the past decade or so has been on distinguishing African feminism from Western feminism (Africa Gender Equality Index, 2015; Anumo & Bah, 2017; Cheeseman, Death, & Whitfield, 2017; King, 2017; Mohapatra, 2009; Sachikonye, 2010; Shrivastava & Desousa, 2016). Such approach is fundamentally relevant to researchers investigating resilience of women, and provide insights about issues that are relevant

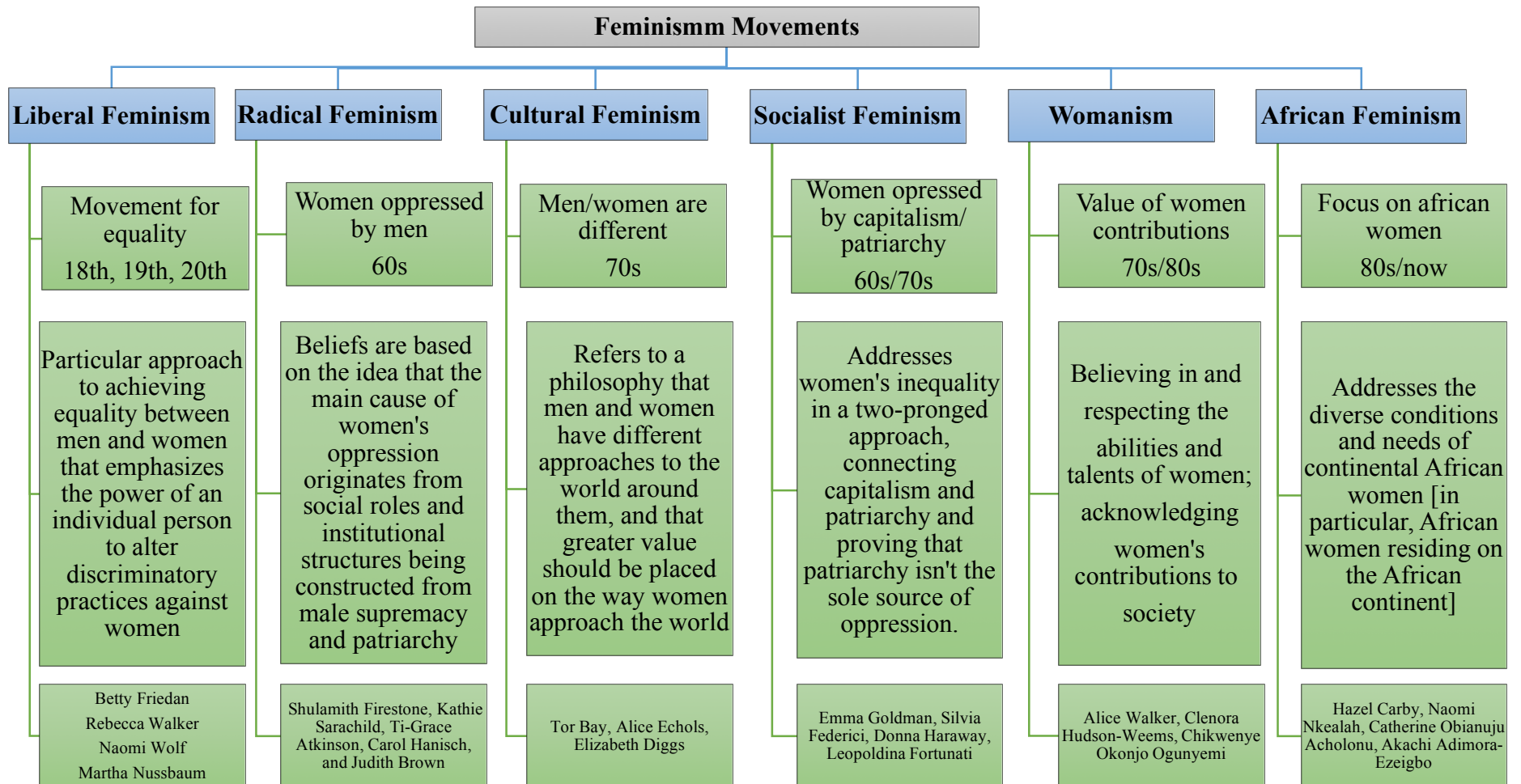
¹⁸ The “Maputo Protocol” is the Protocol to the African charter on human and peoples' rights on the rights of women in africa (Anumo & Bah, 2017) These rights fall outside the scope of this study but for an interesting review of these rights, see the “Maputo Protocol” at:

http://www.achpr.org/files/instruments/women-protocol/achpr_instr_proto_women_eng.pdf

to African women or women in Africa. Thus, exploring the integral forces and contexts that drive different forms of feminisms result in a greater understanding of the commonalities and differences amongst feminism views. It may also positively influence attitudes that are often observed in general feminism literature such as those that negate the existence or differences among feminism movements (Browder, 2015; Hicks, 2014; King, 2017; Miguda, 2010).

The discussion of women struggles tracks the progression of major feminism theories, more specifically, patriarchy, and bear elaboration in regards to this study of women (Abbas & Mama, 2014; Hicks, 2014; King, 2017). This theory posits that patriarchal systems reflect a major force which has contributed to women struggles at all levels, and therefore is treated by Western feminists as a prevalent challenge. Furthermore the need to institute equality between women and men at the workplace, constitutes a leading force to Western feminism, particularly the radical form of feminism (King, 2017; Tadiar & Davis, 2005). Thus, Western feminism perspectives seem to suggest that institutions that are governed by male interests, diminish women ability to grow and expand their potential. In contrast, from the perspective of feminists within the context of African feminism, the issue of gender equality due to patriarchy although considered to be a concern faced by African feminists, is not considered as primary concern that undermine African women advancements. Given the claimed doctrine which is captured in various deliberations surrounding feminisms movements, an illustrative on primary ideology regarding the movements considered in this thesis is reflected on the subsequent figure.

Figure 2. Overview of the feminism movements



The feminisms diagram summarises the essence of the feministic views held in the context of these different movements. The period indication of the rise of each movement is provided as speculative on their predominance in society. Further, names of feminists attached with each of the feminism movements are indicated on the lower level of the illustration. All things considered, it is evident that in today's day and age, attempts to mitigate barriers to women's health and overall advancement are increasingly becoming more salient. It is worth noting that Africa is no different than other continents in the world at least historically where whatever autonomous sociological-structural factors such as income, occupation, and education

3.3.2 African feminism: the goal towards more favourable experiences for women

Research related to female labour participation in the context of African which endorse women as increasingly economically active population. Many platforms created to make positive changes into the experiences of women have continually acknowledged the fundamental role that African women play in their families, communities and the civil society (Abbas & Mama, 2014; Africa Gender Equality Index, 2015; Anumo & Bah, 2017; Orakwue, 2017). Moreover, the use of psychological resilience on African women as they experience diversities within their contexts is central to African feminism.

Against this backdrop and as far as this body of research is concerned, African feminist is recognized as a an issue “of great importance to African women, not only with regards to their identities, but also as it relates to the issues that affect them and their role in the feminist movement” (Africa Gender Equality Index, 2015; Sachikonye, 2010). As far as the follow up of recent studies, two prevalent forces in the context of the African continent namely: African traditions and the African underdevelopment influence African feminism movements.

3.3.2.1 African traditions and resilience of women

Africa is widely known by its amalgam of cultures and traditions (Abbas & Mama, 2014; Africa Gender Equality Index, 2015; Gaba, 1994; King, 2017). African feminists recognize the experiences of African traditions marked by men dominance which disadvantage women. These experiences include household roles, marriage customs, production methods or sexual freedoms.

Although considerable arguments surrounding African traditions exist, recent African feminism views reflect a strong sense of pride towards African traditions and therefore thoughts which seek to abandon traditions may detract the precious cultural memories and rich legacies of knowledge on the roots of African feminism (Cheeseman et al., 2017). By adapting tradition to its times, feminists will ensure that rather than tradition get stagnated in historical records, it can enrich society the way it should do.

3.3.2.2 Underdevelopment of African countries and resilience of women

Despite its diverse resources and wealth, the African continent remains according to statistical indices, the poorest of the continents in the world (Africa Gender Equality Index, 2015). Consequently, this factor may have a direct effect on African women across the continent, or interact in such a way with other factors which in many ways can hinder the ability of African women to naturally improve unfavourable experiences due to poverty or access to basic amenities, inadequate educational and health systems. Further, this precept asserts that the price of these limitations is paid not only by women who are directly affected by them, but by the society as a whole (Africa Gender Equality Index, 2015).

While African feminism has merit, for African feminism to be far reaching in positive effects on the lives of African women, African feminists or supporters of feminism in the African context, are to thrive towards forming social institutions that have the capacity to encourage engaged thinking of its population and very importantly to develop capital which translate feminism theories into proactive agenda to curb obstacles and advance African women.

Over and above the prospects surrounding the objectives of African feminism, it is evident that the realities of African women are multifaceted due to a manifold of dynamics including vast territories which delineate diverse tribes, cultures and religions, and therefore a one-dimensional feminism school of thought would be insensitive. The interpretation of and reaction to African women subjects is especially important to resilience, for how the presence or absence of distinctive African factors determines resilience of African women. By communicating with African women, and involving men in the process, more insightful information would be explored to shape the identity of African feminism/s.

3.4 Feminist reflections of women at the workplace

Traditionally employment for women was primarily concentrated in a small range of sectors where professions such as registered nurses, social workers, human resources managers, counsellors, school teachers, secretaries- to name a few - were dominated by women (Coldridge & Davies, 2017). In recent times, these professions are occupied by men as much as women, although these professions are still mostly represented by women as the majority workforce in domains. Further, whether it is in sectors where women make up the majority workforce because of specific reasons or in occupations traditionally governed by men, scholars content that different individual and workplace contextual factor may demand resilience from women in differently (Brandstatter et al., 2016; Leppin et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2017).

As far as work professions concern women, there has been inconclusive debate about whether men outperform women and vice-versa, in certain work occupations and whether women are face significant challenges working in jobs mostly occupied by men. Some studies suggest that as women start mimicking their professional lives to those of men, the levels on blood pressure, (Chikani, Reding, Gunderson, & McCarty, 2005; de Geus, Van Hoof, Aerts, & Meeusen, 2008) and cholesterol readings tend to rise because of pressures found in demanding occupations considered as suitable to males (Jönsson, Johansson, Rosengren, Lappas, & Wilhelmsen, 2003). This tenet asserts that, despite rises in blood pressure of women working in jobs associated to men, it cannot be concluded that readings of results are significant causes factors for the development of heart disease in women, suggested to because of women ability to handle pressure differently (de Geus et al., 2008; Leppin et al., 2014). Thus, changes occurring in women's health when women are engaged in different, unfamiliar environment of work, may be explained by the process of adjustment and adapting to new conditions which anticipates imbalances to well-being (Atkinson et al., 2017). This is not to suggest that women in jobs which are perceived as best performed by men are not affected by adverse experiences or may not experience health challenges. That said, one should note that how a man or a woman experiences obstacles within their work environments vary per different factors in the life of individuals.

While work adversities and the extent to which a person's well-being may be affected is complex to determine, questions on their associations with serious diseases such as heart-disease is often

raised in studies of adults (Bergman, 2003; Brandstatter et al., 2016; Favero & Heath, 2012; Lian & Tam, 2014; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015). Bergman, (2003) puts forward the view that depressive symptoms are prime risk factors which play an important role for coronary heart disease in women. Although it is argued that women are strong individuals when responding to adversities (Gignac et al., 2014; Seery, 2011), de Geus et al. (2008) and Sperlich and Geyer (2015) current research on coronary heart disease in employed women appears to point to the vulnerability direction in that women being more liable to suffering from terminal coronary heart disease from substantial psychological challenges than men (Mallak & Yildiz, 2016; Shrivastava & Desousa, 2016).

3.4.1 Women and work interpersonal relationships

Despite the rise of women in business leadership positions, the journey of acquiring due recognition within domain such as employment may in instances be interfered by various demanding speculations. It is usually assumed that female individuals reaching a respectable position should set high expectations for themselves as it is important that they take charge of their professional lives. In instances, people, and systems available already set expectations deemed suitable for women. On this grounds it can be argued that women occupying positions of great prominence expect to assume multiple roles of responsibility for themselves, for the workplace, society and other domains outside workplace settings to attempt to prove their competences (McDonald et al., 2016; World Health Organization, 2017).

Although studies exploring the extent to which working women are challenged on day-to-day are diverse, where lack of protective factors within the workplace is prevalent, women may also eventually be influenced negatively by different levels of the workplace relationships, including co-workers, subordinates and superiors (Aazami et al., 2015; Oyeleye et al., 2013). The challenges arising may be small and manageable such as differences of opinion - to severe and substantial, especially when there are issues opposing their status or leadership authority because of their gender. In terms of ego for instance, it is well known that compared to women, men tend to have higher ego. Particularly in dynamic and competitive business environments where women advancement to management positions in unsupported by men, it can be extremely difficult for female leaders to manage workers of the male sex who want to prove their believed superiority as the male gender and force themselves into the job as better placements for the job.

It is argued however, all things considered, that for working women, relationships within the business environment, tend to take better direction when interacting with men rather with other women (Gignac et al., 2014; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015). This is often the case of lack of trust and leads to women becoming quite more critical on each other. This defiance in womanhood defeats the purpose of feminism principles of elevation of women in business (Miguda, 2010; Turner & Maschi, 2014).

There is insufficient research on women issues in the environment of work associated with problems caused by women within the circle of professional relationships with other female individuals. From a feminist perspective, the foundation of women's adversities at work, although directly linked with men as the primary factor of the existence of women barriers; the modern reality of the workplace has proven extensively that women may influence the rise of barriers of progress to other individual women in towards progress (Favero & Heath, 2012; Hicks, 2014; Miguda, 2010; Waterhouse et al., 2016). Women easiness to interact with others women on an emotional level seems to play a role in the forming of unhealthy relationships that affect personal development due to engagements of unhealthy nature with others like getting or giving inadequate support during times of laments about experiences, complaints about things, and gossips about others. On a positive note, the emotional quality which can distinguish women is a skill which allows them to engage in open communication with people and be expressive of their point of views.

3.4.2 Understanding women's emotional predispositions

The underlying argument regarding women and emotions is that this aspect which is often observed on the female gender, seems to play a pivotal role during a women career in elevating or reducing capacity to accomplish goals (Leppin et al., 2014; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015). Emotions are strong feelings deriving from a person's circumstances, mood, or relationships with others; and be intense when a person feels overwhelmed with psychological pressures. On a communicational level, high emotions lead to women responding to direct threads negatively. In the workplace, work-related discussions of negative nature, may incite women to convey verbal messages that can excite similar or worse responses from other people and take situations to an unproductive level resulting in impaired relationships at work (McDonald et al., 2016). Along similar lines,

having confrontational attitudes to adversities may affect women experiences outside their workplace setting and influence their personal life domain. Unfavourable experiences of an emotional nature can be controlled by practicing conducts which increase knowledge about resilience thus promoting positive emotional experiences for women.

There is growing support for the claim that the female internal dynamics or emotions in women is a predominant force in shaping resilience in women (Bernabe & Botia, 2016; Hicks, 2014; Kent et al., 2015; Leppin et al., 2014; Morote et al., 2017; Muhajarine & Janzen, 2006; Turner & Maschi, 2014). There is a direct correlation between physical and emotional state of a person (Rees et al., 2015). Women are said to be more sensitive to feelings, thus emotions can influence the course of actions taken by female individuals in the face of adversities. As central feature of female gender, women may greatly benefit from emotional support at the workplace.

Researchers support the evidence that emotion can be strengthened and controlled by social political, cultural backgrounds (Leppin et al., 2014; Rees et al., 2015; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015; Turner & Maschi, 2014; Waterhouse et al., 2016). Taking into consideration the fact that as children boys and girls are raised differently, and persuaded to express feelings, emotions and to behave in a gender-specific manner. Taking a middle ground position in the subject, Turner and Maschi (2014) propounds society as a force influencing people through reinforcements of such rules, systems and policies that shape human behaviour.

In the early stages of person's upbringing environment from example, young girls get rewarded for not hiding emotions while boys are incentivised to maintain dominant attitudes rather than display passive emotions. These early patterns may continue as people go through maturation and can be reinforced within communities, educational life, family and relational interactions with other people. Consequently, as adult working individuals, women may be more strongly able to expressing passive emotions like happiness, fear; and sadness and men with dominant emotions evoking anger, pride, control, all of which affecting day-to-day engagements (Hunter & Warren, 2014; Woods-Giscombe & Black, 2010). Such gender specifics are also explained by the tenets biopsychosocial influences in the behaviour of people in terms of their gender differences. Further, this branch of knowledge appears to be critical in understanding the differences between women

and men in respect of the degree of certainty or uncertainty about their ability to perform tasks independently. Scholars have well documented the tendency of women and men differently, to spontaneously generate internal and external attributions for their successes and failures in triumphing objectives goals in their life domains whether it is within or outside of their workplace settings is driven by the 'attribution theory'. The literature in psychology regarding the attribution theory suggests that women and men have different perceptions about their abilities to perform in their environments, and such perceptions reflect in their behavioural tendencies to act according to such perceptions (Grossman, Eckel, Komai, & Zhan, 2016; Mohammadi & Sharififar, 2016).

All things considered, when it comes to the workplace settings, women may predominantly attribute their success to luck or external sources like other people and their failure to their ability or inability thereof, whereas with men the opposite direction takes place. However good or emotionally strong a woman in business may consider herself to be, workplace challenges involving interpersonal relationships amongst diverse employees may require positive psychological capacity to deal with the circumstances (Cohrs et al., 2013; Fida et al., 2016). The advantages include: the overall assimilating of new knowledge, skills and abilities that aid communication within the environment of work and relationships with others, and are necessary for individuals to interact and maintain healthy employment life.

In this regards, women should recognize the general physical and cognitive characteristics as essential qualities, nonetheless women should succumb to conditions that undermine their full potential as people to accomplish individual objectives. Successful people appreciate their differences and instead focus on their qualities positively to achieve extraordinary results despite society and institutions of business defining acceptable behaviour and ways which affect how people express emotions towards life events.

3.4.3 A feminist perspective on gender issues at the workplace

Feminists refer of the word 'Gender' as the social construction of sexuality, indicating how society perceives us or how we perceive ourselves and the term word Sex as a distinction of male and female, specified in the biological identity of a person. However, rather than stressing biological characteristics, feminists draw attention and emphasize to issues of women within social and

cultural contexts. Given the centrality of this issue in the context of workplace settings and taking into consideration the initial basis of feminism as the quest by women for equality of the sexes, it is important to consider the impacts of fundamental issues for women's advancement which are prevalent at workplaces (Cheeseman et al., 2017; Orakwue, 2017; World Health Organization, 2017).

3.4.3.1 Implications of occupational segregation to women

Arguments against occupational segregation agree that changing attitudes that undermine women satisfaction at work is an essential step in the process of reducing gender occupational segregation which leads to better-quality of life (Browder, 2015; Southwick et al., 2014; Staland-Nyman, Alexanderson, & Hensing, 2008). Based on this view, it can be suggested that understanding women contributions outside the home environment and emphasising the impacts of the domestic roles on a women wellbeing can complement the plans developed and steps taken by workplaces in this regard.

Accessing work outside home may lead women to success barriers, initially associated with occupational segregation which undermine capability, skills and talents of women at the work domain. Also, described as the process which delimits jobs for men and women, that devalues jobs where women predominate in terms of remuneration, decision-making and work promotion - Occupational segregation may present challenges to working women. Some obstacles concerning occupational segregations may disadvantage women more in achieving career goals or establishing good quality of life due to issues such as unequal and remuneration for jobs, lack of career promotions, and inability to access resources and power at work.

Research on this area may include culture as it has significant role in shaping life conditions of women (Favero & Heath, 2012; Miguda, 2010). The view that accessing education, social rights for both women and men to be a solution that can curb occupational segregation and to establish equal employment opportunities is not unanimous by academics (Leppin et al., 2014; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015; Turner & Maschi, 2014; Waterhouse et al., 2016). Some argue that the prevalence of occupational segregation has do with the society existing structures which subsist to disrupt the women career independence. Although women may have the necessary background education and

work abilities, because of their gender, they may still experience workplace challenges and take longer to accomplish personal goals because occupational segregation (Leppin et al., 2014; Southwick et al., 2014; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015).

Browder (2015), further explains that the subject of segregation in the workplace underpins factors beyond gender. He argues that the activities engaged by individuals in adult life and preferences chosen along the way have an influence in how such individual engages with work and personal life positively. In other words, a person positive attitude towards adverse experiences have a strong effect on the outcomes of events regarding who wins and who loses in a battle to experience personal satisfaction. Although positive attitudes may promote positive outcomes, this characteristic may also aid people whenever more significant challenges - such as when unemployment - is experienced (King, 2017). Along with the example of experiencing redundancy lies the issue of work compensation issues (Sperlich & Geyer, 2015).

3.4.3.2 Implications of unequal work remuneration to women

Remuneration issues, particularly with regards to inequitable financial remuneration, may impact women financial power and independence (McKinsey & Company, 2016; Aazami et al., 2015). In terms of remuneration where women and men work on similar occupations women may still be paid less despite having educational background or job experiences that supporting aptitudes for their jobs. It may be even more critical in instances where female individuals are breadwinners or co-breadwinners of their immediate families. Carrying out domestic work while engagement with workplace undertakings may be indicative women's propensity to display resilience (King, 2017; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015; Waterhouse et al., 2016). In terms of task allocation, in instances where women and men having the same job titles, women may be likely to be allocated tasks different from those allocated to men. In terms of career advance or promotions, women are also less likely to secure positions of power than men are.

3.4.3.3 Implications of familial cultures to women health

It can be said that cultures have the power to shape human behaviour in terms of customs, beliefs, and values. Additionally, whether women are more liberal today or not, does not eradicate the challenges which women may experience in the confronts of personal traditions. Masculinity and

femininity have long been the focus of feminist scholars regarding the ideas, customs, and social behaviour of people in different cultures. As the attitudes and behaviour characteristic of a social group, culture may influence the conduct of each gender differently and which may be a critical dynamic for resilience in women.

Feminism movements have helped open opportunities and unlock potential in women. That said, the imbalances associated within different environments are evident. In the past, traditional family cultures tend to lean towards the belief that male gender was superior than the female gender (Browder, 2015; Favero & Heath, 2012; Miguda, 2010). A reflection of this belief may still be present in workplaces where traditional structures predominate. Notably, it is common that male and female employees occupying similar occupations or performing the same jobs, may receive different treatments (Gignac et al., 2014; Miguda, 2010; Turner & Maschi, 2014). Within the life contexts where females may achieve positive status in educational background; the held inhibiting beliefs of others and pressures put on them to conform to traditional customs that deprive them from forming career, may still influence their discretion in fulfilling personal ideals.

The challenge that may exist within cultures is that by the time female individuals have developed into independent people, then may already have habituated own ways and developed personal identities, not necessarily resilient characters. All things considered, it seems reasonable to assume that changing attitudes and behaviour may be difficult and intimidating especially when the environment which people are part of proves unsupportive. With this in mind, it may seem reasonable to make subjective judgements based on the persons' behaviour displayed without considering factors that may have influenced the attitudes and behaviour of the individuals.

While there are so many diverse factors that can enhance or damage the impact of a person's behaviour in the face of an event at certain point in time, it is important to understand such possibilities before reacting to undesirable experiences. Although significant occurrences can come about, and not be as desirable, the attitudes displayed and actions taken following challenges can very much determine results following unpleasant experience. On the logical grounds, it can be agreed that when people may overcome mental barriers and create beliefs that incite them to begin tapping into newer worlds, expanding their horizons and encourage achieving more personal desirable goals. Therefore, supporting structures aiming to promote well-being should be

continually encouraged on all levels of society to maintain diversity and curb preconceptions that inhibit the welfare of women workforces.

3.5 Predicting the future of women in the world of work

An increase of research studies lend support to the perspective that conventional domestic roles and familial commitments that women are attached to may constitute major factors influencing the beliefs and perhaps the association of women unsuitability to work outside the home. Further to this several views which have neglected women's participation in the workplace settings in the past are increasingly common-sense perspectives on human rights and health and wellness by advocates (Browder, 2015; Favero & Heath, 2012; Hicks, 2014; Miguda, 2010; Turner & Maschi, 2014) Women workforce has been growing significantly over the past few decades across countries as female have become substantial resources for the corporate world.

In view of women emancipation, it can be established that it took many feminists the courage to challenge conditions that were not supportive of their personal circumstances which affected the way in which women lived, and the recognition from political, economic, social domains of life of their personal capabilities to participate in spheres of life outside of home. The historical struggles reflect positively on attitude of working women towards employment life in terms of exercising endurance difficulties which seems to be a talent resilient women have. The process through which people develop into more resilient individual after been exposed to significant confronts is not an instantaneous manifestation or a programmed activity but rather a continual process that demands individuals to take on-going steps towards making the needed changes in their lives and be in control of issues arising.

Although women differ in terms of demonstrating resilience, each individual goes through an individual process of developing this skill and so for women themselves need to take active role in this regard (Rees et al., 2015). Due to the commitment of many, it is now possible that women not only access the corporate business environment, but to make choices of professions with less political, economic, social, technological, and legal constraints compared to the past. The onus therefore is on working women to develop resilience knowledge and use it to the advantage of thriving in the face of adverse circumstances.

Women have proven that their qualities make wide-reaching contributions to their institutions of business. On the other hand, the positive outputs that work can generate may allow certain conditions in the life domains of employees to be managed accordingly. Thus, as an activity which largely involves mental and/or physical efforts, work is undertaken to complete defined objectives commonly in exchange of something, usually financial rewards/money (Favero & Heath, 2012). In terms of money as the common means of rewarding employment, although it can fulfil many needs of people, it is not the fundamental reason for working people. Money as far as salaried/paid employment is concerned, indicates the measure of a person's worth to society. In other words, it is the means of rewarding people for their contributions to society.

For women in the corporate world, employment becomes a significant source of internal satisfaction, and not about gaining financial rewards. Importantly, work is central to women's sense of identity, feelings of self-worth, and contribution to society. Therefore, having access to employment and the ability to achieve common and personal goals is essential for women to affect psychological health positively. Along similar lines, Turner and Maschi (2014) claim that satisfaction and happiness at work makes a woman influence aspects of their lives within the professional and domains of private lives leading to better productivity overall. Essentially, if women are mentally stronger, they are more likely to positively influence their personal lives, their family, and the society at large.

3.5.1 Female workforce contributions towards resilient workplaces

For organisations, having female workforce who are prepared to handle adversities and can demonstrate thriving skills promptly, measure to having stronger and able employees who can increase work productivity and effectiveness. In developing individual resilience in women, it is significant that business entities understand that the employee well-being means that organisations have as much responsibilities and interests as individual employees themselves have in capitalising resources to encourage the strengthening of that skill (Africa Gender Equality Index, 2015; World Health Organization, 2017). Particularly to women there are several approaches that be maintained by companies in this regard. Understanding women characteristics towards specific context at

work assists management to understand basic behavioural trends of women in comparison with men for instance.

Women bring diverse dynamics into the business environment. Such dynamics as discussed by McFayden (2015) in the “She Is: Women’s Leadership Summit”, reveal the large pool of talents women can bring into the workplace in comparison to talents that men can offer. These unique qualities of women in comparison to men are presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. Differences between men and women at work¹⁹

Category	Men	Women
Hierarchies vs. Relationships	Men view the world through Hierarchical structures in terms of authority and follow orders. Men find comfort in territories where there is clarity status	Women view the world through Flat structures in terms of share in authority and fairness. Women work better in territories where everyone has a fair and equal chance of succeeding.
Goals vs. Processes	When attacking problems, men tend to be more goal-focused, and are highly energized by attaining that goal rather than the process involved.	When attacking problems, women tend to be more process-focused, because it motivates women to get involved with the process of getting the goal.
Authority vs. Engagement	Men value single efforts and rather than asking for answers men internalise options for themselves before offering solutions	Women value the share of authority and find more engagement by externalising options by seeking inputs outside themselves before offering solutions
Team Players vs. Team Play	Team player for men means knowing where their position and falling orders even if they disagree with the leader of the team.	To women team player means assisting others in need, and engage in collaborative team play.

¹⁹ Refer to source reference: McFayden, S. (2015). 5 Major Differences Between Men and Women at Work. Retrieved from <https://www.redventures.com/blog/2015/11/18/5-major-differences-between-men-and-women-at-work/>

Attribution of Success	Men tend to point inward the success accomplished, and point outwards the lack of success by blaming it to circumstances outside their control.	Women tend to point outward the success accomplished because of the bond formed with members of the team play. Women attribute lack of success for their own perceived shortfalls.
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It is evident that women and men differences play a role in the workplace experiences. Furthermore, it is critical that workplace barriers associated with gender and which undermine women's potential are progressively addressed to promote women's health.

3.6 Critical workplace barriers to women's health

Ever since the eminence of women into the labour market as supporters of their families, it became evident that it is no longer taboo for women to be expected to work outside of the confines of their homes. Women not only need to fulfil their personal objectives; in some instances, they are the main or only person capacitated financially-able person who are able to support the immediate families. Although the number of women accessing business or workplace settings has increased and is still on the rise, both professions traditionally dominated by men and those professions associated and mostly occupied by women may still bring unique forms of challenges.

Furthermore, it can be assumed that workplace concerns may affect individuals differently and require distinctive approaches developed/implemented to get individuals to cope well and thrive. Researchers also agree that a reduced capacity to reason and deal proactively when the effects of life adversities are experienced is due to lack of resilience and can cause an imbalance to psychological and physical health (Aazami et al., 2015; de Geus et al., 2008; Leppin et al., 2014; Nilsen, Skipstein, & Demerouti, 2016). Taking into consideration that employment can generate both positive and negative outcomes, and keeping in mind that certain types of jobs may have health risks higher than other types of job, it is important to define the most common workplace stressors and challenges that may constitute significant adversity for women.

3.6.1 Workplace harassment

As a significant organisational challenge, harassment in the workplace is any form of unwanted inappropriate physical or verbal conduct, usually intended to offend or humiliate a person and which may take place one time or may persist over time (Bergman, 2003), and which may create a discomforting work environment towards individuals irrespective of race and gender (Barbeau, Hartman, Quinn, Stoddard, & Krieger, 2007).

In the workplace is not just about unwelcome sexual invitation as it is often misconstrued; it is over and above the inappropriate use and abuse of power against people's vulnerabilities (McKinsey & Company, 2016; O'Shea & Dickens, 2016). The most common type of non-sexual harassment impacting women include: personal harassment; bullying, racial harassment, and harassment on grounds of sexual orientation, age, and disability.

Women who have experienced the issues above on significant level may feel the urge to changing jobs, career goals, job assignments, educational academic programs. Workplace harassment can be harmful to mental health and should be taken seriously by women who become victims of these experiences (Nilsen, Skipstein, & Demerouti, 2016). Additionally, the workplace management, and department of Human Resources should put measures towards preventing such challenges from taking place and to mitigate issues whenever such problems emerge. It is important to be cognisant of the possibilities that individuals who have become victims of these problems are likely to suffer psychological/mental illnesses following such undesirable experiences, and to understand that overall work performance of women may be impaired by the deep impacts of workplace harassment.

3.6.2 Work-life balance of women

The issue of whether women should focus on a career, life or both is complex one (Favero & Heath, 2012; Gignac et al., 2014; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015; Turner & Maschi, 2014; Waterhouse et al., 2016). Choosing to pursue a professional career over family for female individuals may be a difficult choice in times of economic demands making it hard for women that have taken breadwinner of roles to pursue career goals in good time. Having formal education may theoretically contribute to new opportunities in finding occupations that fulfil special levels of

needs. From a theoretical perspective, despite the possibility that both women and men will enter the labour market at the same time and will be concerned mainly with advancement in their profession, without interruptions, the likelihood of careerism – that is advancement in a career – is higher than otherwise if significant interruptions take place in the process.

In practice, developing a career may be possible, however, the chances of fulfilling solid career objectives in the case of female individuals who get to have children in the process while engaged with full-time jobs may be discouraging for some women. For instance, having children may have its unique consequences including time-off to compensate for maternity time which means taking time off from employment and the possibility of missing out employment opportunities or being temporarily or permanently discharged from work (Grice et al., 2007). Since a woman's career life is greatly affected by the motherhood, because of non-attendance of work responsibilities, the decision to remain at work for some women may be even more complex than for other women. While some women who may or may not have plans to have children may find the necessary supporting structures and be less affected after unfavourable conditions, others may find a more challenging reality and have less alternatives but to juggle their time between the domains of motherhood and employment and face the consequences of choices made.

Taking into consideration that women roles as breadwinners of their immediate families in increasing, it is accepted to suggest that the inability to pursue desired career objectives because of motherhood may cause women to delay giving birth to children for example. Thus, sacrificing motherhood to prioritise achieving career ideals has become a trend for career women in recent years. Despite the different career implications that motherhood may have on career women, research on women's psychological health argues that family life has substantial psychological benefits for women (Floderus, Hagman, Aronsson, Marklund, & Wikman, 2009; Muhajarine & Janzen, 2006; O'Shea & Dickens, 2016).

Several studies have shown both employment and personal life roles to be factors promoting better health in women (Grice et al., 2007; Staland-Nyman et al., 2008). Considering general perceptions and anticipation of work as something positive, it can be suggested being employed is better than not having a job at all. The financial outcomes resulting from efforts put into job may reinforce the notion that being employed is better than not, but the fact that health outcomes produced from

employment is depends on factors such as the type of job a person is holding, the behaviour and the attitudes of the person and the circumstances of events, make the value and significance of work beyond the mere process of input-output.

Although workplace settings are considerably valuable to females as much as much as they are to males (Aazami et al., 2015; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015), as the number of roles within each domain of women as employees, wives, and mothers increase, juggling between work and family may have health consequences for women. Some views have discussed high possibilities of women experiencing reduced mental health (Favero & Heath, 2012; Gignac et al., 2014), and health imbalances that unsettle their personal life significantly causing issues such as job strain specially in cases where women lack knowledge on managing the demands from work and family actively (Floderus et al., 2009) leading to role conflicts (Waterhouse et al., 2016). Since role conflicts cause women to experience psychological pressure, it is pertinent that women understand the impacts that multiple roles have on them.

Aazami et al., (2015) have indicated that significant conditions arising from the professional involvement tend to affect the effectiveness of performance outside of the work environment. In addition, they argued that men and women differ in the way they get affected by pressures from work and life domains. This view postulates that within the work context, men and women with family engagements are likely to experience the same levels of stress arising from work until exposed to domestic family roles. In which case research found that rapid decrease of stress hormones can be found amongst men, and an increase amongst women (Jönsson et al., 2003). Women also report to a higher levels of home strains and report less time for recreation during holidays, whereas men report more time for recreation.

In addition, it is suggested that stress-related illnesses tend to manifest in terms of physical ill health for males, whereas for female it in terms of mental ill health. Therefore mental health impairment may increase significantly with levels of job stress among female workforce, in line with Rees et al. (2015) report of high levels of anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances that can occur because of significant conditions. Research by Jönsson et al. (2003) also highlights the impacts of psychological stress on the quality of sleep of both men and women. Generally, sleep disturbances as result of stress causes many health issues for working women, and can prevent

them of living a decent quality of life. Some of the major challenges from sleep disturbances include loss of energy, feeling of exhaustion and lack of focus at work.

3.6.3 Longer hours of work

Workplaces operate in line with internal and external factors which can generate issues that are normal and part of the process of an organizational development, but also other issues that may create unfavourable conditions to individuals. Whether individuals work in physical or virtual workplaces, the average middle working-class spend a considerable amount of time carrying out work, and although it may be on the best interest of organisations to establish good conditions of work for employees, is it not always possible to monitor how employees spend their working time. Worse still how employees with multiple roles find a balance between multiple domain are managed in a way that support objectives from both end of the spectrums.

It is known that excessive working hours can cause psychological distress. Although working longer hours can be an intricate issue to contend nowadays when considered from the perspective of women, the competitive domain and nature of certain businesses today may require women to work longer hours on established and extraordinary targets either to reach objectives and fulfil the demands of different stakeholders. Thus, management of time effectively has become a vital skill demanded of women and men in today's dynamic world of work. Further, this aspect of time or working hours serve to indicate that women may work more and considerable longer hours than men due to additional household/family activities (Browder, 2015; Favero & Heath, 2012; Nilsen et al., 2016). While the number of available hours per day for men may be limited to paid work, women available hours per day may be shared between paid work and unpaid work thus working more longer hours than men do (Floderus et al., 2009).

There are vast documented facts recognising role of women at the workplace as significant producers of corporate results (Aazami et al., 2015; Favero & Heath, 2012; Gignac et al., 2014). Further, recent research which has examined the effects of work on women's health notes that the assuming extensive extra tasks constitutes a primary cause for burnout on women (Miguda, 2010; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015; Turner & Maschi, 2014; Waterhouse et al., 2016). Accordingly, Favero and Heath (2012) stress that the need for women to balance more complicated work and family issues including negotiating work and travel, volunteer work, education, and other nonfamily

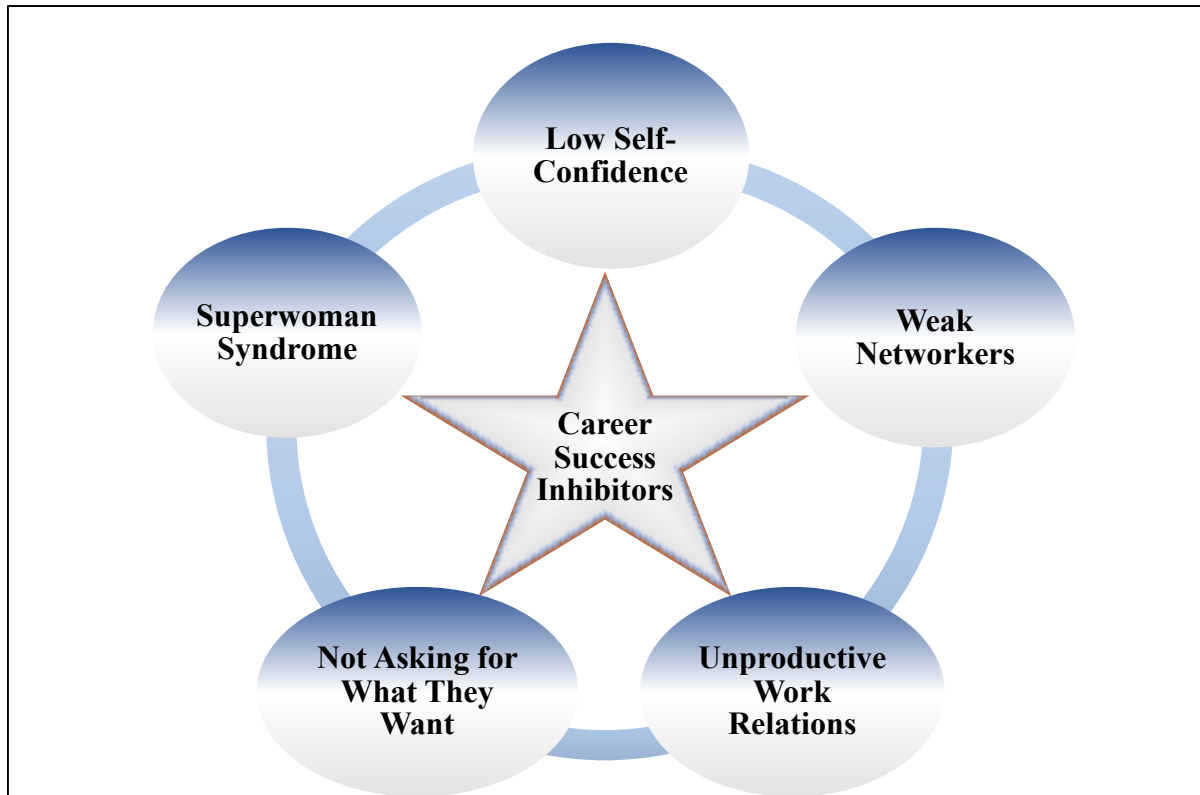
activities may be essential for a more balanced and more pleasant living experiences for women overall.

Traditionally women and men roles and tasks within the home environment were distinct (Favero & Heath, 2012). House cleaning, general family care and cooking, are some of tasks labelled as ‘women’s work’, while men assume responsibilities of changing pipes, fixing electrical appliances, yard and structure works. This traditional division of tasks between women and men at home seem to be prevalent in the corporate environment as men continue having priority over women for career growth (Muhajarine & Janzen, 2006). The challenges above are real and may demand different interventions depending on the contextual dynamics in the living experiences of women (Haracz & Roberts, 2016). While these barriers are significant, these factors reflect barriers which workplaces are legally and morally accountable to address, not only towards the wellbeing of their female staff but their workforce across gender.

3.7 Career success inhibitors

The impacts of challenges imposed by the workplace are evident in women’s daily lives. In addition, additional barriers may be deterrent of women’s success, and affect overall workplace satisfaction [Figure 3 below]. These barriers may be primary causes of desired progress to women, present problems to well-being and influence the ability for working women to develop into stronger successful individuals (McKinsey & Company, 2016). Furthermore, these inhibitors may encourage unhealthy displayed behaviours and involuntarily developed attitudes, and ultimately cease the progress and development of women within the workplace domain.

Figure 3. Career success inhibitors



3.7.1 Low self-confidence

Women may display much lower confidence than their men counterparts in their abilities and work performance, especially in areas that men dominate (de Terte et al., 2014; McKinsey & Company, 2016). Low self-assurance can to an extent be translated into lack of knowledge which results in less career promotion and advancement. Confidence can increase enthusiasm and help women become more resilient to search for new opportunities for development to improve conditions (McKinsey & Company, 2016).

3.7.2 Weak networkers

It is generally agreed that women build relationships with other individuals without great efforts, which is a significant prerequisite for succeeding in the business environment where team work and interpersonal relationships is considered primary. Even though it is usually assumed that networking is a woman's strong feature which is associated with women easiness to engage in

spontaneous verbal communication than men, establishing strong and good relations with co-workers and other stakeholders do not necessarily cause women to grow professionally (McDonald et al., 2016; Fida et al., 2016). Building strong networks is a quality that men more than women have and which consequently allow men to develop a stronger alliance with different pool of contacts, resulting in men expanding their pool of opportunities as they need (Grossman, Eckel, Komai, & Zhan, 2016).

3.7.3 Unproductive work relationships

Workplaces advocate good interpersonal relationships amongst co-workers for the benefit of business and employees. As much as women are encouraged to establish relationships at work, some people may deliberately or undeliberate influence others not to grow and develop in a health vigorous way (McKinsey & Company, 2016). In essence, excessively self-pity or self-absorbed individuals tend to be too pessimistic about the prospects of life as they progressively and deeply focus on own troubles (Fahlgren et al., 2015). By not being able to disconnect from a negative state of mind, people are more likely to be vulnerable to mental exhaustion. The failure for women to develop into resilient can also therefore be attributed to toxic relationships whenever women allow others to influence them negatively. In such a state of mind people often fail to recognise positive ways to overcome difficulties including welcoming ready available support from other productive relationships with other people for example. Self-knowledge is fundamental to success in the business environment for without self-identify a person would not be able to determine the qualities that make them unique people.

3.7.4 Not asking for what they want

Women usually do not ask for what they want as much as men do in terms of their employment goals, and consequently rewards and payment rises, get to be established by others and not as per their standards. Such approach may cause working women to conform to workplace injustices and not to be paid fairly/equally as men and not to find the full fulfilment in their work life (Grossman, Eckel, Komai, & Zhan, 2016; Muhajarine & Janzen, 2006). It is evident that not all women want to accomplish the exact same goals like men may want, or like other women may want. People have different aspirations. Conversely, it is vital to appreciate that while working individuals pursue organisational goals, personal individual goals are taken also projected by the individuals

(Bandura, 2006). Thus, by identifying personal areas of growth that directly align with the workplace objectives, women may take proactive action towards achieving their goals and have greater probabilities to achieving positive results. In addition, women who are specifically more confounded by their own limitations can improve self-efficacy and improve their experiences. Assessments on the impacts of self-confidence and self-efficacy demonstrate that people who readily display these abilities tend to set more goals for themselves and implements plans that assist their achievement to because of their ability to make choices positively (Rees et al., 2015; Turner & Maschi, 2014).

3.7.5 Superwoman syndrome

For individual reasons, some working women may push themselves into very hard and strenuous work, and get involved profoundly in the details of activities to ensure that everything in their lives is continuously kept in good order. This is the term people in general and women in particular use to address a woman with exceptional physical or mental ability, especially who successfully manages a home, brings up children, and has a full-time job (Waterhouse et al., 2016; Woods-Giscombe & Black, 2010). Even in cases whereby employed women may have facilities to delegate a part or total of work and family/home responsibilities to a third party, it is not unusual to find that they will still feel the need to be entirely involved in activities that can be delegated (Sperlich & Geyer, 2015).

Some experts suggest that women tend to feel the need to please other people (Favero & Heath, 2012; McKinsey & Company, 2016; Miguda, 2010). By feeling compelled to performing every action that may come their way - either for own gratification or to satisfy third parties - women may involuntarily introduce facts that can cause them physical and mental challenges in the long run (McFayden, 2015; Waterhouse et al., 2016; Woods-Giscombe & Black, 2010). In that note it can be agreed that in as much as the subject of superwomen may inspire women to put their best efforts and take full control of their work and life roles, extreme involvement in activities should be monitored. Furthermore, since certain undesirable behavioural tendencies of women cannot always be avoided, organisational supports should be designed and made available to assist alleviate the effects of undesirable experiences of women at work. Having resilience models to follow affect improve women psychological health and experiences beyond the work environment.

By exercising mindfulness knowledge in this regard in pinning down responsibilities at workplace or at home, and allowing themselves to make the best of their time in undertaking activities, an optimum health is promoted (Haracz and Roberts (2016).

Above and beyond these observations, such tendencies may often be overlooked. Again, it is only by recognizing that these challenges are real, that possibilities will open initiating change and facilitating women's lives in managing work and life confronts. These traits were evident in various of the workplace and career self-development studies of women (George, Helson, & John, 2011; McDonald et al., 2016; Fida et al., 2016; McKinsey & Company, 2016).

3.8 The biopsychosocial resilience perspective to addressing women's concerns

The gains to be won by addressing these challenges are numerous. Research on individual resilience has focused on several subjects including spirituality, culture, personality and relationships and aging (Doubell & Struwig, 2014; Southwick et al., 2014), yet few studies have examined whether these factors impact the wellbeing of women. Women can achieve rewarding work status and increase their economic and retirement security, and protect themselves and loved ones from adverse conditions. Employers would much appreciate qualities such as perseverance flexibility and dependability, that resilient female workforce would be able to provide.

Resilience of working women require more than resources available, it calls for the free will of individuals to wanting to make change happen in their lives. It is important to note that resilience is not a fixed variable, but a phenomenon which develops over time during person's life experiences. Meaning that a person is not resilient by default nor that it is a guarantee that once this skill has been established that it will be promptly consistent. So, it is possible that working women who have established a reputation of thriving and or positive individuals may also encounter barriers which could still challenge them significantly and cause them imbalances at any point in time.

While undesirable experiences can affect everyone, the ability to manage undesirable experiences in as far as theory is concerned depends on the circumstances of the individual, and their preparation toward addressing the situation. So, while the strength of developing resilience may vary from person to person, any individual may be vested with resources to develop resilience.

This include especially women from different generations of women, since they vary in their outlook on adversity factors and attitudes towards issues that can affect their overall health status (Favero & Heath, 2012).

Life adversities of high impacts affect the normal functioning of people. It is critical for female workers that workplaces understand the challenges derived from work that can affect women significantly and to recognize women as experts in their life experiences. In that way workplaces are more likely to find answers that can help improve female workforce thriving qualities, *inter alia*, coping, mindfulness, self-efficacy, neuroticism, psychological adjustment (Rees et al., 2015). These elements seen to be more individual-focused than organisational-focused. Several scholars stress that initiatives which are implemented by workplaces on the basis of business objectives that are in line with women's personal objectives may favourably assist women display and sustain resilience abilities. Though various strategies may be established by the management to assist resolving the effects adversities, resilience is one which is emphatically effective in ensuring that women are fully recharged, resourceful and productive at work (Leppin et al., 2014; Mallak & Yildiz, 2016).

Notwithstanding the relevance of individual resilience of women, it is evident that workplaces value resources that can promote growth for the business. Further, in some cases, organisations differently may find that maintaining an environment free from challenges difficult to achieve (Matula, 2013). While promoting employee health, organisations can still be affected by employees' stresses caused by family issues, relationships, children and especially work (Matula, 2013; McDonald et al., 2016). This also implies adversity and resilience to be two side of the coin. Clearly it is human nature to channel ways that can assist establish balances in personal lives, but without adverse experiences encountered within and outside the work domains, women would probably not recognise resilience. Thus, different constructs below encouraging resilience in women may as well support the interest of workplaces to prosper.

3.8.1 Promoting lower levels of neuroticism in women

A healthy level of neuroticism permits individuals to form a more common sense and sound judgement on the practical experiences of their life domains. Obstacles can exacerbate when

individuals are not able to define their experiences and come to terms with their possible contributions to the circumstances. Thus, neglecting having some form of responsibility towards occurrences that are not favourable is closely related with poor state of neuroticism (Rees et al., 2015). The attribution theory to some degree explains the variation of perceptions of the real protagonists to promoting resilience experiences amongst individuals (Cohrs et al., 2013; Fida et al., 2016); Grossman, Eckel, Komai, & Zhan, 2016; Mohammadi & Sharififar, 2016). For some individuals, it may be easiest to take credit for every outcome considered constructive, for others it is easier to put blame on other people or events for undesirable outcomes which they may happen to experience. People may often be afraid to face events that are uncomfortable, and it is common for people to withdraw from problems which may be the result of their direct actions.

Many may perceive neuroticism as synonym of pessimism, which is also associated with a neurotic person. This believe tend to demote the common understanding that life is a mixture of positives and negative experiences and the possibility of neuroticism as a variable which can increase a person's human potential to recognising life ups and downs. In fact, several arguments suggest that neuroticism can also prepare people to advance life challenges. Although people may display extremely negative signs of depression, anxiety and unhappiness, considered as high symptoms of neuroticism (Rees et al., 2015), neuroticism does in instances stimulate a person's ability to see experiences from a more positive perspective by understanding their feelings and why they may be experiencing events. The individual may attempt to approach the experience as an opportunity rather than a threat and may experience incremental changes towards becoming a more proactive individual. Essentially, as human beings, it is vital to reach a level of understanding that certain occurring events in life may challenge a person's ability to control the issues. This is as some suggest, part of human nature which gives individuals the opportunity to adapt, through learning to change and adjust into ways that facilitate managing challenges and influence positive outcomes in the environments which people are part of (Haracz & Roberts, 2016; McKinsey & Company, 2016).

People often will consider themselves to be strong or confident until something quite significant to them happens (Matula, 2013). Consequently, the true meaning of resilience becomes subjective to each person in that a person may only truly understand it when an experience of quite significant

happens, where they experience conditions never imagined or significant enough to cause them psychological instability such when a person feels unable to move on, feels overwhelmed by events and wishes they could go back in time to change things to prevent them from happening. Where people may feel hopeless but realise measures can be taken to allow them to return to a favourable state of mind, individuals are likely to invest own efforts to affect the situation positively. This process of resilience may cause individuals to identify and block memories or thoughts, behaviours and actions of an adverse nature [especially those which can negatively influence desired situations or states of mind].

A combination of different factors will determine how fast a person will be able to recover from adverse experiences (Haracz & Roberts, 2016; Mallak & Yildiz, 2016; Rees et al., 2015). In normal circumstances, a person's predisposed behaviour²⁰ following experiences of adversities, is influenced by personal dynamics such as self-efficacy or derived from their peers or workplace supporting such as counselling aimed to promote resilience. Forethought is an important quality which seems to aid individuals mitigate stressful experiences. Moreover, people can find it to be an effective strategy, when engaging in self-contemplations²¹ in order to attract desirable outcomes (Haracz & Roberts, 2016; Rees et al., 2015).

3.8.2 Promoting higher levels of mindfulness in women

Mindfulness controls the part of the human psychology which influences a person's ability to becoming aware of things that are happening to them directly or not, thus becoming more conscious of their own vulnerabilities and strengths (George, Helson, & John, 2011). Healthy mindfulness can also assist in less negative responses from women to occurrences that have the

²⁰ Behaviour develops overtime and may change as often as people experience different events in their lives. Behaviour may also be greatly influenced by other factors beyond biological, psychological and social dimensions. For more information on the current discussion please visit the following sites:

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/commentaries/women-jobs-economy/en/>

<http://urbanwomanmag.com/2017/10/03/what-is-african-feminism/>

<http://www.afdb.org/>

Additionally, for other factors relevant to women's overall progress please see PESTLE factors [Political Economic, Social, Technological, Legal, Environmental] for some more insights at:

<https://www.foundationrecruitment.com/pestle-analysis/>

²¹ These are essentially the process of engaging in proactive thinking about the problem background; how it affects the psychological health of the person directly involved in that situation; and defining further impacts which the events may have on the mental and physical state of the person affected.

opposite desired effect on them. At the same time, awareness can influence the developing a state of mind that is positive and prepared to deal with future events. For example, when adverse experiences take place, all things considered, women holding a positive level of mindfulness become less apprehensive and as consequence react proactively and confidently towards the situation (Woods-Giscombe & Black, 2010).

This attribute adds value to women's ability to focus on what happens in their lives. This is especially important because if women have a positive mind-set and are aware of what they need to do to improve their daily activities at home or at work and their activities may become more rewarding (Haracz & Roberts, 2016; Woods-Giscombe & Black, 2010). Conversely for working women, particularly women with family engagements and responsibilities, having low levels of mindfulness may cause problems, some of which may have impact on them through life (Back et al., 2016a; Rees et al., 2015). Low mindfulness means amongst other things that individuals may not be able to effectively manage important workplace and home functions and may miss out important key issues to resolve just because their perception or awareness of a situation at a lower level of mindfulness.

Particularly to mindfulness, workplaces have an equal responsibility to promote resilience of women since workplace can cause women to experience undesired experiences (Rees et al., 2015; Woods-Giscombe & Black, 2010). Consequently, it is suggested that workplaces improve feedback systems that can allow workers to express issues that may be experienced by them at some point and which are regarded as threatening to overall objectives. It can be difficult for employees to display resilient abilities when there is significant lack of accurate feedback or support following adverse events within the workplace environment (Haracz & Roberts, 2016). Hence, workplaces need to increase their awareness on workplace subjects which challenge women in particular, and need to demonstrate how difficulties will be addressed so that women are aware of the organisation's **stand of situations**, and make sure that employees feel that they are not alone. The bottom line is that as a result of getting feedback, women may gain better knowledge of the situations and become more positive about overcoming adversities.

3.8.3 Promoting higher levels of self-efficacy in women

From a feminism context, in managing female workforce it is fundamental that good assessments on women's perceived self-efficacy are made in order to manage a more constructive level of control towards working challenges (Turner & Maschi, 2014). Considering that the combination of a person's set of knowledge, skills, attitude with other workplace job-related factors determine the degree to which results are achieved, it can be agreed in principle that variables such as control, influence, collaboration, and professional skills, which are all elements affecting work performance, and affecting health, as Bergman (2003) indicates to be particularly primordial for women whose work interests are invested into jobs dominated by men. In essence, women's sense of positive self-efficacy may assist women to overcome issues such as organisational segregation as it is one of the central workplace concerns that feminists attempts to address.

3.8.4 Promoting higher levels of coping in women

The nurturing side of women may allow them to give or share information of the experiences in their lives with other individuals (Smith et al., 2016). Consequently, women can deliberately discuss work and life related adversities in more detail. To help women coping with the issues that they face workplaces may use trained health professionals who would assist women developing positive behaviours that could be beneficial both professionally and personally. Thus, allowing the identification of potential barriers and the finding reinforcement measures that could resolve issues in the present and future. On the individual level, sometimes it may become quite challenging for females to cope with difficulties on their own without intellectual support, thus women may benefit substantially from role models who have experienced or understand the impacts of significant adversities and can contribute positively to maintaining psychological and physical health of other women.

Researchers in psychological health (McKinsey & Company, 2016, Garcia-Dia et al., 2013; Rees et al., 2015) deduce adversities as experiences that may make a person discover hidden strengths and talents a person may not ever realised had in them. Further, role models are people who may possess qualities which enthuse other people and whom other people may have a great deal of admiration (Favero & Heath, 2012; Hicks, 2014). The individual is acknowledged as being able to associate themselves with role models if they believe they share similar attributes or qualities.

Taking all other things into account, it is suggested that role models from the same sexual orientation may have greater impact as far as influencing interests of people seeking to become better in a domain of life. On the other hand, due to shortage of female leaders, it becomes more demanding for women to recover in areas where an outside perspective is required, thus putting more pressure on women to solve confronts on their own. Therefore, resilient women role models inspire other working women who need resilience to succeed in the face of significant.

3.9 Conclusion

In summary, although additional research may be needed, it appears the commitment of many women and men supporters of reducing women's concerns have contributed to various positive advances toward positive experiences for women in different life domains. Nevertheless, it is fundamental to comprehend the origins and development of feminism in relation to women's struggles in dealing with major life challenges.

Despite some differences and limitations within different forms of feminism movements, the need to advocate measures to minimise women's challenges and the quest to improve the home and work life of women resonate amongst feminism philosophies. If feminism thinking influence interventions that change undesirable conditions of women, it will be then that workplaces will be more equitable workplaces for women.

Most of the workplace and personal adversities described are valid issues as far as causing harmful psychological outcomes on women. Without a focus on women adversities of day-to-day life of women, workplaces and their key players will be unable to understand the experiences of working women at different areas of life, and most importantly be unable to promote resilience.

It is important to note that even though feminism theories originated as a mechanism to voice and relieve significant amount of historically recognised issues of women, the extent to which women issues can be solved is rather intricate. Whereas revolutionary interventions in the social, political and economic environments to alleviate women concerns are observed and should be recognised; feminism literature across the board should strive to solve the very issues that often undermine

women self-development. It is not surprising that a direct correlation exists between feminism theories and the need to promote resilience of women.

The theoretical overview around resilience contemplated in the previous literature chapters two and literature chapter three, explain the practical uses of resilience for women within or outside of the workplace settings. The research methodology and methods which have been regarded applicable to the aims of this study are reviewed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed account on the research design, methodology, approaches and other pertinent applications that are used to conduct this research. Given the multi-dimensional constructs of the psychological resilience concept, a resilience model has been selected to direct the aims of the study. It is based on the different components comprising the model illustrated in chapter two that six objectives and research questions were adopted. The model constituents have been projected in line with the position and role of the HRM towards female gender workforce in organisations. Based on the qualitative nature and objectives of this study, this chapter provides an outline of the ideology of constructivism design chosen to guide the different methods and research tools to collecting, analysing, interpreting and presenting information. The chapter further discusses issues of trustworthiness as well as ethical principles and measures employed to support and reflect this research.

4.2 Design of Research

Scientific research undertakings must have a design. A research design represents the base on which studies are planned, implemented and evaluated. Researchers have different views on what constitutes truth and knowledge. A paradigm is what scientific community defines as views that guide our thinking, beliefs and assumptions about society and ourselves (Wagner, Kawulich, & Garner, 2012). Paradigms are used so that researchers are guided during the research process on the choices made and can manage the applications of chosen methodologies and methods. This study has been conducted under the premises of exploratory research. It is through exploratory research design that events, people, and organisations are studied holistically. The exploratory design is therefore considered appropriate because of the aim of the study to understanding the subject of resilience from the vantage points of women themselves who meet a set of criteria established for this study (Chenail, 2011; Rees et al., 2015).

4.3 Research paradigm/approach:

It is not uncommon for researchers to be challenged when deciding on a suitable paradigm that can inform the choices made on research topics chosen (D. E. Gray, 2014). Wagner et al. (2012) stress the need for researchers to determine own paradigmatic views, by contemplating about own views and knowledge on the topic chosen for the study. There are three predominant research approaches in social research constituting the basis of a research design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed research (Sekaran, 2013; Wagner et al., 2012). Due to their unique characteristics, each of these approaches must be aligned with the research objectives of the study.

4.3.1 Qualitative research approach:

The qualitative research approach as indicated by Sekaran (2013), seeks to interpret or make sense of phenomena in terms of meanings the phenomena have for participants. The phenomenon of resilience is one which necessitates explanation in terms of processes behind observed results and through peoples' perceptions of events (Rees et al., 2015). A qualitative approach usually analyses smaller units or samples. Thus, the main goal is to seek for answers based on real-life occurrences using one or a combination of data gathering instruments such as individual and/or focus group interviews, observation and focus group discussions (Mann, 2016). On the other hand, an approach taken within the terms of quantitative methodology may fundamentally concern with collecting and analysing information which is not presented in the form of numbers. This is because the focus of the quantitative approach revolves around quantifiable, statistical data from larger samples using techniques such as polls, surveys, and self-report (Wagner et al., 2012).

A qualitative methodology however aims to achieve depth rather than breadth of the subject matter and puts emphasis on every aspect around the subject under study. Since the present research intends to investigate the phenomenon of resilience the researcher makes use of the qualitative methodology to allow for a laborious, in-depth and comprehensive report to be produced. Several factors also may influence the decision researchers make to mixing research methodologies instead of using a distinctive one. Hence the term mixed methodology (Larson & Farber, 2012; Sekaran, 2013; Wagner et al., 2012). A Mixed research approach is purely a combination of techniques from qualitative and quantitative methodologies that are used in the same study. This approach is usually used in studies that aim to uncover subjects where quantitative evidence and statistic should be

augmented with qualitative findings and vice-versa. Given the research topic and objectives of the current study in understanding resilience of women, the most suitable approach to follow is the qualitative methodology under the justifications which follow.

4.3.1.1 Reasons for qualitative methodology

Understanding social issues from a quantitative perspective often demand certain skills from end-users to use decipher numerical forms of data, hence the choice of employing a qualitative perspective in this research as an attempt to convey platform of knowledge that facilitate understanding to the intended audience. It is essential to offer extensive accounts of the phenomenon of psychological resilience based from the perspectives of women (J. Gray, 2012). The choice to using qualitative approach in this research study is manifold.

The first reason is the attempt of this study to contribute to qualitative literature specific to the female gender on psychological resilience studies within the workplace context (J. Gray, 2012; Hunter & Warren, 2014). Considering that psychological resilience may be significantly influenced by diverse dynamics of life in people's living environments, by using a qualitative approach, an effort is made to access current sources of information on resilience for working women which may inform an enhanced understanding of the subject. Therefore, this qualitative approach allows the researcher to travel through the women participants' landscapes so that they reveal personal aspects about themselves through lived stories to bring alive their perceptions on psychological resilience.

Secondly, although it is also possible to study resilience employing a quantitative methodology, a quantifiable/numeral data is more likely to prevent general audiences to a more profound understanding on the constructs analysed. Therefore, by applying a qualitative approach the process through which resilience develops can be augmented and supplemented by words and expressions that convey feelings. The literature of the present study suggests internal factors that characterize psychological resilience namely mindfulness, self-efficacy, neuroticism and coping, forming the areas of study for this research (Hsieh, Hung, et al., 2016). To be able to make the more deliberation on/ and to establish the patterns amongst resilience themes, it is pertinent to

deploy techniques which can assess the interactions between these components comprehensively and to aid answering the research questions.

Thirdly, because of the perceived undesirable experiences associated with the process of obtaining psychological resilience and due to people's background influencers, getting to the essence of the causes of human behaviour may not be achieved. It is not unusual for individuals who might have experienced very challenging life occurrences to be uncomfortable sharing their lives, especially whenever emotional dynamics on traumatic or stressful events were intense. Since the researcher has experienced related issues of adversities, points of reference aid support to the process of open conversations between the women candidates and the researcher on their life undercurrents.

The fourth reason to be considered is that using qualitative research approach stimulates and adds power to minority voices. Which explains the fundamental need to ensure that the women partakers in this study display characteristics associated to the subject of resilience since qualitative research is predominantly concerned with instituting trustworthiness (Carcary, 2009). A qualitative study recognises women resilient characteristics and attempts to get women to express their thoughts and emotions unrestrictedly. Without using a qualitative approach, this study may not benefit the contextual prospective which the researcher envisages to cultivate, and may otherwise undermine the objectives of the study.

Lastly, the concept of resilience suggests that individuals having this ability can demonstrate thriving qualities despite repeated exposure to significant experiences (Jackson, Firtko, & Edenborough, 2007). Research shows that women are more likely and readily to express feelings, emotions and share moments than men (Lian & Tam, 2014). That said, this common characteristic or tendency may not necessarily inhibit adversities from affecting women physically, and emotionally. A qualitative approach is most suitable in leading the different steps of the current research, considering that the research candidates can offer boundless insights on the subject and presuming that the findings of this research are manifold and useful.

4.3.2 Social constructivism

The study adopts the constructivism paradigm for this paradigm examines constructivist theory of knowledge and the understanding of the nature of knowledge and how people acquire knowledge within social research (Wagner et al., 2012) The term 'construction' refers to ways people build understanding of the world around them and how they fit into the world (Wagner et al., 2012).

4.3.2.1 Reasons for social constructionism

In the context of the above, several reasons give the constructivism approach more pertinence to this current research study:

It supports the basis of qualitative approach in this study since resilience is greatly contemplated as attribute, a process or an outcome. This background suggest that resilience is a product of human intelligence which interacts with experiences that people live in the real world, thus it recognises that resilience is a construction of people realities. By following the constructivist perspective therefore, the researcher avoids a victim-blaming approach which would suggest that individuals who do not possess the characteristics of resilience to function well are to be blamed for this lack (Southwick et al., 2014). Using the constructivist approach the research questions for gathering data from participants' inclusive domains are facilitated on broader contextual base.

It emphasises the construction of meaning. The constructivist approach stems from the ideology that reality is created by people and its main objective is to discover the social world of human experience by building patterns of meaning (Pieters, 2016; Wagner et al., 2012). Therefore, only the women participating in this study can attribute constructive meanings to their existence. That is, the life experiences and the knowledge acquired can only be revealed from women own vantage points rather than by meanings ascribed to them.

It encourages free expression of innermost feelings (Pieters, 2016). Since this study focus on female gender it assumes the study subject criteria as indicated in the sampling section. To understand how women, acquire knowledge about resilience, it is useful that the researcher takes on a constructivist stance to encourage women to give voices to their beliefs and feelings while

maintaining the focus on discussions and enabling all women participants to engage in a constructive conversation without censorship or restraint during the interviewing sessions.

This approach recognises cultural effects and other dimensions of diversity to inform knowledge. Diversity encompasses a variety of differences including cultures, educational background, work experience, and geographic location (Southwick et al., 2014) This research supports diversity for it reflects women who differ in terms of ethnicity, educational background, work experience, and social circumstances. Therefore, a social constructivist approach allows this study to explore individual undercurrents of women, and generation of data which may reflect dynamics of resilience on a practical level of women's personal lives and workplace settings.

Social constructivism also recognizes the interrelationship between the researcher and participant (Wagner et al., 2012). From the researcher perspective, the constructivist approach requires that the researcher uses an open-minded perspective and willingness to consider new viewpoints without prejudice and subjectivity. While this approach values information conveyed by the subject individuals in the study, it acknowledges that the researcher's background and experience on the research topic may influence the research process. The researchers' reflections in the next paragraphs are points of references which may resonate with participants and the social constructivist approach.

4.4 Position of the researcher

The choice on the topic to study women and resilience grew towards the end of the Honours degree at University of Kwa-Zulu Natal in 2014. I have aspired to undertake a research study at the Masters' level which was based on a subject that I had a connection with as a person and as a woman and I wanted to ensure that the topic was pertinent and intelligible enough to fit into the field of Human Resources Management. As far as I remember my early experience within the workplace, dealing with and managing people has always been an interest of mine. My personal background of life experiences and social circumstances has been very much influenced by a combination of positive and negative occurrences. I believe that the experiences have also helped shape the person that I am today. Although I always felt I could connect with people from different walks of life, my interests into getting a deeper understanding on how people behave in response

to both favourable and unfavourable conditions have become clearer in recent years. I have developed a greater awareness of the importance of resilience because of the female individuals who were/still are part of my life [my mother and my 2 sisters²²] and many other women and men whom I had the opportunity to meet in life. As I developed relationships with other individuals both men and women in the professional and corporate environment, and I learned about their life experiences, it became more clear to me that resilience was a quality that people share but that many are not aware of. I chose to focus on women for personal reasons because of being a woman myself, and because of the diverse experiences that women have within the professional and personal family domains that make women unique examples of resilience in our society. I initially wanted to gather information from the different women whom I met from different network of business and service providers in Durban, especially to ensure workplace settings in Durban could be represented by participants. This was also an attempt to explore the role and usefulness of HRM or managerial practices towards different workplace settings. Some of these women have been the main caregivers for their immediate families for years. I have learned a great deal about the adverse experiences these women had in the past and their journey for establishing positive attitude to challenge life adversities inside and outside of their work environments. Many of the issues I knew these women experienced included conflicted upbringing, lack of educational and job opportunities, unhappy marriages, financial constraints, work pressures, physical illnesses, and the loss of a loved one, resonated with me as woman. And I wanted to explore the resilient part of these women who had faced significant adversities. Over and above that, as a woman I believe that it is opportune to explore the subject of women and resilience considering today's fast changing workforce demographics. I believe that any organisation enjoys the contributions made by employees who can demonstrate resilient attitudes. More importantly, I believe that changes in the social, political and economic environments in the world impact the role that women have in society. Therefore, undertaking this study on working women was a great opportunity to invest resources and to explore a qualitative analysis of knowledge in the field of psychological characteristics, and behavioural traits of female gender (Pieters, 2016; Mann, 2016).

²²

I am not simply referring to unfavourable experiences of which they came out resilient, but importantly from experiences whereby they were not able to come to terms with and which affected them to this date because of their contextual experiences and the choices they had made in the process.

4.5 Limitations of the study

In terms of limitations, it is the nature of scientific research to reflect boundaries associated with research studies. Although this study was carefully prepared some important limitations and shortcomings have been noted. The study may have been influenced by researcher subjectivity. Due to personal interest and knowledge about individual resilience, the researcher may involuntarily impact the research development. The issue of subjectivity alike other research limitations adds character specific to this resilience study and therefore cannot completely be disregarded from the current study.

As much as subjectivity being considered a potential limitation which may have an influence to the research study, it is essential to recognised that subjectivity has firstly allowed the researcher to be a real partner with participants because of the possible sensitive constructs of adversities which women are expected to reflect on; and secondly because the researcher could use own understandings and reflections to uncover valuable meanings in the process. However, to manage the impacts of this limitation, the researcher attempted to target women with diverse experiences who have different life, educational and professional backgrounds and were from ethnicities. The researcher made efforts towards continually referring to peer-reviewed literature to minimise the effects of researcher's subjectivity to the research development.

The outcome of the study may have been influenced in the following way:

The process in which the resilience biopsychosocial factors employed in this study vis-à-vis: neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping were investigated in chapters two and three, has been according as per the order in which these are illustrated on the resilience model. In contrast, the research interview question guide [Appendix A] was developed to reflect the order in which the resilience biopsychosocial factors were positioned in the research objectives which started by exploring mindfulness followed by self-efficacy, coping and neuroticism, as well as exploring the dimensions of psychological adjustment and the HRM.

4.6 Data collection method

Data refer to information in the form of facts or statistics collected together in the process of research for reference and analysis. Essentially, data collection refers to a systematic process to

gather and measure necessary information pertaining to the variables of interests that aids the researcher to test hypotheses, find answers to the questions of concern and assess outcomes (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014). Data collection is such an important step of research because it is through it that research integrity can be maintained properly. In addition, when incorrect proceedings occur along the collection process, the authenticity of the information which should be or has been analysed may be dubious, resulting in the incorrect use of resources and waste of time which would possibly have negative impacts on stakeholders involved in the research.

4.6.1 Design of the data collection instrument

In attempting to collect data from the participants effectively, it was incumbent that the researcher expended a research tool/instrument with most pertinence to addressing the research questions and objectives of this study (Mann, 2016). Therefore, the researcher applied Life History data collection instrument to succeed in the achievement of the aim of the study, as it assured that the genuineness of the study was primarily on the participants' experiences and not the researcher perceptions. This approach was subsequently supplemented and accomplished by putting forward thought-provoking questions related to the subject of psychological resilience to uncover insights on women experiences. Such enquiry included understanding the perceptions around resilience which the women held, and how women applied knowledge about resilience into coping adversities in terms of their organisational and life contexts.

4.6.2 Design of the research objectives

The research data was produced based on the six objectives of the study which have assisted in ascertaining the routes participants took towards psychological resilience. Each objective therefore has provided a distinctive goal to the overall research aim. More details on the design which have informed the realisation of each objective will be given below.

4.6.2.1 Research objective one:

- ◆ To understand the extent to which mindfulness contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace

The research interview was aimed at soliciting women to discuss their perspectives on the significance of mindfulness, and to gain their knowledge on issues that impacted their work environments. The interview questioning started by asking the participants to describe themselves so that the researcher could get a sense of their conscious holistic knowledge about themselves. The consequent questions intended to understand insights from women on how they stayed focused to achieved their goals; as well as to understand their general philosophy in life to deal with adversities; and sources of motivation in life. The overall intention to presenting these questions has been to determine the participants' interpretation of internal and external factors had contributed to personal past and present experiences.

4.6.2.2 Research objective two:

- ◆ To understand the extent to which self-efficacy contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace

The second research interview intended to gain insights about the extent to which women believed they can achieve objectives. Women were asked a variety of questions to name and describe the best qualities and strengths they had; and their views of what can result when adversities are not managed. Both questions aimed to discover how women's' perceptions on themselves shaped their working experiences. The women were also asked to describe qualities they wish to possess; and where they saw themselves in a future of five years' time within different domains of life. These questions probed to uncovering the type of improvements women wanted or needed to accomplish for self-growth and sustainability in the workplace or in their personal lives within few years in the future.

4.6.2.3 Research objective three:

- ◆ To understand the extent to which coping contribute to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace

The third research objective was designed to identify and explore mechanism and supports women use to deal with challenges effectively. Women were asked to reflect on previous event when they had to solve a challenge; to describe their personal strategies and action taken to resolve

challenges; and to reflect on influences which caused them to deal with adversities effectively. The purpose for asking this question was to identify effective and ineffective coping mechanisms women employ in times of adversities or crisis which impacts the manifesting of psychological resilience.

4.6.2.4 Research objective four:

- ◆ To understand the extent to which neuroticism influence psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace

The fourth research objective focused more specifically on women's workplace experiences of significant adversities which had a direct influence to their individual psychological resilience. To achieve this objective women were asked to reflect on an early event where some adversities were anticipated and prevented; to talk about their behavioural tendencies in terms of initial reactions to adversities and challenges. These questions aimed at exploring the extent to which women react and respond, and the symptoms experienced when women are face with unfavourable experiences occurring within the workplace environment and within the private lives. Additionally, the researcher asked the participants to indicate aspects of their workplaces considered to be greatly challenging or most rewarding; and were asked to name and explain personal general fears that women may have in life. These last questions aimed at getting women to emphasise characteristics about the workplace and personal life which can further justify how women succeed or fail to succeed in promoting other components to sustaining psychological resilience.

4.6.2.5 Research objective five:

- ◆ To determine what psychological adjustment strategies working women, deploy to cope with adverse conditions in and out of the workplace

The fifth research objective focused on women's perspectives on state of mind and balance against obstacles presented in their work and life environments. To attain to this objective, the women were asked to share the defining and precious moments in their life. The reason for this question was to identify past possibilities that have are meaningful for women and may act as cornerstone of ability to adjust to adverse conditions. Women are also asked to share details of physical and

emotional changes that women may notice or feel during difficult experiences; to define the benefits of resilience to attaining their goals; and to share techniques which help they maintain a positive resilient state. These questions were devised to define to the extent to which individual psychological resilience of women promotes the psychological adjustment to workplace and life's adversities.

4.6.2.6 Research objective six:

- ◆ To establish ways in which HRM can promote positive organisational behaviour such as resilience

The final research objective aimed at getting allusive views from women on their organisational environment and roles of the HRM towards women psychological resilience. The questions posed to women included instigated the type of environment women worked in; the workplace pressure which affected women at work; and/or supporting systems available [or which women wished were available] for them. A question regarding the availability of mentor was also asked to understand women attitude towards mentorship at the workplace. The focus of asking these questions was to inform major influences women attributed to individual and organisational support in promoting and strengthening the quality of resilience. The psychological resilience model discussed in chapter two was fundamental to developing the objectives of this study and the research instrument [interview question guide]. The insights of the six objectives above are information obtained from the vantage points of diverse women that are essential to connecting finding to theoretical basis conveyed in previous literature reviews chapters on resilience and feminism.

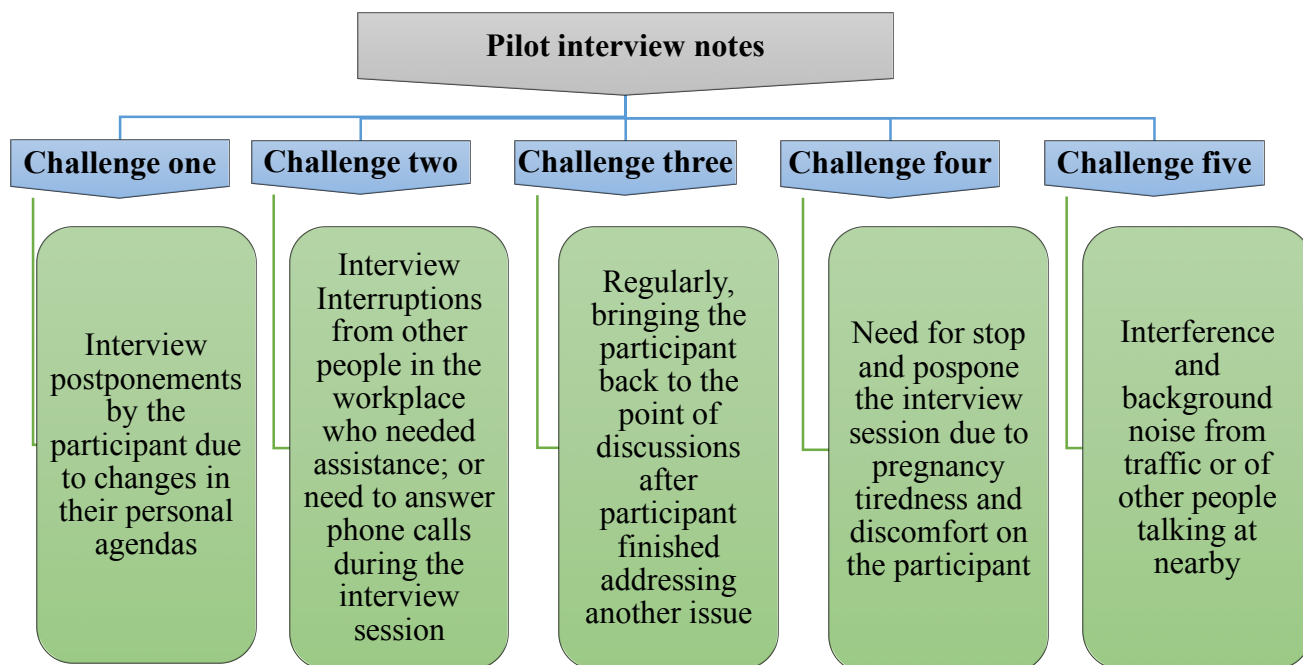
4.7 First individual interview: Pilot study

The researcher has piloted the first interview in terms of the life history method before proceeding to conducting further interviews. It is vital for the truthfulness of results that all necessary arrangements are in place, and importantly to avoid setbacks during the process of collecting data from participants (Mann, 2016). Therefore, a pilot study for this qualitative resilience research was undertaken prior to the launching of the data collection procedures, with one woman who is also a selected participant in this study. A pilot study allows the researcher to define the pros and cons

of the overall study. Further, by testing the research instruments and determining the general feasibility of the study, the researcher may establish the adequacy of time needed to conduct the study; the necessary resources; and anticipating any possible inaccuracies in the process to be addressed prior to launch the study (Chenail, 2011; R. Edwards & Holland, 2013). This preparation further ensures that vital corrections are completed before the launching of the study to the rest of the participants.

The first interview conducted with Participant 1, was also part of the pilot study which intended to identify areas with the potential to offset the objectives of the research and the process overall. The meeting took place at the business site of the woman. Although the pilot interview session was conducted in a secluded area in the participant's place of work, some barriers were observed and regarded as significant as to limiting the quality of data collection process. Figure 4 below outlines the observations made during the pilot interview.

Figure 4. Pilot interview: Preliminary challenges to the quality of data collection



4.7.1 Measures developed to address the observed challenges from the pilot

To address the above challenges, and ensure that potential obstacles such as the above were minimum in the proceeding interviews some initial considerations emerged. I have established and verified with each participant on their flexibility to meet with me at a quiet and comfortable site as mentioned earlier [including: the participant's workplace site; a restaurant site; the participant's home; and the researcher's home site], to ensure that the challenges mentioned above particularly challenges two, three and five were not experienced.

4.8 Description of the target population

A target population refers to a complete set of persons, subjects, units or entities that may or may not share a common characteristic. The target population for this study are female individuals currently working in Durban/KZN, who have experienced significant adversity, and who articulated deployed resilience abilities to deal with difficulties.

4.8.1 Sampling techniques and description of the sample

Scientific research studies should be devised in terms of scientific principles. This include identifying the population, the sample, and selecting the sampling methods/techniques to achieve the objectives of the study (Larson & Farber, 2012).

4.8.1.1 Study site during the research data collection

The study site in scientific research refers to the location where researchers obtain core data to form the basis of the research defined objectives which can vary based on different factors including the nature of the study, participant and researcher. The subject nature of this study explicitly indicates the overall aim of understanding women in selected organisational settings. This essentially means that participants sourced out of the necessity for them being part of a single workplace setting. For this reason, it was not a lack of coincidence that participants reflected different organisational background. Thus, the current study assumes multiple sites for the collection of data under the above circumstances.

As a measure to ensure a smooth and unobstructed process of interview and information gathering, each participant was given options of different places where interviews with each of could take place to accommodate their needs. The suggestive interview sites are as follow:

- ◆ The participant's workplace site [P1, P2 and P4]
- ◆ A restaurant [P7 and P10]
- ◆ The participant's home site [P3 and P6]
- ◆ The researcher's home site [P5, P8 and P9]

In terms of the time duration of the individual interviews I found that interviews which were conducted in the workplace sites took the time estimated in the research proposal, whereas the time of the interviews conducted at a restaurant, participant's home site, and the researchers home site were a multiple of the former.

4.8.2 Selection of the study sample

A sample indicates the subset of units or persons of the entire population selected by the researcher to represent all units or people of interest in a study. Deciding on the sample should be based on the premise that the sample selected enable appropriate data to be collected, thereby allowing the researcher to meet the aims/objectives of the research.

4.8.2.1 Sampling methods and sample size

Sampling reflects the process whereby the right number of units in a scientific research study are selected to represent a part of the population or the entire population under the study (Serakan, 2013). The sample size is therefore a portion of the population in the study and varies based on the nature of the study and whether a study is qualitative, quantitative and mixed. There are two research sampling groups or categories namely probability and non-probability used to identify the desired sample by the researcher (Serakan, 2013). Since the present study takes a qualitative position, the sampling method appropriate is non-probability sampling. This is a more subjective type of technique because the process of selecting samples does not give all candidates in the population equal opportunity of being selected, because the researcher can select candidates based on own preferences. A known characteristic of qualitative studies is the size of the sample which

is this case is significantly smaller compared to the size expected in quantitative studies. Besides that, an attempt has been made to promote the completion of the study aim with minimum partiality. Consequently, the researcher uses two non-probability sampling methods namely Purposive and Snowball sampling to attempt minimising the issue of bias in the selection of the sample.

4.8.2.1.1 Purposive and snowball sampling

A purposive sampling was used towards women who were part of the researcher's own contacts within the professional network of business and service providers. Purposive sampling represents the sampling method which allows the researcher to make final judgements towards the selection of samples from the population whom may or may not necessarily share the same attributes (Sekaran, 2013). The researcher has also used an onward referral system from the participants initially sampled to include additional candidates to partake in this research. This was realised in terms of the snowball sampling method. Some of the purposefully sampled candidates assisted in identifying other potential women whom they believed met the sampling criteria of this study presented below. Snowball sampling is the technique most suitable for research where the population of interest are hard to reach or are unknown by the researcher (Wagner et al., 2012). Consequently, as the researcher obtained references of other prospective candidates, the individuals were approached both telephonically and in person and were all provided the same information on the study aims and research objectives for undertaking this study given their interest to take part [Refer to Appendix A and Appendix B]. This was an effort to ensure that all women who were part of the study were equally informed about the study aim and objectives of the research and fully understood their roles and rights as research participants.

4.9 Criteria used for selection of participants

The researcher understands the importance to ensuring that the research participants were trustworthy for taking part in the current study. By applying purposive and snowball instruments allowed the researcher to locate and select candidates who met the criteria demarcated on the following bullet points:

- ◆ Gender: all participants must be women

- ◆ All participants must be above 27 years of age²³
- ◆ All participants must be currently working/or have worked in an identifiable workplace settings in Durban/KZN
- ◆ All participants have demonstrated resilience qualities and could overcome adversities to within and outside of the workplace settings
- ◆ All participants can recall and articulate conscious experiences of resilience in the English language

4.10 Data collection method: Individual interviews

In research, interviews refer to instruments or tools which perform specific roles and are employed to gather information directly from individuals on their overall perceptions, attitudes and experiences (Serakan, 2013). Interviews allow researchers to generate a dialogical relationship with the subjects selected for the research through a process of exploring meanings embedded in the perceptions of the candidate regarding the subject (Rees et al., 2015). Accordingly, the main advantage of using interviews in the present study is that each candidate got to express their reasoning in words, and shared personal views in relation to psychological resilience. Interviews are important tools in qualitative studies due to the fundamental structures for extracting core detailed information that characterise data which is intangible (Hyett, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014).

4.10.1 The life-history interview

A life history is the overall picture concerning the lives of partakers in qualitative research obtained during interviews (R. Edwards & Holland, 2013; Flick, 2009; Mann, 2016). It should be noted that data collection instruments in general may present benefits and shortcomings; Life history is no different. The main purpose to bring the stories of peoples' alive as part of scientific studies is to get an overall picture of who the subjects are as adult individuals so that their current attitudes and behaviours can be interpreted, and enable an understanding on how previous decisions made in the past have influenced them in the present. It was essential that the researcher aspired and was

²³ The reason for choosing this particular criterion was by no means to regard women younger than 27 as unqualified candidates for this study of resilience but rather to provide additional strength to reflect the purposive and snowballing sampling employed by the study research as to convey the characteristics of the initially envisioned candidates.

fully trusted by the research candidates using transparent open-ended questions for deep insights from participants. Contrary to structured or semi-structured interviews, life history interviews accommodate a structure-less setting which then allows a rich flow of dialogue between the researcher and the participants who feel comfortable sharing critical inputs.

Despite this instrument being time consuming, it is nevertheless the ideal to use because of the underlie qualitative nature of this study. It was also fundamental that the women participants realised their significance into the study as this prevents last minute modifications or unnecessary holds. To ensure everyone was on the same page the researcher gave all participants the leading questions of the interviews, a week before the interviews took place. This step was important to make sure that participants were all well-informed of the research underpinnings, but it also intended to positively anticipate the sentiment of all the women for their contribution towards the study. Psychological resilience is not an enigmatic topic in the world of work. Since methods of dealing with significant adversities and the process of developing resilience differ, life history data allowed the researcher to add a qualitative perspective into the epistemology of resilience.

From a non-qualitative perspective or the quantification measures used in resilience quantitative studies there are evidence supporting the subject. Nonetheless, it is fundamental for the purposes of this study to examine the building blocks forming resilience comprehensively when the enquiry concerns minority groups such as women. It is only possible to make better sense of how resilience occurs by devising and implementing right systems, hence a choice was taken to attempt to capture the dynamics in a persons' life using life history interviews. This data collection tool also helped assess the stages of hardship, periods of improvement and the changes that took place in the lives of the diverse women of this study. As stated above, individual interviews enabled open-ended questions on resilience to be assessed thus allowing a comfortable atmosphere feel and an easy conversational flow between the researcher and the participants to happen.

Studies in positive psychology concur that individuals who score high in resilience have better coping capacity and adapt to life's vicissitudes more effortlessly than individuals who score low in resilience (Aazami et al., 2015; Back et al., 2016a; Bolier et al., 2013; Cohrs et al., 2013; Morote et al., 2017; Rogerson et al., 2016). Life history interviews in this study informs the contributes of

positive or negative changes of the women participant's employment and other life contexts. Accordingly, evaluating the extent to which adversity affects women and the systems involved in managing uncomfortable situations may prove very useful not only for individuals operating under very stressful work conditions but for workplaces which recognise the benefits of having psychologically stable employees.

4.11 Data quality control

Data quality control refers to the means in which data is administered (Chenail, 2011). It reflects the level of effectiveness which research instruments measured the research objectives and the level of consistency of the results achieved. In scientific research undertakings, controlling the quality of data collection has different criteria for qualitative and quantitative methods. The traditional quality criteria of reliability and validity are instruments used to advocate issues in quantitative methods but not the focus in qualitative methods. Qualitative methods use the principle of trustworthiness instead which is the criterion used in the present study of resilience. Despite the differences, the criteria from both methods exist to institute rigour in scientific work.

4.11.1 Trustworthiness of qualitative research

Trustworthiness denotes the degree to which scientific work is consistent, authentic or truthful (Chenail, 2011). Although the concepts of internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity are not characteristic of qualitative research work, and rather quantitative research work (Flick, 2009); it is through the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities within the principles of scientific research that qualitative researchers ensure trustworthiness of research work is accomplished (Chenail, 2011). For the fact that researchers are accountable for connecting different parts of their research work together, this resilience study on women attempts to reflect on fundamental tools of trustworthiness. Although four of the strategies or tools namely credibility, transferability, dependability and conformity were applied into the process, the principles of dependability and credibility were exceedingly important to pursuing the research aim and objectives of the present study (Lietz & Zayas, 2010). Not only these principles offer fundamental basis for achieving trustworthiness, they have the supplementary role of facilitating the interpretation of the initial research findings (Serakan, 2013). Appendix D provides details on the factors of qualitative research in comparison to factors in quantitative research. It is important that

the current study institutes truthfulness as to eliminate any probability to be regarded as fabrication. Secondly since overall conclusions are reached based on evidence collected, as well as the reasoning of the researcher, it is critical therefore that the concepts of dependability and credibility are emphasised to ensue trustworthiness.

4.11.1.1 Dependability

Dependability is the extent to which the researcher can place the study in the context of the circumstances in the study with overall accountability. It makes it possible for research findings to be repeated consistently by other researchers (Flick, 2009). The current study uses to uses thematic analysis to examine data which requires organise data in terms of codification. Hence contextualisation of information from participants follow the principles of thematic analysis to ensure as much clarity as possible in the final reports.

4.11.1.2 Credibility

Credibility refers to the extent to which the results of study were reasonable and can be trusted. A Credible research is therefore one in which the findings can be assessed in several ways to explain the subject being investigated (Sekaran, 2013). Credibility is research characteristic which focus on quality of results rather that quantity to guarantee that results of the research are believable (Flick, 2009). This research study emphasised credibility in terms of choosing tools such as history interviews to make it possible to extract rich and comprehensive data from candidates rather than quantity (Chenail, 2011; R. Edwards & Holland, 2013). A pilot study was undertaken prior to the interviews to allow for any eventual and potential threats to the study be addressed in time of the launch of the study. It was also important to give participants a chance to ask any questions for clarifications before and during process of interviews, and giving them the opportunity receive the findings from the final report.

4.12 Data analysis: Thematic analysis method

According to Larson and Farber (2012), data analysis is the art of examining raw data with the purpose of drawing conclusions on the information material. In terms of this research, the data process analysis was based on Braun and Clark's (2006) thematic analysis technique. This method involves the process of identifying themes within the data and reporting them as findings (Braun

& Clarke, 2006). In terms of research, themes are important patterns of meaning within data which can be generated as the researcher gets closer to the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Research themes allow for extensive information which are relevant to be comprised and classified in much organised way thus ensuing transparency. Generating the different themes in this study involved following six steps as suggested by (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.12.1 Step one: Familiarise yourself with the data

It is a critical phase for the sake of trustworthiness of the study because researchers are expected to do justice with the amount of information they gather. Knowing and understanding the data makes it much easier for the researcher to generate codes and transfer such information into the right category. Some ways to improve familiarisation with data prior is having general knowledge of key areas of the subject matter or going through the data repeatedly to retain the most important information.

4.12.2 Step two: Generate initial codes

A code is a system of words, letters, figures, or symbols used to represent others, and can be generated based on the list of ideas developed by the researcher during step one of familiarising with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Codes provide few advantages including distinctive features to the data which facilitate the organisation of the research material into meaningful groups, which can make accessing information much easier (Flick, 2009). The researcher uses the aid of information technology to create and store initial codes based on the research questions and feedback received by participants during interviews.

4.12.3 Step three: Searching for themes

This step involves sorting codes into themes which requires the researcher to go through the list of codes developed and starting identifying and analysing the codes by linking one to the others and putting them into different themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Some codes are easily transferred into themes due to their well-defined features but other codes which may not be easily identified may be place under miscellaneous themes.

4.12.4 Step four: Revising the themes

This step requires the researcher to make additional amendments to the initial themes found, and establish their rationality. Having sufficient data may be important, however, most importantly is having data which is relevant, diverse and which can support the chosen themes otherwise themes may not be realistic and are likely to fail to carry the needed value.

4.12.5 Step five: Defining and naming themes

This step requires that themes be defined and refined after a thematic map of the data has been created. It is the responsibility of the qualitative researcher to give names and descriptions to the research themes (Chenail, 2011). The information can also serve to inform the readers how research questions have been located to address the research objectives. Themes therefore, ensure that the research data is organised by identifying chunks of associated or contrasting information which can be grouped together in a straightforward manner.

4.12.6 Step six: Producing the report

This last step is taken as soon as the researcher is satisfied with the overall presentation of themes. In this final report the researcher writes and presents the findings in a deliberate concise manner as to increase the readers' interests, while being consistent and ensuring that any arguments made is indeed in line with the research questions and study objectives respectively. Over and above the steps, thematic analysis assists the researcher to deploy proper treatment of the information gathered. The practical considerations for employing this method of analysing data is elucidated in the following section.

4.13 Thematic analysis method in the context of this study

This study has employed the 'thematic analysis' process to analyse the data collected from the participants of the study. The data corpus of this study comprised of ten interviews. All interviews were conducted by the researcher using an electronic recording device as evidence of the process, while taking additional written notes in the process. Following the interviews, the researcher performed the transcriptions manually and verbatim using a protected laptop computer.

To generate codes from the data corpus, the researcher followed different directions. A primary direction was taken to generate sub-themes based on themes which were developed in line with the main research questions and the objectives of the study [Refer to chapter three: Research Methodology]. The research instrument or interview schedule containing a list of questions which guided the interviews of this research [See Appendix B], has influenced the generation of codes which led to final salient themes and sub-themes [Refer to chapter five or table 4 in chapter seven for list of themes/sub-themes]

4.13.1 Defining Codes into themes for this research

As the interview progressed, I made notes of peculiar terms, words or phrases which women could articulate. Most of the codes emerged during the transcription process as I repeatedly listened to the interviews records. I tried to make links between what was been spoken by the women and main objectives of the study. Various codes emanated following repeated readings of the data transcripts which were then refined into more meaningful codes to represent the data corpus, or certain a data set in terms of sub-themes.

There were some obvious codes that emanated from the data which could be generalised into the objectives of the study because they were to a certain extent related to all participants [Like for example: All women self-identified themselves with a personal value or quality; all participants described a perceived adversity or undesirable experience; all women described a strategy applied to cope during a challenging event or situation]. Others less obvious codes were withdrawn through analysis performed on individual data items [For example, not all women described the same quality or held the same value; Women used different strategies to cope in the face of challenge; there were different categories of adversities but not all women related experiencing adversities in each of the categories].

The following table provides three different examples on the classification of the data corpus into codes and themes/sub-themes.

Table 2. An Illustration of the flow of data analysis and classification of the data codes and themes

Data items	Data extracts (Interview extracts from women's responses)	Researcher's observations	Codes/Sub-themes	Main themes
Interview 9/ Participant 9	<p>Researcher: “In what ways do you ensure you stay in the present moment to do your best at work during the day?”</p> <p>Participant: “... How you're gone know what's important to you if you don't know who you are!? And we take that for granted. And you're not gone know it by reading books, people say gone read a lot of books, hang around with a lot of people... they contribute, however you going to get who you are and what you want by calm, quiet, feel, think within yourself and then of course you then read, you talk to people you know that that help...”</p>	Participant 9 stressed ways to enhancing mindfulness e.g. calm, quiet, feel, think within yourself	It is not always easy but there is benefit from promoting mindfulness	Mindfulness as a Building Block to Psychological Resilience
Interview 8/ Participant 8	<p>Researcher: “What workplace and personal issues do you remember were most challenging in the past or at present? What would you say were the least effective methods in overcoming those challenges?”</p> <p>Participant:</p>	This participant has related experiences of ongoing adverse emotions followed the death of her daughter	Feeling the worst following unfavourable experiences	Neuroticism as a Building Block to Psychological Resilience

	<p>“... I couldn’t pray, even if I wanted to, but I couldn’t pray... cause like I wanted to know what was happening, why I didn’t want to pray at that time? Fortunately, I was lucky cause people I was talking to they were telling me just pray, they were telling me, it’s not like they were forcing me to kneel down and pray, they were telling me just pray it will pass, but I was, I didn’t do it, I couldn’t do it I don’t know why because even the session that they booked for me, it was draining me, they even allowed me to come every day because they saw I was so deeply lost, I just quit that...”</p>			
Interview 5/ Participant 5	<p>Researcher:</p> <p>“Can you describe the environment of your current workplace, and explain how does it demand resilience from you?”</p> <p>Participant:</p> <p>“...you know Nuria if you think about it, three quarters of your day is at work, so, if you, if you, you have to be happy in that environment, or as happy as you can be, and a lot depend on what you make it, you can’t expect somebody</p>	Participant 5 shared insights on the time factors associated with work or being at the workplace physically, and the importance to investing resources to promote positive work environments	Individual perspectives of workplace settings/environment to resilience	HRM’s Role in Promoting and Sustaining Psychological Resilience

	<p>else to make a happy environment for you, so you have to work on that concept and how you can achieve it and uh that entails drawing the other staff in and uh show them that you appreciate them that you respect them that you actually love them, it helps a lot. So, that's a very important thing to, your, your staff, the people that you work with, to make them feel special..."</p>			
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4.14 Special considerations: Ethical principles and procedures used to uphold the study

Researchers have the moral obligation to recognise the rights that participants in a scientific study have and to recognise general actions regarded as unethical in terms of scientific work (Flick, 2009). Ethics in research concerns the maintenance of the participant's safety and protection to prevent them from getting any sort of injury, distress and trauma during and/or after the research process (R. Edwards & Holland, 2013; D. E. Gray, 2014; Larson & Farber, 2012). It also involves applying necessary ethical principles to promote transparency, openness and accountability (Sekaran, 2013; Wagner et al., 2012). Therefore, it is the responsibility of researcher to look after the interests of subjects in the research and individual actions applied in the process. Different authors underline ethics as a central factor in the generation of constructive scientific research work (Flick, 2009; Lietz, 2010). Seen that every scientific study may have ethical implications, the following principles of ethics are vital and recognised by this research on understanding individual resilience of women:

4.14.1 The principle of autonomy

It is vital that trust between participants and the researcher in this study be established. Scholars also agree that a bond between the researcher and the participants is more likely to be reached when researchers demonstrate a sense of respect towards participants as autonomous individuals (Chenail, 2011; Hyett et al., 2014; Wagner et al., 2012). Therefore, researchers should be able to elucidate stakeholders about the purpose and objectives of the research, and candidates should request information that is clear and which is not ambiguous to allow them to exercise their rights. It was essential for the researcher to get from each of the women in this study, permission to have them as research participants by giving them a consent form and an additional copy of the same form for the participants to save. Ethical guidelines put emphasis that no individual should be coerced to participate in the study and should be able to discontinue their participation at any point in time if they wish to withdraw from the study underway.

4.14.2 The principle of beneficence

Beneficence refers to benefits, and should not be mistaken with financial incentives, as this may be mistaken by people considering partaking research studies. Within the context of research were

no monetary benefits is anticipated, the researcher must explain to the prospective participants of the non-existence of monetary paybacks from their contribution in the research. The researcher should as much as possible make use of available resources in a way that minimises harm and maximises benefits for the participants of the study and the society at large. In that view, the researcher of this resilience study anticipates that this study on understanding individual resilience of women in Durban selected organisational settings has positive implications for female individuals, the HRM and qualitative resilience studies.

4.14.3 The principle of fidelity

This principle relates to the level of trust expected between the researcher and the research participants. Trust often requires prioritising the interests of other people. Thus, this principle was applied in terms of accommodating the needs of participants rather than the needs of the researcher. Due to the nature of the topic and since the women involved in this study represent different workplaces, participants are given choices where to meet for the individual history interviews to ensure that they are most comfortable. Furthermore, participants shall receive a copy of the findings to allow them to appreciate the outcomes realised from their participation.

4.14.4 The principle of confidentiality

The principle of confidentiality is one of great importance in any category of research. Confidentiality is the guarantee that whatever information or aspect in the study which is directly related to participants is completely and absolutely respected, protected and safeguarded in terms of what has been agreed both in writing [informed consent] or verbally. An example of confidentiality is that the names of participants are not be disclosed and participants are indicated by pseudonyms throughout the study to protect their identity. Since business environment is technology-drive, keeping data safe may at times pose challenges for researchers to preserve data. For this reason, the researcher uses password protected devices and encrypted files to best safeguard data stored electronically.

Due to the non-numerical nature of qualitative analysis this qualitative research is rich and require to take special attention to the quality of managing the different phases involved in this research. Overall, the significance of ethics is not overrated in research, meaning that ethics should be made

a priority throughout the research process. Prior to beginning the research, the study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee [approval number: HSS/2045/016M]. An informed consent form [See Appendix B] was handed to each candidate and a further explanation around the implications of their participation was provided, along with explanations on their rights and actions. This occurred prior to commencing the interviews, and involved communicating with the candidates both telephonically and in person about the aim and objectives of the research, and confidentiality provisions. Candidates were encouraged to enquire about the study and have received clarifications pertaining to this study. Participants were also reminded that interviews would be recorded and informed about the arrangements in place for storage of records to maintain confidentiality and safety of the records. Signatures were formalised as soon as candidates were happy with the brief about their participations, following with life history interviews took place.

4.15 Conclusion

The methodology chapter specified the theoretical framework which informed the research paradigm, methodology and methods used to embody this research, and outlines narratives of the suitability approaches that resilience study uses. Thus, the chapter reviewed the concepts constructivism paradigm and qualitative approach in driving the research aims of this study which informed the choice of sampling instruments and criteria for sampling. The chapter provides details concerning the research process and methods used to facilitate other researchers to inquire and verify how results and conclusions were achieved. It further describes the six objectives developed to understanding individual resilience of women in selected Durban organisational settings. The steps involved in the analysis of data obtained from candidates are based on thematic analysis technique and are described in the chapter. Based on this technique the outcome of the analysis and findings thereof are presented and discussed in chapter four and five respectively. The chapter has finally reviewed essential interventions to institute research trustworthiness. These agencies included principles of ethics fundamental to ensuring that participants in this study were not harmed in any way, and to remind the researcher of the prominence to preserving research integrity throughout the process.

The following chapter compiles a collection of stories and perspectives on individual life-history interviews conducted, that I hope will stimulate thinking about the different experiences that the participants of the study have lived in the context of resilience.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This study took place in Durban, Kwazulu-Natal and included ten adult females between the ages 34 and 73. Each of the woman candidate represented a different workplace and type industry, and therefore did not share the same work environment. The ten Participants were individually interviewed in 2017; the total combined time which amounted to 1,400.00 minutes [one thousand and four hundred minutes; or an average of two hours and twenty minutes per each interview].

Due to the demographics of the study location, and since this research study assumed the phenomenological approach's reliance on the personal experience of the women, it became evident that the candidates of the study reflected the cultural backgrounds where the study took place. Consequently, to establish a platform which provided diverse perspectives of women, the researcher regarded fundamental that the participants were women from professional backgrounds, who represented the rich array of racial groups in South Africa. Further, without any particular order, the women in this study reflected the following racial group:

- ◆ Black
- ◆ White
- ◆ Coloured
- ◆ Indian

As to protect the identities of research candidates, and to apply the ethical principles of confidentiality and anonymity, the women were identified based on the order of concluded interviews with each of them as per their immediate availability [Consequently the women were individually identified as Participant or P 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; 6; 7; 8; 9 and 10]. All participant's viewpoints and discussions are presented in the chapter.

Although most of the participants did indicate a concern to disclosing their identities, my reflection on the non-disclosure of identities of the participants was twofold. Firstly, I felt that there was a need to provide candidates an assurance in knowing that they would not face any issue if their identities were exposed. Secondly, the interviews intended to gather in-depth data, and it was vital that women felt confident to discussing different subjects openly without feeling that they were compromised. Some of the women commented on feeling good after answering the research questions, because they felt it allowed them to consciously indulge in a retrospection on their lived experiences. Overall it has been certainly a great gratification knowing that participants wanted to share their stories and provide insights towards the topic of this study.

Table 3. Demographic representation of participants

Participants	Racial Group	Age	Academic Status	Marital Status	Children	Employment Status	Employment Industry	Workplace Settings	Job Title	Overall Period of Work	Nationality	Home Language/ Culture
1	Black	34	Diploma	Married	1	Self-Employed	Haircare	Not Disclosed	Business Owner/ Manager	7 Years	Uganda	Luganda
2	Black	34	Diploma	Married	2	Employed	Retail Healthcare	Glenwood Pharmacy	Pharmacist Assistant	10 Years	Zimbabwe	Ndebele
3	Coloured	37	ND Diploma	Married	2	Unemployed	Hotel & Tourism	Southern-Sun Hotel	Restaurant Supervisor	8 Years	Angola	Portuguese
4	White	73	Matric	Married	2	Employed	Skincare	Specialist Dermatologist	Practice Manager	33 Years	South Africa	Afrikaans
5	Black	39	Matric	Married	1	Employed	Town Planning	Not Disclosed	Research Administrator	20 Years	South Africa	IsiZulu
6	Black	48	PhD in Medicine	Married	4	Employed	Medical Healthcare	Department of Health	Specialist Surgeon	23 Years	Angola	Portuguese
7	White	62	Matric	Married	2	Retired	Mngt of Companies	Durban Air-Conditioning	Administration Manager	38 Years	Mozambique	Portuguese

							and Enterprises	& Refrigeration				
8	Black	41	Standard-12	Single	2	Employed	Restaurant	Wimpy	Supervisor	10 Years	South Africa	IsiZulu
9	Black	41	MBA	Married	2	Employed	Aviation	King Shaka International Airport	Manager Passenger Services	15 Years	South Africa	IsiZulu
10	Indian	41	BCom Business Management	Single	0	Employed	Real Estate	Maxprop	Residential Letting Agent	15 Years	South Africa	English

The demographic information table above shows primary information characterising each of the ten participants within their personal and work-life domains.

A primary sampling criterion to locating women to participate on this research study was to include women whose age felt under the average working women. Thus, the researcher has decided to incorporate female individuals from 27 years of age onwards. As mentioned earlier in the ‘criteria used for selection of participants’ section [Chapter four], this criterion has been established merely to provide additional strength to reflect the purposive and snowballing sampling employed by this study to convey the characteristics of the initially envisioned candidates, and not to regard women younger than 27 as unqualified candidates for this study. Seeing that the research took a holistic outlook of the experiences that women go through in-and-out of the workplace environments, the contents of the findings may be applicable to specifically within the context of women towards the subject of resilience.

The findings chapter is divided in two parts. It provides a brief biographical narrative for each of the ten participants in the first part; and subsequently lays the groundwork for the second part whereby examples of data extracts from the findings are presented under their corresponding themes and subthemes thus detailing discoveries made during the data analysis process.

5.2 Biographical sketches of the participants in the study

This study has gained from using a heterogeneous sample of women thus attempting to augment the tenets of psychological resilience as an abstract concept and which varies from one person to the next. Such differences are outlined in the following biographical information for each of the female participants in this study.

5.2.1 Participant 1

This first interviewed participant is a self-employed woman who believed she could not work under someone else’s leadership. Owning and operating a Beauty Salon for 7 years was a central part of this woman’s life. At the time of the interview she was in her last trimester of pregnancy with her first child; something she was excited about, considering a previous miscarriage episode

which she experienced beforehand. She described herself as an independent business-mind person who is passionate about doing hair. She planned expand the existing business within five years. Increasing her business stemmed from the belief that she had the abilities and skills to keep the business strong. She begun altering the business space to accommodate her vision to set up a Training Centre where she will impart her knowledge onto other people interested on hairdressing and beauty. Her journey as an independent woman was not without experiencing challenges. One of her most big challenges was to find new ways to make her business sustainable. Her resilience was tested in various events in the business: One episode was losing of Fifty Thousand Zars (R50 000) when she decided to go to China to find new hair products and did not get what she was expecting to when she arrived at the location. Despite the disappointment, she did not let that experience stop her from finding what she was looking for, and made more research of suppliers who led her to Hong-Kong this time where she found everything she needed. She finds strength in keeping quiet and spending time alone to program her life.

5.2.2 Participant 2

The first of six children, this woman described herself as responsible person. She considered having a fulfilled life of being a woman. She is married, and a mother of two daughters, who works a full-time job and a part-time work in the retail health care industry. Having a background in Human Resources Management, she appreciated working around people as she described herself as person who enjoyed working with people. Apart from her work and family life responsibilities she was taking undertaking a degree in Psychology at UNISA. She believed that she could use the degree to improve her abilities in interacting with people from diverse backgrounds and open-up better opportunities for her career. She took advantage of her weekends to work a part-time job at another Health Shop which assisted her generate additional income for her studies and family needs. One of the biggest workplace challenges she had to overcome at the workplace was not being accepted when she started the job. She used various resources to make friends with co-workers at the workplace and realised that she needed to be herself and let people learn about her. She relied on faith, and believed that things would be okay for her eventually, and was related that people eventually accepted her and her work was more enjoyable. She believed that in life a person should not take rejections personally and it was important to understand that people had different

backgrounds. She related that she used her lunch hour break to revitalise her mind and body by going to the Spa on the same building where she worked for massage and reflexology.

5.2.3 Participant 3

A self-described as “extroverted”, this woman believed that her personality attracted her to positive experiences in life. She expressed gratitude for having the people she had on different domains of her life. She related been a blessed woman for having met her loving new husband whom she had their first son and daughter. She regarded herself as positive despite the adversities she faced from a previous marriage or the workplace. She suffered from a neurological condition called Epilepsy which caused her to experience sudden recurring episodes of loss of consciousness. She related that she acquired that clinical condition following intense episodes of stress in her previous marriage. She identified her family and spiritual groundings as foundations in having a well-balanced life. She related her father inappropriate behaviour including getting intoxicated with alcohol or engaging in adultery as significant childhood experiences which had influenced her outlook on relationship. Despite her father behaviour changing at some point, she was determined to become independent from men financially and emotionally and taking her mother away from her father. She had great admiration for her mother for her strength and for not leaving the marriage with her father despite the challenges her mother faced. It was during the previous marriage that she then realised that she was in a similar situation that mother had been in with her father. A situation which she articulated like: “... It was like a slap in the face...”. Her philosophy was to living a life of ‘forgive and forget’ and not allowing experiences to leave grudge in your heart, so allow good things to happen to you.

5.2.4 Participant 4

This woman was thirty-nine-year-old who approached life with optimism and believed in her ability to persevering against the obstacles in her environments. She related that she gave thanks to God for blessing her with her daughter following numerous miscarriages before and after her daughter was born. She described her eight-year-old daughter as the most precious thing she had in life. She said that she looked up to her mother because of the hard experiences of adversities that her mother faced within family domain and marriage with her father. She believed that being successful in life required her to be to give her upmost excellence to whatever she needed to do.

This attitude motivated her to take her education further. She was enrolled towards a degree in Development Studies at UNISA, for which her employer was paying for. In terms of her workplace environment she was happy with the type way that her employer treated the employees and assisted them in areas of their personal lives. She believed having a higher qualification would be both an opportunity to enhance her level of education and would provide her with skills which she could utilise in her career. She was working a full-time job as a research administrator for a Town Planning which she has been working since May 2016. Before that she related working for a company where she was retrenched; and thus, she experienced a full year without job which followed by attempts of job applications which turned unsuccessful. Even though she was relieved to hold a job and despite having the support from her employer, she related being apprehensive about her ability to do the job well because that field of work was still new to her to her and she was still absorbing knowledge about the job. Her big fear was to experience unemployment and not be able to provide for her daughter financially. She related that she controlled her life worries through her religious faith which she believed provided her with a sense of tranquillity that things would be alright for her.

5.2.5 Participant 5

A woman who approached life with a “Can-do” attitude, this optimistic seventy-three-year-old woman was a survivor of breast cancer and related that it was a difficult experience during the time she lived with breast cancer due to the process of chemotherapy and the side effects attached to the whole treatment phases which she had to go through. She appreciated people’s backgrounds and tried to convey respect to all people, something which was modelled by her parents, her mother in particular. She was married and a mother of two and reported been through two divorces where the husbands were abusive. She related that she learned a great deal of being strong from the experiences she had in those relationships. Despite the challenges of raising her children in unfavourable environment, she was satisfied and proud her children had managed to do well in their lives. She her worked more than thirty-three years her life including twenty years at ABSA where retired in the management position. At the time of the interview she was working a full-time job as Practice Manager for a Specialist Dermatologist whom had approached/requested her to work for him, and whom she had been working for in eight-years. She reported that never worried too much about facing difficulties in her live, an attitude that assisted her turn challenges

into opportunities. She strongly believed that adversities were part of any type of job, and that a person needed to be able to persevere in any circumstances to effectively handle pressures in their specific environment. During the years of work-life experiences, she witnessed many people come and leave their employment. She remarked that at any place where “you” are starting a new life in a work situation “If you don’t focus and persevere you will be out in in one week”, and she lived this belief. She believed that women were strong by nature and had many potentials and that women should approach unfavourable situations at work and personal lives more optimistically to achieve more and better outcomes. With emphasis on the Bible, she related that she enjoyed reading spiritual books such as: *A Mustard Seed* by Angus Buchan; *When Day Breaks* by Nina Smit; and *New Beginnings* by Solly Ozroveh. She maintained that those readings provided her the wisdom she needed to preserve a balanced life.

5.2.6 Participant 6

A mother of four, this woman described herself as God-fearing woman who tried to follow principles. One of her favourite Bible readings was the Book of Proverbs which she related as containing insights that elevated the essence of women. She believed that the words enshrined in the Bible provided her the heartiness which she needed in her life. She related that she had been living in South Africa for seventeen years where she arrived as a newly married to pursue a tertiary education in Medicine. She chose to remain the South Africa after completing her PhD in Medicine; the degree which represented one of the most valued accomplishments in her life. She described that before that time she experienced several challenges which she believed were critical to advance. She related that she had to learn the English language before she could initiate the academic life. She related that she started having children at the time when she starting establishing her career. Volunteering at the hospitals for no compensation before she graduated was Doctor, occupied much of her time, and challenged her to ability to provide for her family financially, and to manage her duties as wife and mother and student at the same time. She had to deal with workplace gender segregation and racial problems which she believed was partially due to her foreign background. Working in male dominated environment, and being the only black foreign female Clinical Surgeon had its challenges as well. She held that some of the staff did not like her initially and treated her with indifference when she was promoted as a supervisor. She related that to maintain her strength she had to remain neutral from the negativity that she received

from people. She believed that people needed time to adjust to her, and decided that she would be fine as long as she performed the work which she was hired to do. Instead of allowing herself to feel downhearted, she disciplined herself to focus on completing her job. Encouraged as a child to fight for things that she wanted to have in life, she tackled many challenges in this fashion. She found ways to reach out to others for support and guidance to difficulties she had in life. She believed that women should not keep their problems for themselves and should look for solutions outside themselves by finding people who had been in similar situation.

5.2.7 Participant 7

A self-described woman of the world, this sixty-two-year-old woman and a mother of two sons, related that she went through some tough times when she experienced war at different times when she lived in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. She related that in that difficult time all basic resources were scarce, and the only way she could survive with two young children was to work-out a plan with some friends, whereby one of them would be looking after the children of themselves and friends; while the others would go to stand on queue to get whatever food would be available on that day, or to stand on the queue to get petrol for one car that all of them had to use to go move around. She believed that after experiencing the struggle she went through; she could live anywhere in the world. Working in different countries had afforded her the opportunity to acquire knowledge about people and their cultures which allowed her build relationships with people of different backgrounds. She related that she was fortunate to having worked with/for people that helped her grow personally. At the time of the interview she related that she was retired, and that she was developing a business for herself whereby she would provide tourist guide services to local and international people who wanted to explore the attractions of Durban/KZN. Although she described being a people-person who enjoyed helping people achieve their potentials, she demonstrated a short-temperament towards individuals with low self-esteem. She related for her, being in the company of people that were excessively self-absorbed and who demonstrated constant self-pity over their own troubles, would mean that her need to absorb that negatively into herself. She believed that being impatience in that regard was her bad trait. One of the things that she disliked the most of people was laziness. She associated laziness as a key factor that reduced a person's ability to mature and self-develop. Being assertive and making decisions without fear or vacillations was one of the qualities that she learned from of her previous manager. She believed

that having strong convictions was vital for tackling obstacles in a person's environment. One way she found effective to enhance resilient thinking was to read books, two of which included (1) "I Moved Your Cheese" and (2) "Who Moved My Cheese?". She believed that women and men could benefit from constructive and easy-to-apply insights from these books to better manage their situations in their work and in their life.

5.2.8 Participant 8

From her perspective, women were born with inherent strength to stand their ground in the presence of significant adversities. She believed that women failed to give themselves credit by recognising their strengths and accomplishments. She claimed that women allowed themselves to getting overly emotional about unfavourable occurrences - something which she strongly believed could cloud women judgements to taking better control of their life experiences. Born and raised in KwaMashu township in KZN, this woman did not have an easy start in life. From a childhood of extreme poverty, this forty-one-year-old woman developed a strong sense of resilience that she carried into different episodes which she encountered in her life. She related that she and her siblings used to watch television over her neighbours' windows outside their homes because her parents could not afford anything like television or fridges at that time. While still studying Standard Grade-twelve when she was a teenager, she experienced an unexpected pregnancy (an episode which was not well received by her parents), which lead to an agonising period of frictions in the relationship she had with her step-father. By the time she was seven months pregnant, her adolescent boyfriend decided to leave her to deal with the pregnancy alone. Soon after giving birth, she saw the need to find a job to take care of her baby, her mother and her siblings. Her mother had already lost her Job at a local bakery she was working at the time she gave birth to her baby son, and she realised that bringing a child meant that things could be harder difficult for her because her step-father did not support her towards raising her child. She knew that she need to do something to change things in her life and developed a 'Map' where she organised her needs by priority of focus. Earning money for her baby and her family was top of priority and she reluctantly stopped going to school. To earn money, she started washing the cloths of the transportation drivers in the area she lived in the KwaMashu township. She felt a greater need to make earn more money when she would not get cloths to wash and could not bring money home, and she begun a frantic search for work by going up-and-down to the centre of town until she eventually got a temporary

work as a cleaner at the Wimpy franchise. She was laid-out at one time when business was slow but eventually was recruited as a full-time employee, which was a breakthrough in her life. From being the cleaner of the restaurant windows at Wimpy to a supervisor in the same work environment, she believed that she has made significant progress in her career life. She was living in the centre of Durban, a place she was renting to be closer to the workplace. Both her work and her family were highlights of her life and she tried to do her best to keep those domains protected. She related that was a champion for her family and her co-workers for her dedication and hard-work. At the time of the interview she related that life was comfortable that she could provide whatever she could to improve the lives of her family. Despite the financial advantages, she related that she was not satisfied with the behaviour that the bosses at workplace demonstrated to her and the rest of her co-workers. At one stage, she got into a relationship where she gave birth to a daughter and another son. Lamentably, she reflected the time that she lost her eight-year-old daughter in 2016. A woman who had always viewed herself as strong to handling anything, she described been surprised about the extent to which she felt deeply lost during the time of grief. Self-described as “quite spiritual”, she related that she became numb for quite some time after the death, and she could not even pray anymore. She related that what had caused her intense sorrow was knowing her daughter was initially taken to the public hospital for an observation to check what was causing her to limp, and following some follow-up visits, ended up being hospitalised. She strongly believed that there was negligence and a bridge of proper duty of care for the safety of her daughter on the part of the hospital staff.

5.2.9 Participant 9

This reflective forty-one-year-old woman, accredited her mother’s example of working hard and laying the foundations to persevering despite her circumstances. At the time of the interview she was leaving her job with Standard Bank as Relationship Manager, where she worked for fifteen-years, to settle into a new as Passenger Manager in the Aviation Industry. She related being quite pleased with the direction which life heading. She believed that the events that she was experiencing had been a direct reflection of her hard-work and dedication. She related that life did not always provided her with the things that she needed or wanted to have, since she grew up in an average family of six brothers and sisters that demanded a lot from her mother, specially because her father was somewhat absent financially. Despite the childhood not always been

favourable she believed she having a good education and being proactive opened allowed her to change her live around personally and professionally. Overcoming physical and emotional abuse from her previous husband whom she had her first son with, was one of her great triumphs. She related that she did not find courage to speak out about the domestic violence that she endured to her family or friends during the time the events occurred. She considered the experience a very difficult one for her, and she did not want to burden her family with her problems. Only after time which the divorce was settled and she felt safe, she opened-up to her family and friends who were sympathized with her and were taken by surprise that she managed the situation on her own. She believed that investing in herself was the best thing to do, as she wanted to be independent financially. She valued education and completed an MBA degree at UKZN, a time during which she became pregnant with her son from the second marriage. Self-describe as “very organised”, she believed it was important for her to plan for her future with her new husband and the future of her children. She took a decision to take a full two-years period break from the work activities with the Bank, so that she could to focus on what was best for her family and her future career aspirations. She related that she could experience many positive changes in her life within those two-year’s time. During that time, she was able to absorb a lot of insights from reading books. She drew some enthusiasm and insights from Robin Sharma in his book titled: “The Lessons from the Monk Who Sold His Ferrari”, and Mayo Angelou. Having a background in finances she cared about managing her financing to secure her future. She developed personal goals for the rest of her direct family. She could help her husband become more collected towards his business challenges and general issues; and she managed to create career pathways for each her two sons. For example, her first son had finished being a background extra for a Hollywood movie; while her second had, son done modelling adverts for clothing companies including Woolworths, Mr. Price and Hub. She believed that achieving positive things in life required some conscious steps were taken by a person. She remarked that one should “be calm, be quiet, and stop” to feel and find who they truly were.

5.2.10 Participant 10

Self-described as a simple and systematic person, this woman enjoyed the simple things in life, but related that she aspired to achieve a lot in her life. She believed that the two-way relationships she had with her mother and family is graceful and effortless, compared to a lot of personalities

within the business domain of her life whereby she found herself having to work very hard to getting things done and completed. She related that she wanted to be able to control the things that she aspired do in her life. Her workplace environment life and previous marriage proved to extremely hard for her well-being both in the last few years. She worked work the Real Estate Industry as Residential Letting Agent, and related that dealing with antagonistic co-workers, particularly women, at the workplace had been tremendously hard for her to deal with. She believed that the people that at she worked with, intentionally and progressively tried to unsettle her life at the job. She related that she tried to work within the moral principles of being honest and being transparent with work dealings which could promote both the interests of the company as well as the interests of the clients; an approach that she believed was not welcome by some of the co-workers at her workplace. Following attempts where she brought her concern to the management to assist resolving the issues, and after not having the response she believed was right, she realised she did not have the workplace support that she deserved. She felt that maintaining herself and performing her duties became exceedingly problematic for her, especially when she did not received recognition for having gone the extra-mile and completed all required exams of the program levels in that industry. She decided to resign the job she worked for fifteen years start over at another conducive environment. She related that when she learned that she had great values and several qualifications, she realised that there were several opportunities awaiting her. A single woman at the time of the interview, she identified her family as the highlights of her life, who supported her in difficult times when she had problems with her divorced husband, including being exposed to continued domestic violence. She believed had been left her traumatised by the experiences for some time, and related that it had taken her four-years to bounce back. She related that she enjoyed watching television programs to get entertained. Some of her top programs were: Marvell movies, Supernatural, Spiderman, Transformers, Fast and Furious. She derived much satisfaction from those types of entertainments, and believed that while spending that time to watch entertainments took her focus away from negativity and preoccupations, she was provided with enthusiasm to deal with the issues in her life.

5.3 Research findings

This part of the chapter presents respective themes which women have discoursed by the participants in the interviews process. The discussions are categorised into core themes and sub-

themes in terms of the resilience model illustrated and discussed in chapter two, and chapter three respectively. Each theme has been purposely designed to present data findings reflected by the participants on their resilience life experiences.

5.4 Introducing individual resilience of women

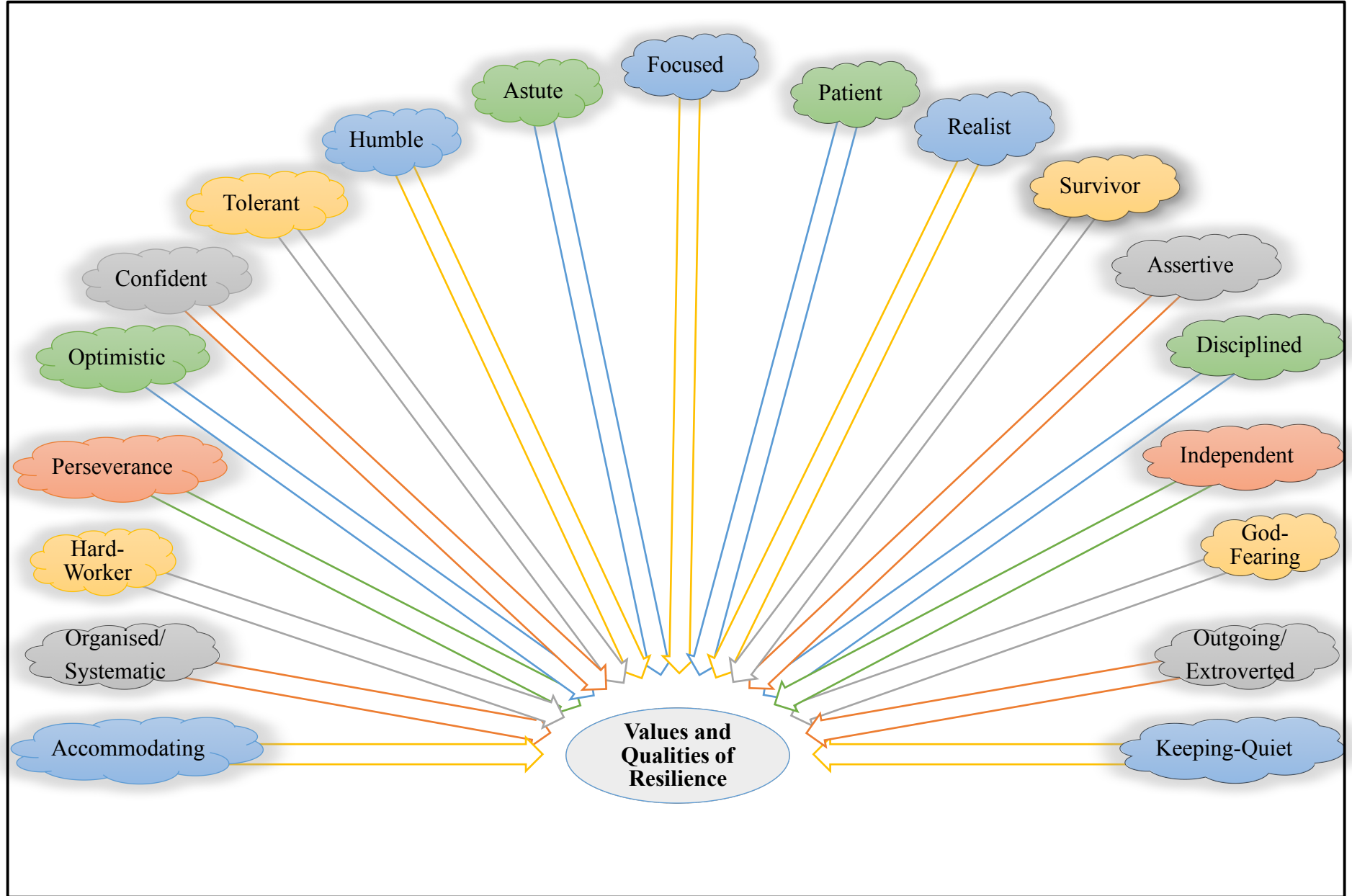
The lives of the women in this study have been impacted by a range of different factors. The participants were requested to describe their views on the essence of individual resilience and the implications that resilience had on them personally [See Appendix E for general insights of the many different meaning of resilience to each of the participants of the present study]. The findings presented in the following themes reveal the lived experiences of the research participants.

5.4.1 Theme one: Mindfulness as a building block to psychological resilience [Mindfulness is the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something]

5.4.1.1 Core values and qualities related to resilience

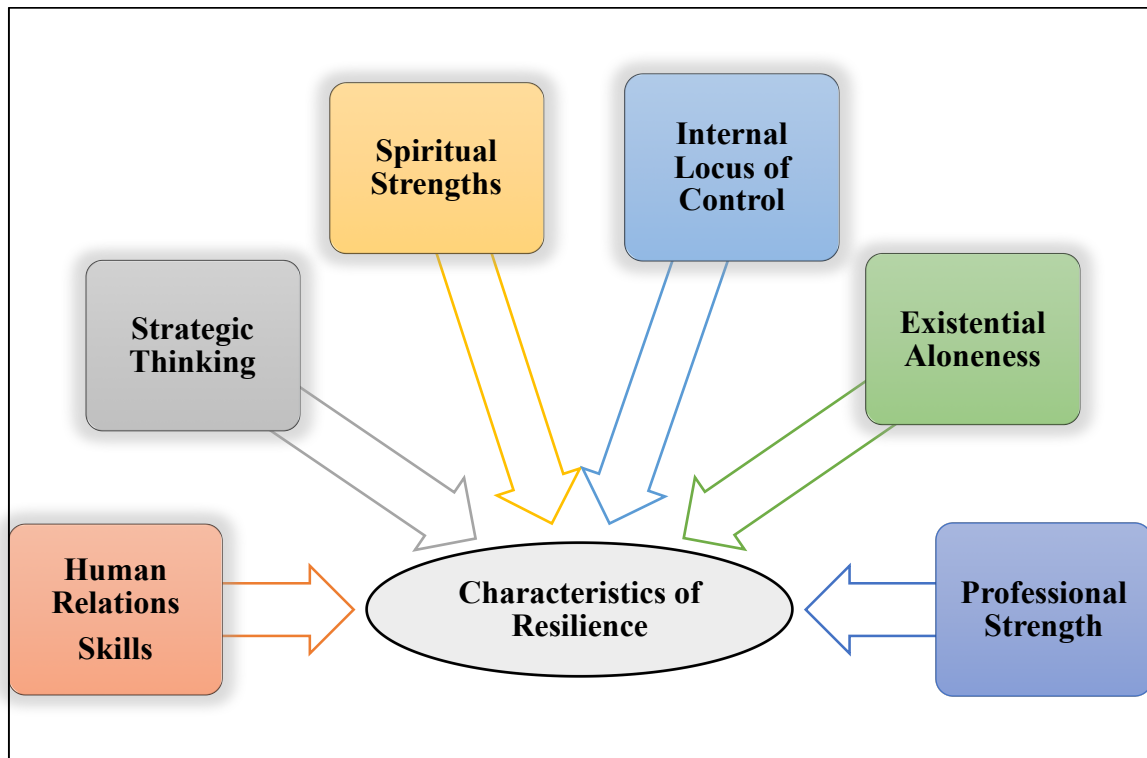
When describing themselves, the women in the study associated themselves with an array of values and qualities considered relevant in their lives [refer to the next Figure]. Having the ability to effectively managing their life domains was vital for the participants.

Figure 5. Research participants' upheld resilience values and qualities



The resilience values and qualities illustrated in figure 5 above are succinct attributes self-described by the women in this study. These attributes have provided the researcher with the opportunity to embodying and framing these values and qualities into distinct themes which characterise resilience, and which can be more attuned to our understanding of individual resilience of the women in this study. These new themes are presented in figure 6 below.

Figure 6. Précised participants' resilience values and qualities



5.4.1.2 Ability to remain focus to achieve important goals and objectives

Several of the women identified and described the quality to focus to assisting them in affecting areas in their lives positively. Participant 5 related how having the ability to focus added value in multitasking situations, and making priorities of things that were important to her:

“...I’m blessed with uh the ability to focus on more than one thing at the same time and still do it well because I can listen to you talk and I will be able for instance be typing but still hear what you say, it’s something that you learn so I think it’s also your mind prioritizing them because you can’t, uh you can’t let somebody um take your mind away from what you’re doing...”

Different to participant 5 whose ability to focus helped her to better multitask work activities, participant's 1 ability to focus provided her with more clarity during times of significant adversities. She explained:

"If I've got any challenge... to focus... for me to focus is to work hard towards it, to work hard to see how I can calm the situation... And I mean in that I keep quiet and I take time and I see exactly where the problem is coming from..."

Participant 5 reflected a similar perspective, shared how she enhanced this quality:

"I grew up in a positive environment so to me that's the way I align my thoughts... um how can I explain?... I focus actually by myself - it's almost like I meditate. I meditate so therefore I always try... that's my focus, that's the end of my tunnel and I go forward until I reach there, nobody is going to stop me no one that's my focus..."

5.4.1.3 Life's challenges demand perseverance

Some of the women reported perseverance as an important attribute which came handy in difficult times, specifically towards interpersonal conflicts:

"...if you can't persevere then, what, where do you go? Uh perseverance, even if somebody uh try to make you feel uncomfortable, uh useless or what the word might be, you, you have to persevere with how you normally deal with things, to overcome other people's criticisms. Umm if people criticise you, you know you get that in a workplace very often, you overwrite that criticism by persevering doing what you do the best and the way you do it, if you think that's how it's done. Don't let other people criticisms change you or make life so miserable for you that you, you don't want to work there anymore. I've seem that, that, specially where there's a lot of girls, there's jealousy, and some of them will be nasty to other people and those people become so flustered that they can't function. So, you have to focus, persevere to, to get to everything, if you have people like that working next to you... If you don't focus and persevere you will be out... in one week. Uh I would say in a, in a work situation also, being kind to other people and accommodating. Uh you get it back eventually, people be nasty to you but if you keep on being kind to them and accommodating they will turn, I've seen it, yeah..." [Participant 5]

5.4.1.4 Work-life application of current values and qualities

The values and qualities which participants associated themselves projected their roles and their responsibilities in the specific environments of work and their personal lives.

5.4.1.4.1 Strong spiritual grounding are helpful to keeping a clear state of mind

Some of the women described themselves as God-fearing women. For them holding a religious belief system gave some of the women a sense of strength. Participant 2 described this quality in this terms: *“Firstly I value most my prayer time; I do have my prayer times; I believe that in life for you to be a successful someone you need to be focused and you need to believe in God for God to guide you in every system that should take.”*

For participant 6 whose profession as a medical specialist surgeon involved running operations on patients and treating significant physical infirmities and injuries; having faith and exhibiting a spiritual outlook had a positive impact on the outcome of her work performance. She explained that:

“... It supports me because... in everything I do even at, including at my workplace...like in the Hospital for example if I’m treating somebody I have to do it in such I way that it has to be in accordance with what the Bible says, and then I think to myself would God be happy if behave this way and this manner? ... In the work that I do it’s with people, right? So, I have to, to give my best to the people so... And then the bible principle is that really comes handy for, for my work yeah.”

5.4.1.4.2 Having control around life occurrences and what could happen next

Some of the women found that being organised in terms of planning their lives, was fundamental to sustaining their well-being. Participant 9 ascribed her ability to thrive to having the quality to being a very organised woman. She hypothetically explained:

“Another well that I know for sure, I’m very organized, you know, I’m very very organized you know, maybe it takes a lot of time but you know what I plan I write things down. If I lost that, if I was not like that, you probably won’t even wanna know me, I would be this irresponsible like I don’t know what’s coming what’s going...”

5.4.1.5 Sources of motivation and inspiration: The “mother” role model

Women in the study overtly stated that having role models in their lives was significant part of their well-being and self-development. Women did not self-credited themselves for being able to thrive, and related memories of past experiences related with their mothers as a positive example which had made a significant impact on their behaviour as adult individuals.

Participant 5 related that positive memories of values that her mother had inculcated on her in childhood: *“Umm if I had to say again it’s, it goes back to my childhood, my mother, the way she raised us. She was a very especial person and she worked so hard and uh the way she raised I think made us people that uh approached things differently, she treated me from this high to have respect for other people. If I, we I grew up in a small town and I you know that’s many many years ago and it didn’t matter who it was, what colour they was I would say good morning uncle, good morning auntie and that’s the way I was raised. So, I think yeah... mother and um the mother figure, because you know if your mother is a, a person that’s got values, um I think it, it, it um will form you into the person you become and what you achieve to a great extent and you’ll always look back and think before you’ll do something you’ll think back at what your value systems is and do things according to that before you just into something”*

Participant 3 attitudes towards unfavourable circumstances in life also reflected the values learned from the ‘mother figure’ in her life. She recalled significant problems that her mother experienced and had to overcome which were caused by marital infidelity, and disturbances in the family following excessive consumptions of alcohol on the side of her father.

“The background of that actually I can say came from my mom; because my mom was a person that went through so much in her life. There are things that I just couldn’t understand how could she take and can take it and still moving forward. So, she always taught me that if you want something in your life you must work for it.”

Participant 4 memories of her mother’s experiences was somewhat different but no less painful: *“... she lost her father while she was still young unfortunately so she was kind of on her own like that’s how she assumed herself to be... um she has had instances whereby she was hunted by her siblings wanting to kill her... She has had instances whereby um she had nothing to offer us to eat but yet she would go out there and try and try and make means for us to be able to have food on the table...”*

Most women explicitly described their ‘mothers’ as an example of resilient woman, and role model to them. Participant 9 stated why her mother was the person that she mostly admired in comparison to other people:

“My mother I know it sounds a bit corny but I would like to say Oprah Winfrey you know or Nelson Mandela but I don’t know those people, I know off them and I read about the good work that have done. The good work that they have done indeed, however, as I’m trying

to be real, real cause you know, inspiration for me comes from doing, and observing, and being and... it's um... you need to be there to be inspired... you need to be in when you're inspired"

Having the support from her mother following her pregnancy at adolescence in times when resources was scarce, imparted strong family values into Participant 8 life. She expressed: *"My mom, like I said she couldn't do anything when she was working but she managed to be my mom, she didn't show, okay even though she was disappointed she's a human I did mistake or someone else do the mistake, you have to... to be disappointed but you don't throw your child away. You make sure you cage them in the right cage, like even though she, she couldn't do anything for me but she was taking care of my child while I was going to for hunting, so she's been there..."*

Despite not specifically classification her mother as her reflection of source of resilience, Participant 1 reflected having an admiration to hard-working women in general: *"... I admire a lady who is hard-working. I see myself in that shoe and I do the same. I work hard, and I like it, yeah..."*

Conversely, Participant 7 expressed her non-admiration to individuals who did not try to push themselves enough to thrive during an adverse situation:

"so I do not admire weakness in a person, weakness I'm not talking about diseases, weakness is people that complain all the time, I do not admire them, in fact I have no time for them... the positive individuals and they ...um... how can I say? they fight for a better life, that's what I admire..."

While most of the women described their mothers as role model based on their lived experiences, participants reflected a sense of respect for women who stood their ground.

5.4.1.6 It is not always easy but there is benefit from promoting mindfulness

Most of the women described everyday techniques which were used to help them stay mindful of their life towards performing at their best at different areas. The participants took it seriously to be in control of their lives.

Finding the balance to sustain a healthy mental well-being and being in positive terms with different areas of their lives was something that all women sought. For Participant 2 who was

a wife, a mother of two daughters, who also worked a full-time job and a part-time work and was enrolled with part-time studies - finding a time to regroup herself in the middle of her life responsibilities was challenging. As she recognised the limitation of time she had available following her day-to-day undertakings, she shared some of the activities that she was able to get involved with to recover from the effects of stress in her life:

“That’s quite difficult, it is difficult, but sometimes I do get time for myself, the time I sit. I do. You know sometimes I do get to spoil myself, lunch time: one hour is long enough for me, I go to the beauty parlour, upstairs, for an hour or 30 minutes, I do my reflexology by Priscilla, I also get to go to the beauty parlour just for myself to get a massage, just you know to cool down. Once in a while, like almost every month I do it, I go there, I sit in the salon I tell them listen I’m here for a massage for reflexology, because it helps to circulate the blood, and helps you to focus, you know because as you do reflexology it helps to focus on those points, the head, the toes, the whole body. That’s what happens. So Yeah I do... because sometimes I feel I work so hard, so why not spoil myself...”

The ability to ‘plan’ and ‘follow through’ was difficult but significant for women. Participants 10 explained how she went about planning:

“So it’s a big challenge, but uh... that is why it is nice to plan. We all plan in different ways... you don’t have to sit down with the writing pad and a pencil and plan, you can plan while you’re brushing your teeth, you can plan while you’re driving your car. Um and, also try and find something that is different from your daily route to actually think... strangely enough you take a broom and you’re sweeping your house, there is not much thought that needs to go into me sweeping the house, but while you’re sweeping your house and you are calm and cool and collected and you’re just sweeping it’s another way of therapy and it will actually start clearing your mind...”

5.4.2 Theme two: Self-efficacy as a building block to psychological resilience [Self-efficacy is the extent or strength of one's belief in one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals]

Women articulated strengths of which they considered favourable to their daily lives. Being active was important to women. At seventy years of age, participant 5 who was still working full-time, expressed strong belief that her proactive behaviour caused her to be mentally and physically strong compared to other women who were her age. She related this strength as a

quality which was present in her family, and she sustained that not being physically active could atrophy a person's mental and physical capacity:

"...I think we like to be busy... if you stay busy and learn things and whatever, then your brain also doesn't deteriorate. It's, it's a proven fact Nuria if I look at people my age and they not, they not doing anything... it's like they deteriorate so quickly in every way: the body the mind even the soul I think. It's amazing... Some people think if, when they reach 60 they can't do anything anymore and other people must do it for them. The more you do for yourself the better um sort of make your body do what you want it to do and it will... It's like, you know, even when you're young you sometimes feel um ooh I can't get up now, I'm too tired or I'm sore or you just say to yourself, you have to get up, get up and, and once you get going it gets better. It's also true, I found it so many times that when you feel slightly sick it's so easy to stay at home and say phone in and say I'm sick, don't do that, don't do that because you feel better when you're at work, and it's better for you to be at work when you're not feeling well then to feel sorry for yourself..."

5.4.2.1 Early risk and protective factors to resilience

Women described different events from their past which had directly and indirectly impacted their present lives as adult individuals. Women elicited childhood experiences which have influenced their outlook of life:

"My father went through drinks, alcohol, women, drugs, sickness and umm you name it... I used to tell my mum please... I always wanted to be independent because I also wanted to take my mum from my dad and mum she always used to say, the fact that your father do this do not disrespect your father in front of me, do not disrespect him in front of anything/anybody"

[Participant 3]

Participant 4 also recalled early life experiences that taught her about positive values that she should carry in life:

"Ahh, I think like what we were taught as young children that you have to be a person that have honour in whatever you do like I try not to degrade myself in whatever I even if it's hard like aah as long as I do something that is honourable uuh I don't do out the way making shortcuts in order to achieve something. If it's meant to come to me it will come to me, if it's not meant to me at this point of time then I let it be" [Participant 4].

5.4.2.2 The effects experiences to self-development

The women in this study recognised the influences that past life experiences had on their lives as adults. Participant 2 emphasised the importance of life experiences:

“It shapes the person that you become in the future. You must decide what you want and go for it... so eventually you become the Nuria that we expect, or the [Participant’s name] that you want to be, the real person. But you go through phases. Life shapes you, experiences shape you to be what you are... you know you learn through experience... I realised that no this is what I want in life and it becomes you, you become strong. It shapes the person that you become in the future. You must decide what you want and go for it...”

Some women had to be strong to help others recover from their own adversities. Participant 7 related that dealing with her husband’s clinical depression episode, was a life changing experience for her: *“...he was in a depression very low depression... because I was not patient for a man of that age to be... so weak or not just weak but let himself go, I had to re-direct my life, it’s like re-direct to help him to cope with low depression. And that was, I promise you, that was a challenge in my life, and so I had to be stronger, positive, not for me but for him, yes... That was very hard for me, that’s why I say I’m not patient for that type of persons and I don’t know why they do into depression, I don’t understand why, what makes a person go into depression and our married life was in a little bit of a shaky place but I had to be to change my own life because of him and that’s why also I had to give up my job and I wasn’t happy about it...”*.

5.4.2.3 Must be able to find your niche and establish self-reliance

The understanding that they could be unable enjoy life in full was disconcerting to some of the participants. Two of the women described tenets of finding their niche in life or in employment. From participant’s 1 perspective, a person should thrive to live a life which represented themselves and not try to aspire someone else’s life:

“Sometimes people, they living other peoples’ lives. If you don’t find yourself, you end up like that. But If you’re sure that this is me, this is what I am doing, and you’re confident with that, which means you will be able to achieve what you want... no matter what comes”

[Participant 1].

Like participant 1, participant 10 emphasised the importance of identifying her own strengths and individualities, even outside her confront zones, to achieve desired goals. She reflected:

“I think one of my strengths is, I do not aspire to be like anyone... I am comfortable with me and if I made a mistake, I’m learning from that mistake. I do not mind making that mistake and learning from it because when I make that mistake I know that I am not gone do it again, I’ve suffered from it so I want to go through my life learning from my mistakes and not trying to be like someone else, but be very considerate of people who have achieved and what they’ve done to achieve what they have. So definitely studying those people but not trying to be like them. Be yourself, why do you wanna be like someone else - be original.” She continued by hypothesising the difference between the car brands Jaguar and Toyota to explain her point why aspiring a genuine self was fundamental: *“... like if you take the new Jaguar advert that is running on Facebook and you take your Toyota advert: the Jaguar advert shows so little of the car but that car will sell more than your Toyota advert which is showing the entire interior of the car because Jaguar already got a name for itself, and they are using different techniques of making you feel that you want this car, they’re showing you the birds, the skies, the horizons. They are showing you different things which is inspiring you to buy this car... so when you have that name you will flourish and that is where what we need to aspire to... achieving that brand...”*

5.4.2.4 Proactive techniques to finding a niche and establishing self-reliance

The women in this study not only believed in themselves they could qualify their personal attributes applied to complete tasks and achieve goals. Participant 6 explained how following a discipline behaviour worked for her and helped strengthen the attainment of her objectives.

“... uuh I think, that comes with discipline... I think apart from discipline you also have to have a passion on what you’re doing, first you have to like what you do and then you have to be disciplined, I think these two things tie together...and then after the discipline of course the hard working, I’m sure whoever is disciplined, if you are disciplined you will do your work perfect because you gone abide to the rules or regulations of that work...”

For participant 1 having a positive sense of self-efficacy was vital since she believed that her position as a business owner required her to be a strong-minded person so that she could sustain her business. She related her view on self-efficacy towards unfavourable events, and shared how an unexpected incident which she faced in the past to vacate a previous business premises and find locate new premises proved tested her resilient abilities:

“To me the first thing that I do is to get stronger in the situation - Cos where else you’re not strong you can’t do anything - So after that I believe in myself that I can do it... Yes,

yeah... because I know if you want something and really focus you'll get it... coz for example with that, if it wasn't being strong, my business could be existing now? Nooo, it couldn't, because I was gone feel the world has end, but you feel strong and you say you can make it. You always have to have that, that I can make it... Try, ok try and fail but never fail to try. Try, put your energy and try, yeah..."

Alike being disciplined, the planning approach and being prepared for future events presented a great deal of efficiency to many of the women in this study. Participant 9 related:

"...what if you can't plan at work? what's gone happen? you won't be successful. So, what makes you think that you can even wing through life? If you can't plan your life you're not gone be successful. I tried to do that, I tried to wing it in life and it didn't work. So, what do you do when you crush and burn? it's either you say I am defeated or you learn quickly you do things differently and that's what happened to me you know. In life, I then thought, I'm like uum I can't just be my best at work only you know, or I can't just be my and I tell my kids you just can't be a teacher's pet at school only, you need to succeed and you need to be your best in all areas of your life and for me what is that? You plan, that's number one. You plan, planning, so that...you know what you need to do, and if you know what you need to do you will know what you don't know how to do... and where you know what you don't know what to do you'll never get stuck cause you know you okay I don't know this I'm going to get help, you know. So, at work I'll write, I need to do this, this, that, that, that. And I'm like from the list hum I'm not good with credit so I'm not gone go until and then get stuck on number three and say ooh man I'm stuck now I don't know, plan I'm like oh mina I'm gone have to speak with X; X at 2 o'clock I need to sit with him, I need to sit with Y you know because those are the credit guys. So, planning also allows you to plan ahead for things that you're not good at, so that you're never stuck, you know. You can get help. It makes things easier."

For Participant 7, the experience of living in war zones in her past had influenced positively her self-belief that she was capable to go through any situations in life. Describing herself as a survivor, she shared her attributes: *"Maybe um the survival on my life, that's what I'm proud of. I survived wars... in Mozambique then war in Zimbabwe, yeah because I also lived in Zimbabwe, so there always, during the war maybe the worst that any human being can experience and so I'm a survivor, that's what I'm proud of. I'm a survivor and I feel that I can live anywhere in the world, nothing will make me say 'oh no I can't survive there', no I can..."*

5.4.2.5 Proactive listening abilities can support self-efficacy

At the time of the interview all women expressed a desire to acquire a quality or improve some of their existing qualities. Being able to listening better was commonly cited by the participants in this study. Women found that the ability to listening was relevant for their workplace environments. Participant 2 related that listening effectively would help her improve her work roles which involved facilitating diverse health needs of people from diverse walks of life. She shared her views on effective listening:

“...when, you know, you’re talking to people, what kind of advice, you know? that is skill, that’s a skill as well and how to... appreciate people... the skill to appreciating people, the skill of dealing with people... human beings they differ, so yeah we need that skill...”

Participant 3 related the subject of lack of listening abilities as a common issue amongst managers credited to her experience of having to report to higher management when she worked as a Chef; and having to manage other people directly when she moved-up to a position as Restaurant Supervisor at the Southern Sun Hotel: *“sometimes we’re managers, we just there in the position but we don’t, but we don’t listen to what the staff are saying...”*

When talking about the importance to improving the listening capabilities, participant 4 reflected on her own previous work experiences and observations which she had made on other people: *“I’m still learning more about listening more. I’m still because that’s something that I’ve noticed with most youngsters, they always talk, talk, talk, talk but they don’t listen and understand the other person and like try to uh see where they coming from, so I’m trying to master that skill like of listening more, because one, where it came from: my previous employer he did, she did mention to me that you know as a person you have to be able to listen, not just listen but really listen to where a person is coming from, why are they saying this? why are they doing this? like, why are they going this way?...”* [Participant 4]

A connection was made between listening and being talkative by participant 6 who described being made aware that she had that limitation by people in her life: *“Yeah, I think one of the skill that I would like to learn is being a bit patient and less talkative because sometimes I can go out of the board when I’m, when things are not working out my way yeah, I think that’s one and the listen, a lot of people tell me no you don’t listen too much so I’m trying to exercise that to have those listening skills.”*

5.4.3 Theme three: Coping as a building block to psychological resilience [Coping is the ability one has/or the process to dealing effectively with something difficult]

5.4.3.1 Life is full of adversities

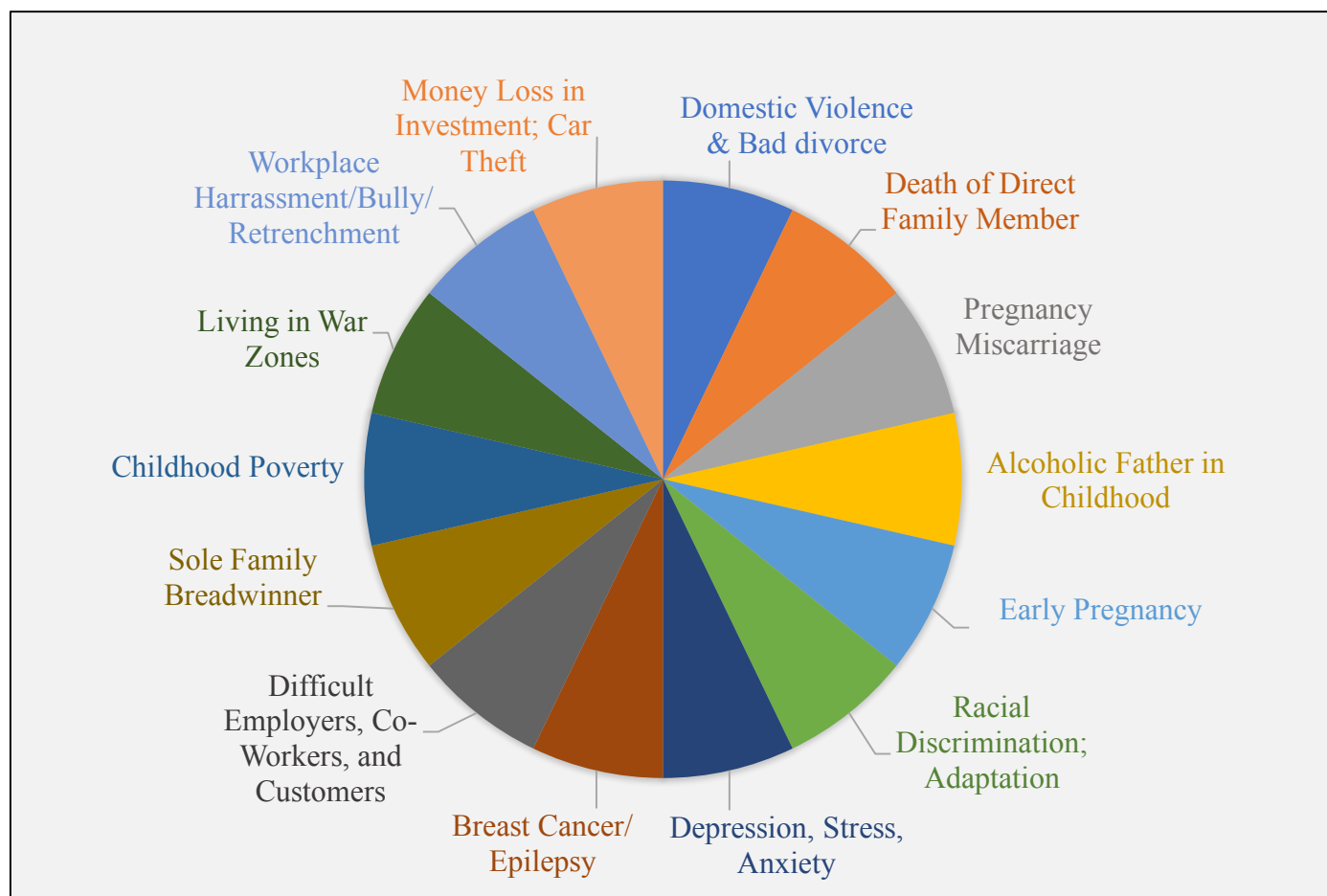
Many of the women related adversities as natural occurrences of life. As women were asked to describe their views on adversities, some diverse interpretations were disclosed based on the experiences that the women lived. Women identified and discussed incidents from different domains within the workplace and personal life contexts [See Figure 7]. Participants conveyed different understanding of diversity, which lead the researcher to use the term adversity interchangeably with the terms challenges and difficulties as participants narrated their stories of adversities.

The implication of a person's personality type was emphasised by the women repeatedly during the interviews. When describing how she managed adversities, participant 4 stated:

“um each challenge is different Nuria um... I don't think there is a set technique of challenges, because each one is different, it depends on how they reach you on the mood that you are in. You get people that they hear such news or they get such things that will shake them and it knocks them down, and you get people that will get the same experience, like as let's say it's a death in the family – some people they take a death hardly like um they perceive it in a way that it knocks them down like they die, a part of them die with that person uh that's why I'm saying that challenges they're different, the way that you tackle them you cannot say this is how I'm tackling this, this is how I'm, like it depends on the whole set up” [Participant 4]

Participant 10 reflected a similar perspective related to the influence of the workplace environment to a person's personality following exposure to workplace adversities:

“Well, there are a lot of adversities, because one: you have your personality, and your personality says you know - calm – cool – collected – considerate: and then you are exposed to an environment where you've got to perform, and some of that does not fit in very well. So, it's brings out the... you've got to be a stronger character. And if you have to be strong and you have to give instructions take instructions, plan, other things come handy. You have to take time to consider other people. know who you are dealing with. If you know who you're dealing with, their background their profession, their personality, it becomes easier, because then you would not overstep the mark and you will maintain the respect and still give the instructions and get the response” [Participant 10].

Figure 7. Work-life adversities of women in this study

5.4.3.2 Adversities and implications to women

All women in this study understood the repercussions of not being effective to managing unfavourable conditions. The participants were involved in multiple responsibilities and were aware of the types of efforts that their living environments demanded from them. The roles reported by women included two or more of the following: household roles such as a mother, a wife, a family caregiver; and specific workplace roles. Like participant 4, Participant 2 who was also engaged in an extracurricular activity [undertaking tertiary education at University of South Africa - Unisa], related times where caring for a manifold of activities affected her well-being adversely. She stressed:

“Well, like I do have so many challenges in life. You know studying and being mother it’s not easy, right. And I do get stressed sometimes... I have to cook for my husband and you know all that I’m after work, I’m so tired, I’m exhausted.” [Participant 2]

5.4.3.3 The peculiarities of confronting adverse experiences

While all women reported experiencing some significant adversities, their experiences reflected some differences. Women were aware that finding the right approach to sort life challenges was significant however hard at times. When I enquired participants individually on their views regarding best techniques to approach adversities, peculiar responses confirmed participants' diverse experiences. Participant 6 immediate response was:

"It is difficult to answer this question, because depending on what circumstances, because if you want to do something and, and then you, you cannot do it or you tried and then you cannot do it uh there's various ways: either you accept it or either you go forward you fight for it, or either you look other alternatives and then you do it."

Some of the participants found different ways to manage challenges and unfavourable conditions in their lives. The women indicated reaching out to other people to getting an outside perspective of the situation being experienced:

"Challenge, what does a challenge require? Challenge require answers you know probably a lot of questions you know cause then those questions will give you answers and those answers will give ideas, a diverse bouquet of ideas, and where do ideas come?... so, if you want a lot of ideas you need to you know to invite, to include a lot of heads with brains you know..." [Participant 9]

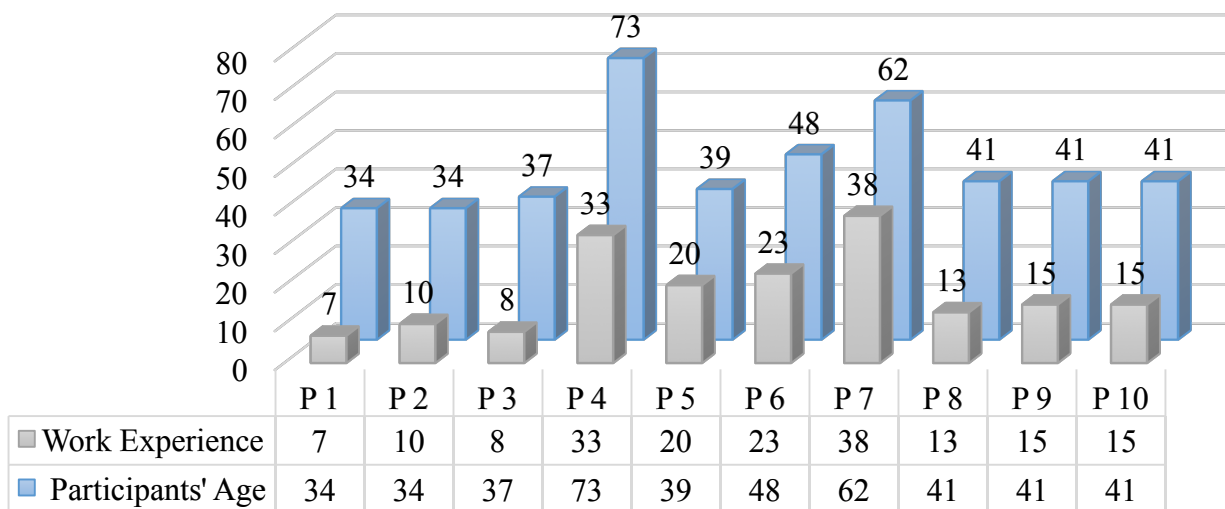
For participant 1 coping well during challenges usually manifested after she engaged in deep reflections of the adverse event or situation. She indicated that:

"Whatever, no matter how good you are doing, wait the day for the problem. How are you calming the problem? Not to run away... you can't run away... you just sit, and reverse yourself, where did I do wrong? Or why the situation is like this? Keeping silent, that's the only way you can... that's the only weapon you can know how to solve the problem and where it comes from, but if you report you don't have time, you don't wait, you end up a loser because you can't calm the situation when you don't take time. No, you can't. When you don't take time, you fail in a lot of things. Time is very important. Everything to give it time, is very important. To think twice is very important, but all takes patience... all takes patience... cause if I do something and I want it, to have a problem... I won't give up on that but I fight a lot to see that the situation will be calming down, my problem has cured..." [Participant 1].

5.4.3.4 Experiences of adversity within and outside of the workplace setting

All women in the study represented different workplace backgrounds and a majority could provide examples of direct experiences within the contexts of their work lives and personal lives. Although eight of the women worked full-time jobs at the time of the interview whilst two women were not engaged in a workplace setting due to family demands, all ten participants described several years of engagement in paid work within the workplace setting [See Figure below]. A minority of the participants did not report significant experiences of significant challenges within their workplaces.

Figure 8. Participants' age²⁴ and years of professional work experience²⁵



Although Participant 7 did not report that she faced a specific workplace difficulty, she conceded having an awareness of the existence of gender issues at the workplace in her perspective: *“I personally never found that I had adversities at the workplace... Um but there exist, definitely does, where there’s between male and female or males and males, females with the females, and maybe I just been lucky to be in a good place...”*

²⁴ The age of participants refers to the age of the women at the time of the interview.

²⁵ The years of professional work experience of participants refers to the total period which women had worked including past profession and current profession at the time of this study.

5.4.3.5 Approaching challenges from a man's perspective

In the view of most of women, the gender factor had an influence to the extent to which female individuals and male individuals were effective to dealing with difficult matters. Participant 10 aptly stated: *"I believe that male... when it comes to male... and I've said this before, they want to close the deal complete the job and close it and file it away... uh... with women there are much more discussions and in those discussions your personal opinions and personality come out... and then you have ranking... ranking where if one person doesn't agree with the other they feel this all thing is going in circle, they will call Ryan and Ryan will determine a solution... however, Ryan should not determine the solution, the solution should be the best option for the matter"*.

5.4.3.6 Workplace adversities associated with ethnic differences and expat citizenship

Five of the ten participants in the study were nationals of different countries in Africa. Some of the women described some of their workplace experiences as foreigners as important contributors to their positive outlook of life. Sometimes being resilient meant letting an adverse situation taking its course and letting or waiting for other people to adjust to you effortlessly, as the case of participant 2:

"... the first time was difficult at work when I came because I was the only African lady and the rest of the ladies I was working with they were Indian ladies. So, the challenge of/like me being a sociable person, my workmates were not sociable, so I had to teach them to start being sociable, because when I will talk to them no one was ready to be like you know sociable, talking, and all. So, it was so hard for me the first time, and I was only one you know. Then I tried to be friendly to them, it took me time for them to understand 'ok, there's another person', you know when they're with friends they will stand on their own corners and I will be alone. So eventually I managed to find my way around. And then we became friends, they became sociable as well, that was quite a challenge cause it took some months for them, you know, to adjust. Someone who you can say 'okay... he's a colleague and a friend'... that even if we got problems you can still share' you know... I felt myself, one day they will be, they will adjust, they will be right. I never said to myself that I'm gone leave, no. I never had that point whereby I'd say ooh no I'm gone leave, I'll do this –no. I said to myself one day they will be okay, they will adjust, and then eventually they adjusted because what made them do like that, because they had someone previously who went, was also a black and was not a nice person. So, they just put us under one umbrella, thinking ooh people are all like that, not knowing no people are different, people differ, you know..."

Some other women experienced issues of racial background and expat citizenship as they tried to reconcile career and family life. As a specialist surgeon doctor and a family oriented woman, participant's 4 early career life at the medical healthcare industry was not without some ups and downs:

"... I am in the male dominated discipline. Surgery in the past used to be more males, so when I came to South Africa I think uh in between fifty something registers, we were only two females that time... another challenge was being not from South Africa and I could not speak English then, and then another challenge, I'm not racist, but it comes being a black female, and then another challenge was being a mother because for the surgeon is a, is a strange to correlate family life especially when you're a female, kids and work and study... and I was newly married so was lots of challenges..."

5.4.3.7 Health adversities and the ability to look at the bigger picture with optimism

Experiences of health challenges in the past changed the way women regarded significant adversities in life of matters that people who had not experienced could be rattled about. Participant 5 who experienced breast cancer, exhibited the perseverant mind of many of the women in the study. When I asked the participant whether she had a fear in life, she optimistically described her experience:

"Not really. I think I'm too positive. I've been through cancer I had breast cancer, I had the operation, I had Chemotherapy, I had radiation, and um, I went to work every day except for one week but I couldn't stand on my feet anymore and I couldn't swallow and I thought I'm dead umm but you know, that was not a nice experience but it also make you understand more, people here I that I have to tell that I've got cancer I do it in a way that um uh you know I would have had ... felt would be the right way for me. So, you know always think how things will affect you before you say them to somebody else, so don't do to other people what you don't want done to you. That's another think that is important..."

Women described experiences which impacted their mental well-being negatively. Having lost her daughter a year prior to the interview, participant 8 was still working through her grief and feelings of loss. At the time of interview, she acknowledged having gone through depression due to stresses at the environment of work, particularly relationship issues with the management. She lamentably shared a memory of an unfavourable event:

“My boss, when you can see my boss, you will say thank you. One day she shouted at me, I wanted to cry in front of the customer, she shouted at me in front of the customer and I was like... I used to ask myself... Customer complained about: ‘I found hair, I found this I’.... what if the boss is doing this in front of them, how come they don’t call someone and say: ‘why do you do that in front of the staff? How do you expect that person to, to work for the next hour or for the next thirty minutes? How do you expect her to cope? She’s already under pressure, you are there, we are here; we want this by the snap of our fingers and then you, you talk to her like that?’ No, they just sit there...”

For participant 7, having to watch her husband go through a period of clinical depression, was one of the most difficult challenges that she had experienced. The experience pushed her to reassess her abilities to deal with the situation more positively: *“...um at the beginning I thought I was incapable of eh helping but when I saw that my life was uh in danger, not my life as I was gone die but my uh my future was in danger, I also got a lot of insighst from other people that told me no you can’t help somebody else without affecting all this... all the branches of your life, the future and everything. It was the help of other people, yes. Not that I have to go into a lot but I listen to other people, I’m a good listener, I also think oh yes, I’m not, I was not there, but somebody open up to me and said go on this road because that’s the best road, that’s the best road to cope... changed my thoughts to be able to cope...”*

5.4.3.8 Marriage/divorce can be an overwhelming experience

Only one of the ten women in this study had not ever been married. Out of the nine women that reported been married, four of the women reported experiencing divorce in previous relationships. For some of the women, a range of unfavourable experiences that followed their marriages made them learn great deal of lessons on their life choices:

Participant 5: *“... I’ve been through, through 2 divorces, abusive husbands so you know I’ve had my shade so I just, I just had to be strong, there was no choice in the matter so you know, I didn’t want to upset my parents too much so because they warned me about this guy and I didn’t want to listen so you know so when it, when it hit I just knew that it’s for me to deal with it because you, that’s something in life you make choices and uh what happen to you is uh a lot of it is got to do with choices you make the right choice or you make the wrong choice and that choice is going to effect of your life...”*

For participant 9, one of the big challenges was dealing with the financial repercussions of being a single mother: *“I think for me the most challenging um most challenging thing that I’ve had to ever go through as a woman was um the end, going through the, going through the end of my relationship, the previous.... challenging because I was very young and I was a single mother, that’s number one. Um challenging because there were obviously financial implications you know as well. It’s always very easy you know you know when you are, when you’re in a partnership, even if the other person is not bringing in as much but they also take care of something that you don’t have to take care of you know, so financially.”*

To one of the women, the challenging episodes within the marriage triggered a serious psychological. Participant 3 described her experience: *“... coming out from that previous marriage being epileptic, not that it runs in my family but it was the stress, the depression and all the scenario and for that reason I will say I will not let more people drag me down...”*

Participant 10: *“I’ve had a huge challenge in my life... I was not ready for a... to be divorced right...for me coming from the Indian culture... it’s like you meet someone, you get married and you have children and you live with them forever. That was my mind-set. And here I dated this man for 10 years... I mean like he was the highlight of my life, I was in love... I met him when I was 21, we’re married when I was 22 right... everyone we met said we were so in love just like the highlight of my life ... I wasn’t ready for a divorce and um the mental strain on me um was unbelievable... this was the most challenging thing in my life... rehabilitating myself...from the loss from this trauma... it affected me directly, um depression all of that... and the thing was dealing with that challenge I make a lot of mistakes and um I can’t say if I go back I would do it differently cause that’s where I was in my life, that’s when what I knew... it took time... the challenges are gone take time as long as you keep it together and you keep going and you have to know that you cannot blame yourself... you have to take responsibility for where you went wrong but you cannot blame yourself...dealing with your challenges it takes a lot of time... it took me 4 years... you can say 4 years to deal with everything and get it out of my system...’*

The experiences of adversities that women discussed in their different life domains above reflect the extent of similarity and diversity that the individual women in this study have lived.

5.4.3.9 Having the ability to maintain a positive outlook towards adversities

To effectively deal with adversities, the women in this study chosen to use a proactive approach to handle adverse situations in their lives. Most of the women described how they came to cope to difficulties.

“... don't give up, although you'll find obstacles, obstacles are there to strengthen you not to put you down and then carry on, look for other alternatives... You carry on, the most important thing focus in what you want, if you focus in what you want even if the obstacles are there you'll be having strength to fight and to win because you have focus but if you don't have focus and then anything that comes in your life and then you keep changing your mind and then you never gone get there where you finally want to get...” [Participants 6]

“Um emotionally... positive or negative either way... they tend to make you grow because without them you will think that everything is honey, like, they open your eyes into the struggles of other people, you might think that you're facing something very difficult but there is, once you, as woman you know we talk, once you listen to the next person you're like human this is nothing, the other person is facing way, you tend to scale like your problems, your challenges to other people and you try to see if you are growing as an individual or not.” [Participant 4]

Participant 8 made peace with life's unfavourable realities:

“If it won't kill I can live with that, cause I believe in chances, I believe in timing you know, if I cannot fix this now I need to try harder, I need to look for the time to make sure that it didn't happen now but if it was meant to happen, I need to come back to it, you cannot just leave it aside, like, that is why you mustn't have a lot of junk in your life. The junk I mean, I don't mean like all the things, I mean the things that you can live without, so that means this problem, this problem is yours, you need to fix it, and you can't, able to fix it, okay, it's the moment, give yourself a chance, maybe it was the wrong timing or maybe you. you didn't think it through, so that is why it ended-up not being completed the way it's supposed, what I believe is if the walls didn't collapse so I can still live with that... cause we, we normally take ourselves too much as a failure, umm too much as a failure, but for me I don't take, I don't even think that I am not educated, I don't even put that negative mind in me, I'm like okay educated or not educated I need to educate my child, I want the best for them, I don't want them to do things for me which I couldn't do, I want to guide them and make sure, they taking the right path, whatever wrong they do but the foundation, the foundation is solid.”

Participant 5 has also found comfort adjusting to challenges:

“Ooh you not going to get anywhere, you going to, to jump from job to, job to job, because people that they can’t uh put roots down in the job and deal with what they have to deal with, you will, you will see that they will, they, if you look at their CV’s you will see that they being here there, everywhere and they get the same problem, because, you have to um be... you’ve got to be determined to make it work, and you have to find a way to make it work. Don’t, don’t let the first thing that happens that, that makes you unhappy rattles you so much that you say ooh no I can’t take this, so you have to be strong in a work situation and you have to, to know that you’re going to get bad situations in each and every work situations, doesn’t matter where you go, you going to get it there. You never just going to have good situations, so if you can’t deal with conflicts and with jealousy and with all sort of things you will never make it, you will not make it.”

5.4.3.10 General ways to approaching challenges more effectively

The women indicated tools that were used to managing adversities based on their context and the resources which were available for them. There was variance of the type of strategy women applied to a specific domain in their lives and the extent of the condition that they were experiencing.

“For me it’s like this, I see that I need to achieve something, I fight to go through the obstacles take one at a time, and if I see that uh, this way I can’t, I think about it how it’s gone be possible or how am I going to get there in a different direction so is always this challenge of it doesn’t go one direction it will go another direction but I get there.” [Participant 7]

Selecting a challenge to focus on based on the resources available that could assist tackling the obstacle was the strategy that was taken by participant 6:

“...How do I do that? I choose what is vital, I sit down when these challenges come and then I think what is vital? ... what can go really bad if I don’t do it so I select my... challenge and then I put my priority. So not all challenge are win some are lose, I think it’s the law of life but if you can select what is more important for you and then the others you can like hide blind or like put blind eye or forget about that and things during the times they fall, fall into a place but it’s not easy, life is full of challenges, and then not everything we can solve, so just have to accept that sometime if we can and is in your hands to sort out you do try if you can’t after you’ve tried and there’s no solution um either you stop or you ask for help...”

Some of the women described their coping abilities to be the result of believing in something bigger than themselves which guided them through difficult times: *“I think hum whenever I have a tough situation, um I think about it and, and I don’t know about you but I am a Christian, and if, if you’ve got that, do you know how much further you get for other people?... because you, you can pray about something and you can share with fellow Christians, say for instance the people that you work for they’re not Christians then then it’s very difficult, because they don’t understand things the same way you do; but it, it depends a lot on um the person you are and how you, um, how you relate to, to issues. Either you, you deal with it and, and you believe that you will get the help that you need and, and then you get through it, it’s once again I would say uuh don’t, don’t just accept a situation uuh look at it from different angles and, and look at the facts and try and sort of, what works very well is if you can make a list situations the pros and the cons and say if I do this then that will happen and, and it really does work hey.....yeah so you know, it’s not something that you you you can really tell somebody how you learned it. It’s experience uh and little by little you get to know how to deal with things, it depends on you as a person how you deal with things...”* [Participant 5]

Participant 9 strongly believed that coping required engaging in positive reflections about the situation. She stated:

“... uh mina I do a lot of reflection you know. Whenever I’m facing a challenge, even if it is a work challenge I keep quiet, I love my quiet moments because that’s where you can think, that’s where you can also absorb the challenge ... And mina I believe and this is what works for me whenever there is a difficult situation I have a quiet moment, I sit down, I reflect on, I sit down you know, you sort of like look the challenge in the eye because you know what I need to really I’m like Aibo did did this really happened Aibo what what happened? you know, and there you’re sitting and you’re thinking okay this is what happened this is what happened this is what happened this is what happened... what could I have done differently? You know that’s the reflection... but if you know if you don’t sit down quietly and you absorb this yourself you know; you will not really get the true story of the challenge and without the true story of the challenge you can’t have the real the right answer or solution for the challenge because you don’t even know what a heck is going on you know...”

Participant 2 found that by accommodating other people and situations in life, they were able to lighten tensions in life circumstances: *“... So I believe the strategy that you can use is in life*

just try to accommodate each and everything. Accommodating is the best thing. Being a happy person and you know adjusting to everything and understanding each and every person is the best way that you can solve things out yeah; And at home as well you know if you are not married you know, with your family be there for them, always smile you know, take things as they are, people are not the same, appreciate each and every one and if you're married learn to appreciate your husband, say good things about him even if you know he's not good, just call him and say 'ooh my husband I love you' ... but to you things, you know, are not okay. They will change, the men will change. It's not easy, but will get there..."

5.4.3.11 How I overcame my divorce/marital challenges?

Marital problems lead some of the women to act towards overcoming the undesirable experience, some of them resulting in divorce. Participant 9 who decided to go ahead with a divorce articulates her experience:

"... but you know how I think I overcame that period, I think my first it was just the knowing that I was doing the right thing you know and I also that thing you know whatever you know the challenges in life and whatever actions you then decide to take forth you know you need to have certainty you know, clearance that you know what whatever that you doing is for your benefit or my case my child's benefit as well. So, the thinking process and what got me through as well, it was actually knowing that I'm doing the right thing..." [Participant 9]

For Participant 7, choosing to employ rather a 'tough love attitude' to support her husband during the time his depression was difficult for her but a tool which she deemed appropriate to that situation. She explained how the process unfolded:

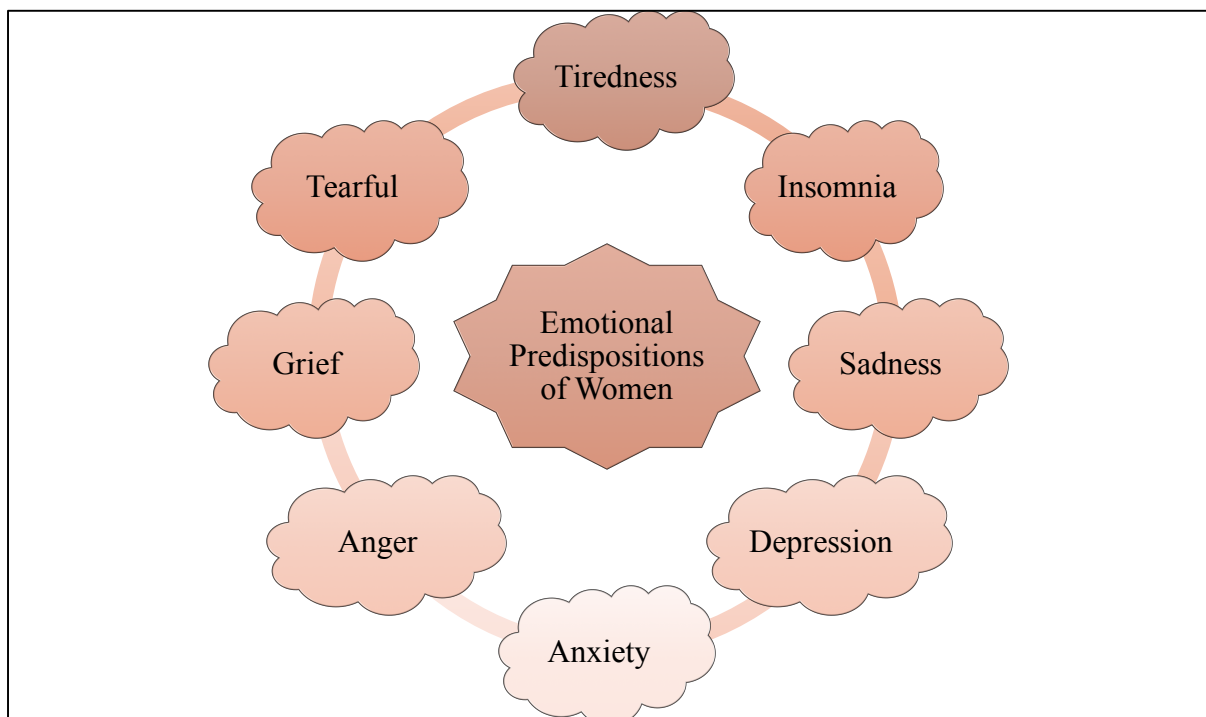
"I sat down with him and I told him 'I can't be you - I can help you, but I can't make you positive if you're not, and can't make you positive because I am, I am strong but I can't think for two people'. That's where my weakness is. I don't accept a person being constantly in demand of somebody else you know... I was listening to Doctors, to people that studied you know, and they gave me the insight how I would cope and they taught me one thing: 'Sometimes you need to be rude to be kind' not rude but you have to be harsh to be kind to that person because if you pamper... if I'm gone pamper you and say: 'oooh that's so nice I'm not gone do anything about myself let somebody deal with that' ...people must stop being stubborn and think there's other world and other people... you also get tired you know, you also get tired but I thought, I just said one day I said to him, I refuse to be in your hole in that dark hole of your life and that island, you're in that island, swim, get out of there.... That made me give up my

job, yeah my life had changed to help a person to help a person who did not help himself yeah. I did help him, he's in a better place now, still very negative, it's always there that, I think that evil with the wings you know is always there and I'm trying to cut those wings off once in a while..."

5.4.4 Theme four: Neuroticism as a building block to psychological resilience [Neuroticism is the tendency to experience ongoing undesirable emotions such as anxiety, anger and depression more frequently, intensely, and readily, and for a more enduring period]

The women in this study described several common predispositions – as indicated in the figure below – and which they claimed tended to increase in the process of experiences of an adverse nature.

Figure 9. EPW: Emotional predispositions of women



5.4.4.1 Feeling the worst following unfavourable experiences

Most women related the types of limitations they experienced if they were faced with something difficult: *"Um there's one... there's one thing that I don't do, I don't sleep, I don't.*

I'm thinking about it, I'm thinking about it and maybe it's a trait, or maybe it's positive I'm not sure where I put that..." [Participant 7]

Participant 6 reported different experiences and how she tried to overcome the limitation, including getting tired, and overcoming the feelings of fatigue:

"I get very tired yeah I get tired and then you know you just want to sleep and then when you realise no no not the way I act and then you start being doing the opposite what what you fell, getting tired. That's why I said I draw myself to work become very busy yeah so, when I have challenges the first the first feeling no just tired I don't want this in my life and then you sit back and then you say okay what should I do for that and then you start occupying yourself, do this one, two, three just to try, at least if you cannot solve it the time that these things are going on you're busy doing else something else until these things pass, pass away you see, passes away. I think it's sort of coping ways to, mechanism to do things., no one will like challenge, when you get challenge the first issue is fatigue and when you start seeing fatigue you say no no no no that's not the way I should solve the problem and then it gives you energy now, you bounce back as I said and then you go then I try to, to, to do opposite what you doing at that time and then you, you sit and listen to other coping mechanisms as we spoke, talking to others and taking other people's point of view..." [Participant 6]

Losing her daughter was described by Participant 8 as the hardest experience she had ever endured. A woman who had viewed herself as mentally strong to facing any challenge, participant 8 shared that her grief surprised her. When her daughter died, she found that she could not even engage in prayer, something that was easy for her to do during times of adversity. She related that she could not even be consoled by other people who wanted and tried to comfort her. She explained: *"...I couldn't pray, even if I wanted to, but I couldn't pray... cause like I wanted to know what was happening, why I didn't want to pray at that time? Fortunately, I was lucky cause people I was talking to they were telling me just pray, they were telling me, it's not like they were forcing me to kneel down and pray, they were telling me just pray it will pass, but I was, I didn't do it, I couldn't do it I don't know why because even the session that they booked for me, it was draining me, they even allowed me to come every day because they saw I was so deeply lost, I just quit that..."*

5.4.4.2 Fearing for the worst over actual or potential problems

The women in this study have stated various forms of anxiety or worries to which they were quite apprehensive about, and did not desire them to happen. The anxieties or worries that women stated included fear of death, fear about losing jobs, worry to being involved in unlawful events; or harming people and fear of being financially incapable to supporting themselves and their loved ones.

Having financial stability was significant for all women. Some of the eight of women in this study who were married at the time of the interview described getting support from their spouses in terms of financial contributions and domestic help from their spouse towards their personal needs. All ten women emphasised the importance to being employed and being able to generate an income to support themselves and their families. Not having financial means to provide for their children was for some of the women big concerns, like to participant 5 who despite getting the support from her husband, described experiencing regular worries of not being able to hold a job where she could financially contribute into the family needs and raise her daughter.

While she was not regretful about the personal sacrifices she made in her life, participant 8 understood the pressures that she had on herself to support her large family since she was a single a mother on two, and had to support her retrenched mother and the children of her deceased sister. She reflected on the expectation that her family members had on her:

“...I don’t have time for anything, even to buy clothing for myself, you go in the shop, you look around and look around, I’m like thinking what if my mom phones and say she need rice and yet I’ve already spend that 50 rand with buying this t-shirt, do I need this t-shirt today? Then something said: ‘no wait’, and I would ended-up not buying it, even if my mom didn’t phone and say anything you know, cause all of a sudden I because a hero at home, cause whenever it’s a pay day they know she is coming, she will phone us at this time: ‘you must have boys waiting from me there to those mealie-meal’ whatever, everything they ever wished to have in terms of eating yeah I will buy those things, the things that we didn’t used to have before...” [Participant 8].

The descriptive profiles of the women in this study coupled with the detailing information regarding their employments backgrounds far reflected the emphasis that all women placed on having job security and financial freedom.

5.4.4.3 Experiencing high neuroticism had its undesirable potential effects

Several women articulated an awareness of unhealthy behaviours that were reflected by them following pressures or uncomfortable events in their lives. Participant 6 shared her experience towards her reactions to unfavourable events:

“...Yeah like me I’m very short-tempered person, when things like that happened I’m very, I just go on the bore and then uh, you know, and after the fight... I sit down and then I realise ooh I should not have said that. I think it’s a natural that when there’s something and then we tend to overreact, it does it does happen uhh, but sometimes if you can predict that it will happen and then you at least prepare yourself and say noo I won’t say anything, I’ll just keep quiet you know you can, but in a sudden thing, depend on on the mood that time, you can sometime fight or keep quiet but most of the time because maybe of my making I, I’m a person that I will go for a fight and then realise uum uum it’s not worth it and then I’ll bounce back yeah...”

Some of the women reflected on their past of what used to be their attitudes towards unfavourable circumstances. While not all women experienced ongoing undesirable emotions in the past, all participants could reflect and describe an undesirable emotion. When discussing how she had changed from having a short-temperament character to a much calmer and controlled character, participant 2 related:

“Okay, let me tell you, the first-time reaction I will do before... This was me before and now me now. Before when something will happen, dealing with customers and customers are very rude and they shouting and everything and my reaction yooh you wouldn’t like it, I will act as if I am also a customer, I would tell them you know what: ‘I will not take any nonsense’ that was the kind of a person I was. I will tell them straight you know what, I’m not gone say sorry for nothing, you should respect me, I should respect you cause I’m offering a service so respect me and let’s respect each other. That was me, but I think it was also you know being immature and you know you grow out of it. Anger management. So, I had to go through that. So, it also helped because of the course I’m doing that... noo anger does not solve anything. So now if there’s nothing whereby... or maybe there’s a problem that I need to tackle or there’s a customer, difficult customer or anything, I became so like cool, different, not me, it was not me at first, not different but before uh aha I don’t wanna lie to you, I’ll go mad, I will tell that customer, you know what... I will swear by that until that argument is like... someone has to come and stop it...” [Participant 2]

A past of experiences of ongoing undesirable emotions was also reflected by participant 9:

“... what I used to do when I was younger here is the challenge, you wanna get all dramatic about it. When I was younger I couldn't even, even go out and talk about it and whine about it, so it will be just all confusion then, I don't understand, I'm thinking: ooh my goodness my life, my life is you know, and then it's only now that I'm only I'm able to reflect now and even the things that happened to me when I was younger then I'm thinking: 'Aibo' I could have done this and this and this, and whatever I though was a challenge probably would not even have but uuh but at that time we just so quick...”

5.4.4.4 There is benefit from experiencing healthy levels of neuroticism

From the workplace perspective, participant 3 decided to change her behaviour and attitude to towards colleagues that she believed bear malice towards her. Consequently, she felt that she could better control her experiences at work. She aptly related:

“Sometimes when you are angry you don't have that patience and we just attack and we don't want to listen. If you're not comfortable if you don't like what it is that you're seeing, that is irritating you don't stay there to create more and more fight and grudge it in your heart. Because grudging it in your heart, does not create happiness, does not create peace and joy of living, because you're going to be there thinking about: 'ooh that one did this and that this and that or me I should just do my revenge'. You do your revenge and you're not going to reach right through your revenge because it goes wrong, and afterwards you just going to self-destroy you. You just going to see no health on you. So, whenever wrong things happened to me in my way of life, even though people asked me to revenge against the people that did evil to me I never did, and I praised God that he gave me that strength for not doing that because otherwise I don't think I would have what I have now, If I would pay with the same coin. That what I believe.”

The participants reflected on memories of crying and shedding tears following an emotional experience. The women in the study described different circumstances where tears were shed due to significant distress:

“As far as life uncomfortable situations are concerned, I am an emotional person like I tend to cry, a lot, like, you know when you get that um a betrayal type of feeling yeah, um yeah I am a person that quickly absorbs that shock like because in life you expect what you are giving to be given back to you yeah, so I've had hateful moments... I've had a point whereby I

broke everything in the house... that was the anger within me yeah because um you give that trust to someone and yet they throw it in your face. It's, it's quite heart-breaking when that happens yeah, I've had such instances..." [Participant 4]

For most of the women in this study, crying or shedding tears was not necessarily an expression or reflection of something distressing. Some of the reasons to which women expressed emotions in the form of shedding tears varied amongst the participants. Sometimes crying or shedding tears meant recharging their strengths from a bad situation and returning to a normal state of mind for the women. The participants narrated:

Participant 7: *"The cry the cry that I feel sorry for myself, nooo. For me to cry it has to be a very, very unusual thing in my life. I think I made myself strong throughout my life, my career, my uh, maybe the war also in Mozambique and all that, made me strong... I cry over something small but not over bit things in life..."*

Participant 8: *"... shedding tears is very good. I feel sorry for people who cannot cry, cause there are people who say I cannot cry, okay but it's very good, it's taking out pressure on me, yeah... cause it's like when you don't cry you put everything inside, you might say something, you might do something, I've seen, I've seen people at work, you shout at them, they said: 'ooh I don't need this', take the bag and go, without the boss saying go, they just take the bag. And they, they change word with boss, boss saying this and they are saying that they forgetting who came to who you know, you come to them you look for a job, just try, as small as it is, just try because you came here, , you didn't land here, it's not like the bomb or the balloon open and you ended-up landing, you came to Wimpy, so you are, if you want to work for Government you go to Government store, don't, when you here don't act it's a curse, someone cursed you to, you you woke up and um there's Wimpy eh eh eh you came here... We're bound to experience pain; we cannot say I won't get pain or how did you get this pain..."*

Participant 3: *"Crying. I cry, I'm very sensitive, I cry a lot. I cry just a lot and aah, I cry quite a lot so the first thing that I try to do is just to be, I need to be by myself. I need to be by myself a little bit and to listen Christians songs. So that's my positive thing that I do, I will cry there or I will open up and talk, sometimes people say no it's not good, most of people say it's not good all you do is open your mouth about people ooh people take advantage of your problem and use and this, they go and say... but for me I think my talk and talk set me free so I think*

everybody knows my life, I don't, I don't have like a hiding or like quite ah conservative, like my husband is more reserved, I'm more open-up, extroverted and open-up person."

Participant 6: *"... Some people when they see me, they think I'm very strong but I'm um just secret between you and me I'm the person that cries the most in this house, but they don't see me right? they don't see me. It is good, is good because when you are crying, I feel like after crying eeh from that I found ways out you see so it's painful sometimes but you have to always think back. If I cry am I gone solve if I continue crying? Crying is good but if I continue crying am I gone solve any problem you know? So, what should I do to solve the problem, and then you start to looking at the way that you should come out of that pit, and, and then once you start to trying to come out only then you get alternative if you don't try to come out there and then you would sit then and knowing that there's no solution but the moment you start trying I bet you, you will find ways out"*

5.4.4.5 Ability to control emotions and taking control of unfavourable occurrences

It was important for the women to have the resources to manage unfavourable situations in their lives. Making a good assessing of the situation prior to making a final judgment was of primary importance for Participant 5:

"It's difficult to say because you know, what I find, anything that, that happens you just, you just have to assess. Assess the situation, and then see what will be best to, but never lose your temper, never, never act in an angry way, it never helps, you will always look back and say: 'I shouldn't have done it that way' ... I don't know if sometimes you get very angry but when you look back, uh, and if you ever lost your temper and, and you look back and you say to yourself: 'if I didn't lose my temper and I handled it in a calm way would I have a better result?' and you would have. So even though it's very difficult sometimes to rain it in, try not to lose your, your calm and your poise in a situation, and just, just stay uh in a, in a zone that/where you can handle things."

Participant 5 described a workplace situation whereby she applied calmness to deal with a disgruntled client whom had refused any assistance that she tried to offer to him. She explained:

".... one of the clients at the bank, it, it, it didn't matter what I said to him, he, he just you know, I tried everything that I learned uh on courses, my experience, and he's remained angry, he just didn't want to back down... nothing helped... and you know I think that, that you have to always remember if you stay calm, the, the other person can't fight you. Uh think about

it, the moment you use your calmness and it starts to become a screaming mash or whatever, who's losing? The person that lose his temper is the loser, if you stay calm, you always win. So, this guy I said to him: 'Sir I've tried everything now, that I possibly could to help you and nothing is working if I lay down on the floor and you come and you wipe your feet on me will you be satisfied then?' And it was over, he looked at me and he, he didn't have anything to say, he didn't know what to say... as easy as that, and just, just by staying calm, it changes everything... if you don't give a person reason to fight he can't fight he can't keep on fighting and, and like I say it totally deflated him and I was willing to lie on the floor and let him wipe his feet yeah..."

Participant 9 described her view on attitudes which she believed were reflective of women when things did not go according to their desires: *"... it's easy as women, we're super sensitive to anything that does not work with us you know, because that's when we then, in a challenge, something not going your way, and then the immediate response is we as women mostly we then overdramatized, overdramatise you know whatever the challenge is... we just wanna over-drama we don't even understand what is and then we go out we talk to our friends we whine about it and still you don't get answers cause the whining party ends-up being a pity party, people end-up pitying you instead of giving you solutions, real solutions..."*

5.4.5 Theme five: Psychological Adjustment [Psychological Adjustment is the process of harmonizing and balancing ones needs against the obstacles presented by the environments one is part of]

5.4.5.1 Resilience may also be strengthened as you grow older and experience events

The women in this study related to lifetimes of experiences a contributing factor to resilience. The age of the women in this study ranged between 34 and 73. Participants described experiences at different times in their lives and development into adulthood as dynamics that affected their outlooks of situations in their life. Participant 5, age seventy-three, who at the time of the interview was working full-time in the skincare industry reflected how she has matured to understanding about respect values:

"... you develop as you go older I would say. You, you learn new things and how to treat other people and what I would say is very important from the word go for anybody is: have respect for other people. It doesn't matter how they treat you, have respect for them and treat them with respect and you'll get respect. That is very important..."

Participant 2 described a 'before and after' type of attitude that she had demonstrated towards adversities:

"Before whenever I would experience challenges I would like, you know, sometimes cry, you know, cry, if I cry then it would come out of me and you know I'd say 'ooh why me? why this is happening to me?' but nowadays I will say I'll get there: Emotionally, physically and everything I will tell myself one day I'll get there, I will make it. That challenge that is there I believe now that it's like a phase passing, doesn't affect me anymore like it used to be before... now, it's fine, now I'm okay. I just say okay cool you know, cool it down, talk about it you know. Yeah before the whole place will hear; but in life you learn you know, it's called anger management, you need to manage anger... it happened naturally. I think it was like, you know, experience, that you see ooh, where will you get keeping on arguing with customers, because you get them every day of your life and everyday your life will become miserable. So, I decided nooo enough is enough, my life cannot be miserable because of someone else. Yeah..."

Participant 3 challenges in the previous marriage taught her valuable lessons about people's changes in behaviour and personalities over time, including her own weaknesses and strengths:

"I think before I was more heated... now I think with people start growing older and start getting experiences, people become more calm in a situation... Even when I was with my... my relationship... with my husband [her previous husband] I think... it was a bad first marriage but it also taught me to cool down to be more patient. I think my husband [present husband] is a different person... and the way we used to handle our situations was little bit different before, but now we learn like okay: 'I used to say that in one way' but then I learned that okay 'I think my experience of life made me see that not everybody is the way of what you wanted ..."

From participant 6 outlook, a person should understand when they needed to adjust into the reality of situations;

"... and not all the challenges you can win, is, is, is, is wrong when you, you think that you can solve all the problems it is totally impossible so yeah and then some, sometimes you know you just have to keep quiet you know, say ok, you keep quiet and see what, what then happen and other solutions talking to others you know asking opinion, I'm a person that, that's why I said I'm very outgoing when, I don't stay with the problem myself."

From her perspective, having faith and believing in her ability to achieving greater things in life coupled with practicing patience in the process was one of the primary tools which helped participant 10 turn her life around. *“Well, when it comes to achievements I’m happy that I managed to achieve it by myself when it comes to uh profession what I’ve studied towards what I’ve achieved, I’ve managed to do it my way. I haven’t had a lot of assistance and I have done it slowly, I wasn’t in a hurry and I didn’t go in there say you know this is it, it’s gotta be done and uh just uh do it. I’ve taken it in my strides; I worked and I studied and it was good to know that you just get it all piled up there, your qualifications, your experiences you just get it all, all piled up there and you don’t even think about it until one day like now when I had to go to out and be interviewed and I sat down and did a C.V after 15 years and I said ooh okay, I really done all of that?... uh surprise yourself... so you must not be so focus on getting it all on the wall. Let life happen because you gotta live your life now aside from just going and running out to the achievements. Just live that life, and as I said if you have faith everything will fall in place and you’ll meet the right people”*

5.4.5.2 A mental map and a proactive attitude to help achieve psychological adjustment

Participant 8 related her experience of how she came to adjust her needs against the obstacles presented in her environment. Since taking care of the family basic needs became a non-negotiable choice when her mother could no longer work and she needed to earn money to support her family and her recently born baby at the time, she developed a plan whereby she could see clearly what issues were worth prioritising at that time, and the things that she had to sacrificed and put on hold like an education for herself:

“... Ok, like when I drew my plan, what I did, I took out a lot of things, I call it a jug cause... it’s things that I wanted to have you know, I wanted to have but I cannot have... like I drew like a map, I said okay this is what I wanted but cause I don’t need it now I took it aside... I don’t know whether I threw it away or I put it somewhere which whatever box, whatever box, maybe I will go and reach for it someday... at home it’s was like I was the only source of income, I had to work hard. I’ve got siblings, my brothers, my, my sister, one sister that I have and two brothers, and plus my baby... I didn’t have someone to help me financially, except getting paid where I was working plus the grant... in that map there were not a lot of things... There was no corner or anything, it has to be me and my family, it has to be me and my family, so that, because... for me I had opportunity to go back to school but I couldn’t take it... if I go back, and knowing the situation is like this and I won’t get this uh income from work I won’t be able to get it and cause this is why my family is, I see my family is progressing... in my terms

it was progressing cause I could see I could buy this now, we're are not using that... So I had to say okay now it's me and my family, I stopped going to school, I took out that desire of like I had to go to school, I took out completely, I said it's not working, I don't know where I dropped it, cause now it's like coming back, now a little bit, but I took it out, a lot of it, friends, I never had friends, I never had friends, I don't have anyone to come to, to me and say hey let's go for shopping or this, it's only me and my colleagues now and now I met you yeah but a lot of things, it's, it's me and my, my family."

5.4.5.3 Ability to change and adjust to fit into the reality of the situation

All women in the study reported exercising resilience in one domain or another in their lives by own efforts. Participant 7 related been unhappy at some point when she had to leave her job overseas only to return to take care for her husband who was suffering from clinical depression. She related:

"I think is really resilience or self-taught, self-taught, to cope with that... I don't know, I don't know how to describe this but uh yeah, you know when you find a person that was certain say uh I don't know, I don't know if I can go there, uh I don't know if I a capable of doing that. For me I am always capable of doing something, maybe it will take me longer, but I will get there yeah..." [Participant 7]

Coming from a background of having strong desires to hold her own business, participant 1 reflected on her experience as a woman, thriving to succeed in a new environment:

"Yeah for me first thing, being on a foreign land I think it has been in lot, but I won't say that much because there is a lot of people who are on foreign land, and they can't do what I'm doing... Umm being strong it has really made me achieve what I want, If I wasn't strong I couldn't achieve, I couldn't be me today. So being strong It has done a lot in my life. I don't know if I was more than being a business person, because to me I don't feel that I can work for someone, So I always make a plan to make sure that something is always available for me, I always think, I always make a plan; What is the next... If this salon Fails What am I going to do next? I don't Sit on one thing, That's me. That's the reason I say I'm not scared of Risks. You can get me a business and I'll search on it and I'll try."

Within the context of approaching life experiences with a positive resilient mind-set, participant 5 critically stressed:

“You know Nuria that... this is your life and what you make of it depends on how you approach things how you handle it... you can either make it good or you can make it bad. You can make each day you get up in the morning, and it might not be such a good day but what you make of... it’s in your hands. So yeah you get up and you say: ‘oooh this is going to be a terrible day’ and you make yourself feel miserable and it will probably end up being miserable but if you get up and you say oh no it’s not so bad... there’s a promise of rain...”

These perspectives from participants 7, 1 and 5 reflect the general resilience outlook that majority of the participants in this study conveyed when describing their experiences.

5.4.6 Theme six: HRM’s role in promoting and sustaining psychological resilience

Having the right resources to maintain healthy lives was essential for all women in this study. The women discussed the pertinence of provisions to sustaining individual resilience. As indicated, the women in this study reflected diverse backgrounds. In terms of nationality, five of the participants were South African born individuals, while the other five participants were nationals of other African countries. Further, all ten participants’ professional background reflected distinctive industries [See Appendix F].

While most of the women indicated having taken some type of work-related training or course required by the workplace environment, not all experiences provided women with sense of self-development. Not all workplace environments represented by the women in this studied offered the women an HRM support. The women’s reflections concerning the roles of an HRM towards facilitating psychological resilience varied amongst the participants in this study.

5.4.6.1 Individual perspectives of workplace settings/environment to resilience

All women made strides to instigate circumstances that mattered to them. Even through challenges most women tried to avail themselves with resources which assisted them sustaining balanced lives for themselves. All women described a personal philosophy toward staying mentally strong during adversities at the workplace environment [See Appendix G].

All women valued employment and acknowledged the benefits as well as confronts that could develop from that domain. When describing the importance of adopting resilience attitude in the domain of the workplace some women emphasised the amount of time spent the workplace:

Participant 2: *“... work is where you spend most of your time. It’s like your second home. In my life, in my own opinion I feel that work is like your first home because most of the hours you spend is at work. Yeah if you say it’s like a second home, I feel it’s like a first home, because you just go home for a few hours you know to sleep, and you know to just eat and sleep and, you don’t have much time at home.”*

In addition to time spent at work, Participant 5 reflected on the responsibilities that should be considered both from an employee and employer perspective to ensure an employee is happy at work. She explained: *“...you know Nuria if you think about it, three quarters of your day is at work, so, if you, if you, you have to be happy in that environment, or as happy as you can be, and a lot depend on what you make it, you can’t expect somebody else to make a happy environment for you, so you have to work on that concept and how you can achieve it and uh that entails drawing the other staff in and uh show them that you appreciate them that you respect them that you actually love them, it helps a lot. So, that’s a very important thing to, your, your staff, the people that you work with, to make them feel special...”*

There was variance on the level of satisfaction that the women had towards their affiliated workplace environments. Whereas some of the women described their workplace environments as favourable and supportive, other women related to experiencing significant unfavourable experiences in that domain. While some of women in this study worked normal five-day week, and eight hours per day; other women worked above the normal days [including holidays], and above the eight hours mark due to the nature and demands of their jobs.

5.4.6.2 Work-life motivators and drivers of women

Although women were motivated differently in terms of their work life, the issue of workplace satisfaction and career growth had a great influence on how women behaved at their jobs and the decisions they made about their career lives.

Two of the women in this study discussed their experiences of making transition between jobs. These women who had just resigned their former jobs, had entered fresh jobs for different reasons. Participant 9 related having to resign due to a new opportunity which emerged with the Aviation Industry which she was anticipating. She was happy to that new change in her life after 15 years working in the Financial Industry, which she related as being some of the best years of her career life. Participant 10 related a different reason to resign after 15 years [which

coincided to participant's 9 years of experience in the former job] of working in her workplace environment within the Real Estate Industry. Despite being happy about taking that decision forward, her motives emerged out of negative recurring experiences at the workplace. She shared:

“I’ve had situations where I had woman screaming at me... screaming on top of their voice... I became the first 10 years, I became the face who was going to solve the difficult problems... they felt that they could treat me anyway that they like... the superiors of the company obviously did not know but there was times that I was broken down and I didn’t know what to do and it affected me but none of those times did I say, I’m going to leave... I didn’t feel like I had an option, but I had an option a long time ago and I never knew... so the women have treated me very very badly to the point where it would of broken somebody else down... people would come to the office, they would see me and they would think ooh she’s gotta a nice position with the company she is; everything is going well... but they didn’t know how much there was behind the scenes and the way I was being treated...the superiors of the company didn’t know the way I was being treated and the things that were happening behind the doors and I was not being recognised for what I was been actually doing in contributing to the point where the year that I got my Level 4 qualification in the yearly function it was not even recognised that she she is an administration staff who did not need to actually do a Level 4, qualify, write exams and pass.. that year I got no recognition and that was the breakdown for me, I said no... I can’t go on like this... so it was building up slowly that I, I could see that I was in an environment that I was not going to grow, I was being held back, I was unhappy... I can handle everything I can handle workload; I can handle stress. I can’t handle someone just being nasty pure downright nasty, snapping at you with the movies and not looking at the situations and making a judgment... you’re in the next room they will pass a comment in the front... you as talking to them they are side-lining somebody else and making an insinuation... for me that was what I couldn’t handle, I could not handle that... and I said umm this is it...I left the company because of the women...”

Some of the women related being satisfied with their employer or workplace due to the work facilities and services that were available to them:

“you know Standard Bank is one of the organisations in South Africa, well in the financial services that has a heart, immense support from every everywhere even personal things, psychologists that you don’t have to pay for they will sort you out, you know within the work environment, you know, having technological problems, even at home they even set me

up at home, support you know uuh colleagues as well, they big on team work you know. I think it's easy to thrive there because of the support structure you know and also mina I'm very inclusive I'm a people, I work with people I don't work with people I don't work with systems I don't work with people you know so it's nice to then work in an environment with people are team players you know, yeah.” [Participant 9]

Other women articulated the extent to which connections with different stakeholders within the context of the workplace could be positive to promoting psychological health and favourable environment for employees in general:

“.... obviously, I'm not a super woman, so I work with many people, and is almost like uh uh a link, we all link at work, am I right? I'm nothing without the tea lady, I'm nothing without the garden man, am I? no I'm not. Without all those links working together, we are nothing in built, because I can't be a garden person, I can't be cleaning the toilets and be a secretary, I can't on the same day. So, to me, all those links that are with me, no matter from the lowest to the highest, we all have different places in the, in that tree, the birds are sitting in one branch, you're sitting in another that's the beauty of it because we gone work together...” [Participant 7]

5.4.6.3 Family-life motivators and drivers to fulfil women's personal needs

At the time of the interview two of the women participants had seen the need to put their professional lives on hold, to accommodate family demands and priorities. Participant 3 found the need to focus on motherhood when she got pregnant with her first child. After experiencing some pregnancy concerns, and worrying about her age implications to conceiving again, both herself and her husband decided that it was best that she stopped working and stayed at home:

“... currently I'm here in the house being a housewife... the reason I left my work, it was my pregnancy also was not safe, with my health my child was in a different... different position, I had the risk of losing the pregnancy and my husband and I... we're older and the age was for us... that's one thing we wanted both of us, clearly we wanted children, and I understand that the age can create difficulties in a women relationship for being a mom so then we were just trying to avoid problems... He never wanted it [She is refereeing that her husband wanted that she stayed at home full time to look after the children], and I think in his family, a woman is more to stay in the house and taking care of the kids...”

5.4.6.4 The ‘nuts and bolts’ of the being a career woman

All individuals placed great value on holding a professional life and building stable careers for themselves. Being a part of an environment of work which provides job security was of great importance for the women in this study. Women recognised that exiting their employment was as an experience which they could face in their career lifetime. Five of the women in the study related experiences of having to leave their workplaces at some point in their career due to reasons such as retrenchment, pregnancy, caring for their family or spouse, poor work relationships and career advancement. Experiencing retrenchment and a full year of redundancy, and living through unsuccessful attempts to being hired was reportedly an experience of significant distress for participant 4. The experience had significantly enhanced her view on the significance of obtaining the financial benefits which was attached with paid work, and which she desperately needed to sustain herself. Consequently, the thought of losing her new current job [which she was engaged in, at the time of this study] and not having the ability to provide a balanced life for her daughter, generated in her intense feelings of fear though she tried to be optimistic about the future.

5.4.6.5 Sharing knowledge and experiences can help promote resilient behaviour

Most of the women, believed in their capacity to share knowledge and resources by assisting others improve their abilities in their areas of interest. Several of the women have stressed the benefits of support to enhance a person’s capacity to deal with different demands of life.

Participant 7 placed emphasis on the prospects of gaining knowledge through the support or others or mentorship: *“The benefits are enormous, they so vast...it’s the network that you have... because if I had ended up in a place, I’m talking about myself, where they are, they don’t care about human touch you become a number, and you are there you do your job go home and yeah goodbye. That’s uh you know, you achieve so much because they give you, they give you support, it’s your foundations you know, they lift you up and at the same time you lift other people as well... That’s the benefits...”*

Participant 10 similarly stressed the twofold advantages that employees and organisation could gain from that resource: *“It comes like you know we’re having a discussion now and you bouncing of ideas you look at more perspectives, although you may already have thought of those perspectives but hearing someone else say it and discussing out it becomes a reality that you can go out and brought a plan and see it through. So, your mentor will improve you... will*

improve you tremendously because they will help you reach your plan that's hidden away into action because you'll now be bouncing your ideas of this person and you would see the positive and the negative sort of response and then you start believing that, that plan might be the right plan and you will put it into action which means you ultimately be improving the yourself and company... so everyone should have a mentor..."

Speaking from a personal experience point of view based on the time when she was younger and unexperienced, whereby she did not receive the help that she wished she had received in order to self-develop, participant 10 related:

"...because when you're younger somebody has to tell you, and I wish there were people when I was younger to motivate me and tell me what to do but I was in an environment where male dominated. What they said I had to do and I'll do whatever... I took on things and assessed... there were cultures and all sorts of different things coming out... they were all males, I was the only little female there and I had to learn quickly to deal with that... and they put me in the deep end... they just wanted to see what I can do and I was so young but I, I rouse to the occasion... so it was an interesting sort of experience because if people don't push you to experience things and leave you to swim or sing you don't learn... you have to be put in that environment..."

Participant 3 shared a similar experience of necessitating guidance when she was promoted to a higher post at the workplace. She related that she was not shy about asking for help when she felt that she needed:

"I was a person that I came out from the kitchen to be a restaurant supervisor, I got the position, and the fact that I was already given the position for me it was a huge blessing... so when I make my own mistakes, when I anticipated them and I didn't achieve or It ended-up being actually being a problem, a situation, I would of go straight to my manager and say I didn't achieve it, I didn't manage, would you forgive me, would you teach me how to have more control in this situation. That's how I, I would humble myself and I would say to the manager: 'I can't manage in this way, in this way, in this way, teach me how to do it'..."

For some of the women, the unavailability of workplace resources to promote resilience, did not deter women from searching own ways to developing and strengthening personal qualities and abilities. When asked about her attitude towards the convenience of a mentor in support of women well-being at the workplace, she replied:

“You know, I think with the mentor if you look at people around you, not a specific one, you take, uh, from different people, you get different values and you apply them because you see things in other people that you admire and you would say that’s a good way to do it so you, you don’t need one mentor, people around you will teach you a lot if you just open yourself up how to do things. You observe, to observe and to use other people’s good abilities to enrich your abilities and learn from them, then you have mentors all around you” [Participant 5]

Taking an individual approach to support resilience was common amongst the women in this study. Such an approach allowed women to learn from different angles and gain diversified perspectives of thriving through life.

5.4.7 Minority themes

In addition to the above presented findings, some of the following findings emerged out of the data corpus following the data analysis, and are classified as minority themes in the present dissertation.

5.4.7.1 The wisdom not to dwell on negatives during adversities

In this study, some women’s experiences of adversities have been triumphed early before women become reached adulthood. Sharing her experience of having to get an early start in the work environment at her teen years due to lacking sufficient money to live, participant 8 related how she thrived through the demand of daily work:

“...hum fast fast fast. I think the pressure of being having nothing, wanted to have something little, it helped me learn more things because...when I came there I was the only girl who was sweat, all the time, even the boss that hired me, she, I heard that she asked the manager if I was okay because every time when she sees me, the sweat is like running all over cause I wanted to make sure that whatever she will give me she mustn’t regret and she, and I wanted to feel happy cause I was receiving something which I didn’t have before you know, so I cleaned the tables December, the whole month of December, cleaning the tables, sweep the floors...trying at the same time to keep everyone happy cause, when I was working there the waitresses were cleaning their own tables...I did a lot back then, that’s when I grew because even now I’m doing a lot of things...”

While all participants' reflections on the presence of specific challenge varied, one woman [Participant 9] vibrantly described the resilience modelling that experiencing challenges provided her:

"... you also build resilience going through challenges, there are a lot of people who, who make it a point or who make it a career really to stay away from danger... how you're gone build stamina or you gone build that strength or that resilience or that positive outlook you know if you don't allow yourself to, to go through challenging situations you know. Sometimes, sometimes not all the times I invite challenges because they make you stronger, you just want, you want this issue to come you know cause you wanna go through it and that's what builds, you know, resilience..."

5.4.7.2 Influences of 'sex hormones' and linked issues to women's well-being

Other less frequent findings were noted in this study. A small number of participant shared insights of natural evolving into more resilient individuals. While participant 3 hypothesises on the process underpinning resilience was analogue to a woman's intimacy life, as she indicates resilience as a process which required a series of steps and actions; participant 2 understanding on what was causing her recurring unfavourable emotional behaviour came to light after understanding about the potential emotional triggers or side effects associated with contraceptive pills. She briefly explained:

"... I think it's because my I was on a new pill, you know contractive pills, they also give you that reaction. You know when you on pills contraceptive pills, yeah but as they adjust to you eventually you go right..."

The above findings of individual resilience named by the women in this study reflect the similarity and diversity of their life experiences.

5.5 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter has been to present the findings produced in the data collection process. Findings were presented in terms of on main themes and sub-themes. Based on the findings of this study the following conclusions can be drawn:

Mindfulness:

Women possessed a certain quality and held a certain life value; and could assess the extent to which the qualities and values they held enhanced the quality of their lives. Women were aware

of areas that needed improvement in their lives. Women applied different philosophies to deal with situations in their lives. Women valued themselves and others, and mostly looked up to their mothers as source of motivation in life. Women used practical steps to improve mindfulness including: Spending time alone to self-reflect on things; visiting a spa to take relaxation massages; practising meditation; and withdrawing from destructing people of situations. There was good understanding of the consequences that could follow in the absence of resilience.

Self-efficacy:

In general women held strong self-beliefs on themselves to complete tasks and reaching goals. Further, women also held anxieties about their capacities to achieve their objectives. Women believed they held positive qualities and values, and believed there was room to improve certain areas of their lives. Women believed improving the weakest areas in their lives would promote self-efficacy for them. Some had a clear vision of the near future of five years, however, other women were uncertain of what could be their lives life in that time-frame. Not all women were fully-satisfied with their present life circumstances.

Coping:

In terms of adversities, there was a balance of which domain women experienced more adversities. Where some women experiences of adversities stemmed predominant from workplace environment; for other women, adversities within domains outside of the work proved more dominant. Coping was not always easy for women. Women diverse experiences included: depression, retrenchment; loss of a loved one; living in poverty; being bullied at Work, experiencing breast cancer; living epilepsy; domestic violence; and divorce. Most women considered themselves as survivors. All women appeared to make a positive relation between their experiences of resilience and development into adults or experiences of motherhood. Women learned from experiences they lived experiences at childhood and adulthood. Women felt the importance to strengthen their coping abilities.

Neuroticism:

Women could recall events of significant influence on their behaviour and attitudes. Women experienced events which had an adverse impact on them psychologically. Women were not always capable to be composed mentally without displaying some unfavourable emotions. Most women displayed unhealthy behaviours in the past, and events which they considered

distressing nature and triggers of unhealthy attitudes. All women experienced directly one or another undesirable emotion following significant adversity. This included: depression, anger, sadness, anxiety, fatigue, tiredness, grief, and crying. A few of the women still demonstrated some unhealthy behaviour in the present-day, following adversities. Women recognised their tendencies and sensitivities to unfavourable experiences. Women were afraid of events that would diminish their abilities to survive.

Psychological adjustment:

All women in this study exercised resilient behaviour in one domain or more in their lives. As women grew into adulthood and experienced events, women's outlook of life changed significantly. At some extent, whereby women could anticipate obstacles in their environments, women managed to develop measures to deal positively with upcoming events in their lives. Women demonstrated less undesirable emotions following adverse experiences, and can sustain more balanced attitude towards life. Women understood the foundation of resilience and held it necessary to sustain a resilient psychological state of mind. Women could voice their worries and concerns to the relevant people both at work and life domains. Not all concerns expressed by women received attention by the concerning party; and to some extent women had to find own ways to deal with the experience. Different approaches were applied effectively by women in their environments. Women applied resilience in different spheres of life including: Work life; Family life; Health domain; and Conjugal life; Personal life.

HRM's roles:

All ten women in this study represented different industry of workplace. Women provided insights based on their experiences within the context of their work experiences and general life experiences. Women were motivated by common goals: to have a fulfilling career; to be able to provide for their families; to effectively balance work and life domains; to have positive relationships; and to receive support for self-development. Some women had workplace facilities available at the workplace. Other workplaces did not offer facilities and supports that women believed was important for them. Women understood the benefits of having the support from their organisations in some form. They considered mentoring as critical tool to acquiring knowledge and believed they could benefit from receiving knowledge from other people; or impart knowledge to other people. All women placed great value on their work, and understood the implications of being career individuals as women. For the most part women supported the

notion of assessing resources from within and outside themselves to cope with challenges in their lives and function optimally mentally and physically.

Above and beyond the six objectives of this study, this chapter has also discussed in the first section, which reflected important connection between resilience and feminism theories. Last but certainly not least, some minor findings which emerged beyond the study research objectives have been presented in the last section of this chapter as minority themes. With this in mind, the following discussion is pertinent to providing further speculative elaboration on the findings.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to assess the findings which have emerged from the interviews data presented in chapter five relative to the theoretical framework of the study. Influenced by a biopsychosocial model of individual resilience presented in chapter two and feminism philosophy in chapter three, six research objectives were developed. By means of social constructivist approach, the voices of ten women were heard as they ascribed and described own interpretations of lived experiences of resilience. This paradigm laid grounds for the use of life-history interviews which encouraged participants to be unrestrictive in disclosing personal experiences while allowing me to engage with them continually throughout the data collection process [refer to findings in chapter five]. While the study participants shared the same gender attribute, their background, lived experiences, and perspectives of resilience differed.

In line with the above, and in terms of the theoretical frameworks enmeshed in this study, this chapter discusses the implications of the findings emanated in chapter five into eight succinct sections. The first section gives an overview of multiple overarching findings which reflect broad topics of resilience and feminism theories. The subsequent sections encompass the six research objectives of this study as outlined in chapter one and introduced in chapter four. A discussion of minority themes from findings which emerged outside of the objectives of the study is provided in the last section of this chapter. Accordingly, the reflections and considerations given in this chapter are an attempt to reflect an avid immersion in philosophical thinking applied by the researcher on the diverse discoveries constructed by the participants themselves in chapter five.

6.2 Discussion around the connection between resilience and feminism

Multiple aspects of the experiences lived by the participants in this study were captured at various points of the process of the analysis research data. Prior to discussing the findings in relation to the specific objectives of this study, it is therefore appropriate to remind the reader

of the interactive aspects of women's experiences that explicate connections between resilience and feminism.

6.2.1 Resilience through a feminism perspective [work-life domains]

The findings resulting from this study of women corroborates with the underlying process of psychological resilience. Resilience was defined in this paper as “the ability of a person to recover, re-bound, bounce-back, adapt or even thrive following misfortune, change or adversity” (Garcia-Dia et al., 2013). Thus, as individuals, women are potentially having the capacity to recover, re-bound, bounce-back, adapt or even thrive following adverse experiences within and outside of workplace context.

It is my view that the results from the findings elucidate knowledge on applicable factors to promote psychological resilience as entrenched in the biopsychosocial model implemented in this study (Rees et al., 2015). The personal values and qualities indicated in Figure 5 and what participants considered as bad traits [poor listener, impatient person; short-tempered person] can become the defining characteristic of women's self-identity. Even though similar traits are not reported in the literature, it could nevertheless be argued that the values, qualities as well as bad traits described by the participants captures the essence of the biopsychosocial model of resilience, and importantly reflect the extent to which biology, psychology, and social connections influenced them to emerge strengthened and transformed cope with adverse events.

A considerable body of research reflects the benefits of resilience to working women (Rees et al., 2015; Deluca et al., 2010; Fida et al., 2016; Thompson et al., 2011). Significant adversities were not always the motive for which participants felt a need to foster psychological resilience. There were many instances within the workplace context where exhibiting resilience was vital for the individual women in this study. As pharmacist assistant, participant 2, felt that standing on her feet for the most part of the day could be tiring for her at times, and that she was expected to demonstrate positive qualities during her shift. The ability to demonstrate resilience attributes has also been useful to other participants who faced uncomfortable challenges such as by clashing relationships with co-workers or their managers within the work environment [P3, P5, P6, P8, P10]. A few major concerns lived by the participants have adversely affected the women in this study [Figure 7], and were consistent with the underlined prominence of feminism theories with regards to social, political, cultural, and economic forces. Feminist

theories suggest that women face diverse inhibitors to wellbeing, and this was true in the present sample of ten women, who were from diverse backgrounds (Browder, 2015; Miguda, 2010 2014).

6.2.2 Background of work-life of participants

Following the process of analysing the data gathered, it became clear that all participants were active in at least two workplace settings before the time of the interviews. While a common purpose why participants engaged with work was to maintain financial independence and uphold decent quality of life for themselves and their families; exerting work activities allowed women to learn important life skills and promoted women's self-confidence and self-worth. The ten women in this study worked as an average 18.2 years at the time of the interview [see table 3]. This finding suggest that in terms of workplace settings, the entry of women into professions in modern times is evidenced in this study, and means that cultural practices and traditional beliefs restricting women roles to household activities and looking after the family is not prevalent to the women in this study. Some of the participants worked in traditionally considered female dominated industries [Haircare; Hotel & Tourism; Skincare; and Restaurant], some of the participants worked in sectors considered male dominated sectors [Retail Healthcare; Town Planning; Medical Healthcare; Management [Mngt] of Companies and Enterprises; Aviation; and Real Estate] (Leppin et al., 2014). Despite progress can be seen insofar as employment for the women in this study, there is still a pernicious workplace influences and stumbling blocks which have hindered self-development of the participants in this study. The results of the present study suggest that women faced significant issues depicted in terms of feminism theories.

6.2.3 Perceptions of adversities

In this study the concept of adversity is used interchangeably with difficulty, challenge or problem. In terms of adversities the women in the study collectively have lived a range of significant adversities [Refer to figure 7 in chapter five]. It is true that although hardships create new opportunities to some people, as often as not, significant adversities have the capacity to influence the ability of an individual to perform normal activities. More specially when a person is unable to thrive and effectively manage the issues at hand due to lack of adequate resources and practical knowledge or skill to maintain healthy life.

6.2.4 Segregation and oppression at work

As far as segregation is concerned, although not all participants experienced segregation at the workplace, it was evident that some of the women faced difficulties due to their ethnicity and gender. Women who experienced challenges to self-develop themselves hoped to see better opportunities in that regards [P3, P5, and P8]. In terms of oppression or discriminatory behaviour, some of the women who experienced oppressive treatments at the workplace domain at some point in their careers, included both non-nationals and South African women participants. In terms of this study, being a 'black woman' caused some of the women to experience unfavourable conditions, and therefore being black is considered as a factor of women's oppression [P2, P6, P10]. For this study, a black racial group include Indian people, as it has been recognised in South Africa. A second factor of oppression reported by women in this study was being foreigners, that is, born in a country other than South Africa [P1, P2, P3, P6]. And a third type of oppression at the workplace which some of the participants faced was to do with them being women.

The data analysis has further showed an additional influence on the lives of the women related to resilience and feminism. One example of this is that Participant 8 described that she used to be quite puzzled that no one would intervene whenever her workplace manager would demonstrate hostility to her or colleagues in front of the customers at the restaurant as they serviced the customers. She shared that she expected that by-standers specially the customers who were involved in the event directly would demonstrate support for them by speaking out or reasoning with their manager at the time of the events of the inappropriateness to addressing them in distressful ways publicly. From this backdrop, both resilience and feminism demonstrate that women experiencing difficulties expect that other people with the ability to support would do so. Although in the present study participants appeared to demonstrate the ability to defy workplace challenges such as interpersonal conflicts, these findings are consistent with the need to accessing the influences of risk and protective factors within the workplace setting more comprehensively and from the perspectives of women (Mallak & Yildiz, 2016; Roh et al., 2015).

6.2.5 Gender at work

The subject of workplace interpersonal conflict is evidenced in this study. Women had dynamic outlooks on relationships between themselves and men versus themselves and other women at the workplace. Work relationships were meaningful to all participants; however, the findings

indicate that some of the women had better experiences working with females than working with males and vice-versa. While participant 10 main difficulty at the workplace was maintaining positive relationships with some of the female co-workers, participant 2 related feeling more comfortable around women as compared to men in the environment of work. Furthermore, some participants shared views on certain predispositions of female individuals had which differed from male individuals. The literature review chapters on feminism also emphasised general behavioural differences between working women and men (McFayden, 2015 (2015), and mesh with findings reflected by the women of this study. Some of the participants believed that women in general tended to overwhelm themselves extensively over unfavourable occurrences and engage more negatively and emotionally to resolving their issues, as opposed to men. Women believed that men were better in that regard because they were able to focus predominantly on the end results and not engage in unfavourable emotional behaviour [P9 and P10]. This study illuminates some of the own complexities of women behaviour which compromise their own health due to interpersonal conflicts.

6.2.6 Superwoman syndrome

The literature on this topic articulate tendencies that women unsurprisingly display in terms of undertaking every endeavour or attempting to intentionally manage anything and everything which is put in their way (Floderus et al., 2009). In this study, the behaviours of the women reflected in this study indicated that many of the women was found in that predicament. The life history of each women show that most of the women in this study were involved in more than one role, that is, the participants were moms, professionals, wives, students, responsible for families, and responsible for households. Not only they were physically and emotionally engaged, the women wanted to excel in all areas of their lives. This is indicative of superwoman syndrome. Although feminism advocates for advancement of political, economic, personal, and social rights for women, when it comes to balancing work-life demands, not much were changed for the women in this study. In some case the women in this study worked hard and were happy that they invested efforts to bringing favourable circumstances for themselves. Importantly is that women believed that working so much harder at work provided them with job security [P1, P3, P4, P8, P10]. This was possible in part, but overall, for the women doing too much, with too little time was not always favourable for the women. Some of them took care of extensive tasks at work included the roles which they were not responsible for [P3, P8, P10]. Oftentimes women did not realise that their behaviour left them feeling physically and mentally exhausted, to the point to experiencing unfavourable emotions such as stress, anxiety

or burnout. Further, the resilient women in this study cited that women needed to be a bit calmer and not feel the need to wanting to doing it all. This finding is supported by resilience researchers who have determined that too much pressure of attempting to perform too many roles presents barrier to a person's success and personal well-being (Favero & Heath, 2012; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015; Turner & Maschi, 2014; Waterhouse et al., 2016).

Overall, the women's experiences of individual resilience followed somewhat interesting patterns which suggest a link to biological [neuroticism], psychological, and social [mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping] undercurrents of the resilience model. In several ways, these undercurrents are further reflected through the research objectives. Also, the women might have been stronger in one or more elements of resilience at the time of the interview.

The purpose of the above discussions was to provide the connections between resilience and feminism given the importance of both tenets in promoting overall well-being of women. The next sections will address the specific objectives of this study.

6.3 Discussion of the study's research objectives

The findings from this study of resilience are consistent with Rees et al., (2015) assertion that neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping are essential factors to promoting resilience, which ultimately confirm the importance of the role of biopsychosocial factors in the life of human-beings (Haracz & Roberts, 2016; Hornor, 2017; Rees et al., 2015; Shrivastava & Desousa, 2016).

6.3.1 Research objective one:

- ◆ To understand the extent to which mindfulness contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace

While mindfulness is commonly well-thought-out as a therapeutic process which promotes a person's mental health, it is overall the practice of being fully present at each moment. And insofar as resilience is concerned, mindfulness has been scientifically proven to improve a person's ability to manage more effectively the inevitable pressures of day-to-day life (Kent et al., 2015). Starting from the presumption that mindful employees impact organisational productivity and the bottom line, and the fact that we live in faced-paced environments where people can often get distracted by diverse occurrences, and run activities on autopilot;

mindfulness should become part of the internal initiative of any business entity or work environment, so that an employee's ability to concentrate and even multitask activities actively gets to be developed and maintained.

At the time of the interview, the study participants individually shared insights of their life experiences. Mindfulness has been described as a tendency to experience and express mindful or cognizance qualities such as non-judgment qualities, and behavioural qualities such as acting with awareness rather than on without concentration (Rees et al., 2015). The findings of mindfulness meshed with the literature reviews in several ways. Firstly, participants have upheld promoting behavioural qualities in their lives [See figure 5. On values and qualities described by participants]. As mentioned earlier, these attributes described the participants in this study and constitute fundamental parts of mindfulness. Consequently, it was not unexpected that most self-described attributes were reflected in the data corpus. They shared events in which they could exhibit these behavioural qualities knowing the benefits from sustaining such behaviour. For example, some of the participants kept themselves calm in the face of unfavourable situations. While some of the participants indicated having the ability to focus on the present, some found ways to improve their quality of mindfulness through applying meditation, reflecting upon a situation and taking time off to reenergize themselves in some form of leisure to generate strength to improve specific challenges. Not only women described strengths which they believed they had in themselves, they could relate the attributes to the domains in their lives which were not balanced. One of the participant for example, maintained herself calm and collected to manage role ambiguity [P4]. Through calmness, she could collect herself when she did not understand the tasks that she needed to perform at work. Such attitude allowed her to stray away from engaging in self-doubt and inferiority complex, but instead to look for support from the management to better understand the activities which she required performing.

Secondly, the study participants also reported some behavioural qualities which they believed they were most vulnerable. Attributes such as 'poor listening; being too talkative; short-tempered; and impatient' were common traits which some of the participants self-described and a reflected on, and expressed having a desire to improving the trait positively. These findings are congruent with the concept of low mindfulness (Haracz & Roberts, 2016). The literature on mindfulness suggests that individuals demonstrating positive or high mindfulness are more likely to demonstrate auspicious cognisant qualities rather than displaying traits

without concentration or conscious thoughts (Kent et al., 2015; Rees et al., 2015). The authors suggest that low mindful individuals are more likely to let themselves getting overwhelmed by concerns in their lives and immerse themselves in everything that is happening with negative thoughts and emotions often without realising what is going or should be done. Low mindfulness was also vivid in the lives of some of the participants. Some of the participants verbalised that they went through restlessness times in their lives following unfavourable experiences. One woman who had lost her eight-year-old daughter, related that there were times when she felt a void in her life whenever she thought about the lost, and would spend time wandering. This second area of mindfulness, which reflects an autopilot behaviour rather than acting with awareness was lived by the participants.

A third area in which the findings of this study are consistent with the theoretical underpinnings of mindfulness, is that the participants have taken steps to improve their mindfulness. The apprehension voiced by most of the women in this study with regards to mindfulness was the impacts of approaching occurrences without conscious thoughts or attention. For many of the women knowing the facts clearly regarding their lived experiences was a serious part of the process to effecting positive behaviour. For example, various studies have determined that positive mindfulness increased a person's ability to display quieter and more confident attitudes toward situations of a stressful nature (Rees et al., 2015; Haracz and Roberts, 2016; Viladarga et al., 2013). While all participants reported having recognised experiences within the world of work, eight of the participants in this study were working full-time at the time of the interview, while two of them reported not being engaged with paid work at the time. For some of the participants, there was a challenge to establishing positive balances between their different life domains as full-time employees, wife and mothers, and for some of the women also as students. Some of the women reported having few different roles to take care of, or experiencing fatigue by the end of their work day undertakings. In the study by Viladarga et al., (2013), a clear correlation between mindfulness and burnout was found to be true. Their study suggests that workplace factors such as burnout had a quite significant adverse influence on the employees' ability to focus and concentrate on activities. Maintaining a balanced state of mind or psychological adjustment was not always easy for the study participants because of the multiple activities that women were involved in. Furthermore, the women did not relate receiving much stimulus from their workplace to promote mindfulness. By stimulation, it is suggested an act of concern or interest from the management what was going-on in their lives in general, and encouragement with the necessary means that would reflect caring about them. I also think that

some of the women could have had improved their mindfulness quality if they implemented certain basic steps if they were aware of the relevance of mindfulness. The first step to improving a person's current affairs is to know what is happening around and what needs to be done, if a person is not able to establish their needs and priorities, then a person may unintentionally head to experience unpremeditated life experiences in the future.

One of the main common objectives in the lives of participants in this study was seeking a better balance between work and family life. Participants who had resources to sustain and maintain overall well-being, reflected being able to concentrate better and perform better during challenges. Collectively, the participants assumed that it was their obligation to behave mindfully towards conveying favourable circumstances for themselves. Subsequently, the women who were used to being independent by working and looking after themselves, also relied on personal efforts and the resources that were available to them to maintain good quality to life. For participant 5, who was the senior in age compared to the rest of the other participants at seventy-three years old; promoting self-awareness and being proactive towards life occurrences was fundamental to keep her mentally and physically functional. She emphasised on consequences of making choices in life: *"...that's something in life you make choices and, uh, what happen to you is, uh, a lot of it is got to do with choices you make, the right choice or you make the wrong choice and that choice is going to effect of your life, so..."* This is congruent with both theories underpinning resilience and feminism. Although currently women have grown in terms of stepping into vast and diverse possibilities of career as well as family which would conventionally be difficult, it seems that choices that a person has chosen to take may not necessarily be a favourable option for the individual's well-being (Favero & Heath, 2012; Gignac et al., 2014; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015; Turner & Maschi, 2014; Waterhouse et al., 2016).

6.3.1.1 Personal inputs towards resilience

To sustain resilience, most women related the need to persevering, working hard, and show with determination in the process of exercising duties. For the women in this study, being able to perform their daily lives effectively meant behaving intentionally and consciously while completing the deeds of their lives. The women were diverse in terms of the industries which they were in, and majority of the women related that they knew were knowledgeable about the tasks which they needed to perform. Examples of mindfulness were repeated in the stories of the women in this study. Several of the women remarked that *"I take time alone to reflect on*

things...” or *“I focus and meditate or I go to a spa to relax”* or *“I write down a plan of actions... or try to get help from someone who can help...”*. Evidence that the participants in this study understood certain approaches that could best assist them being in control of their life experiences.

6.3.1.2 Sources of motivation and inspiration

While there were commonalities amongst the women in terms of crediting their strengths from their mothers, half of the women strongly believed that by pursuing spiritual grounding as part of their faith in a divine being [Also referred as ‘God’ by the participants] provided them with a more stable outlook in life (Kent et al., 2015; Sturgeon & Zautra, 2013). For many of the individuals in this study being spiritually grounded alleviated the handling of stresses and anxieties of the day-to-day life. One example is from participant 4 for who found herself being challenged by the job demands and the demands of the family lives. Just like participants 4, few other participants who had active double roles as working women and housewives related feeling encouraged to overcome obstacles through faith.

6.3.1.3 Resilience versus experience versus age

This study has not confirmed previous research on aging or ‘growing older’ as a significant factor to determine quality resilience, however after multiple analyses of the data, the evidence I found points that the experiences lived by the participants had a great impact on how they perceived being resilient. The age of the participants did not necessarily dictate their level of strength or resilience or the extent to which they were conscious or aware of things. Essentially being older did not determine that a woman was more resilient than the other woman in this study. The findings however revealed that the types of episodes experienced by participants did persuade the way women behaved following such episodes. Importantly how the participants perceived their circumstances, and their promptness to improve their quality of mindfulness and bring about favourable results was a most critical factor.

Even experiences did not translate into resilience knowledge which set the women apart as stronger individuals. Many of the participants related that they developed resilience thorough experiences. Learning through experience as far as the literature is concerned, involved more than simply being aware of the presence of unfavourable condition. Literature suggests that whilst the process whereby a person goes through the adversities takes place, a personal need to make changes, and a person’s willingness to go through the process, to thrive or bounce back

need to be fulfilled by the individual. Some of the women had to learn early in life to be resilient so that they could survive. For example, giving up education as a teenager to find a paid work to support her the household [P8]. So, the development of resilience becomes a personal choice to a great extent. Sometimes experiencing conditions which causes a person to feel stagnated or unable to thrive could also be a point in which individual become motivated to stimulate more favourable circumstances for them. This as particularly the case of participant 9 and 10 who used to wing it in through undesirable experiences until they had realised it was up to them to move on.

As indicated in the findings chapter, the participants were between the age 34 and 73. Participants 5, age seventy, who worked as a practice manager for a specialist dermatologist reflected the significance of mindfulness. She believed that her ability to be mindful improved with experience, and that she was encouraged to perform different tasks simultaneously and efficiently because she was able focus more. She also believed that while it was important to being aware of her needs and interests, it was equally important to being aware of the interests that the people around her had. In that way, she would be able to maintain a positive balanced environment which supported her personal values of respecting one another. Given that my findings are based on heterogeneity of the of participants, the results from such analyses should be treated with cautious.

6.3.2 Research objective two:

- ◆ To understand the extent to which self-efficacy contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace

The theory of self-efficacy, has strongly drawn attention to why people holding certain attributes can display resilience more effortlessly than lack the attributes (Bandura, 2006). In other words, if a person believes they are capable of accomplishing tasks, and can produce favourable results, it is more likely that in such circumstances the person in question would engage in more proactive behaviour and consequently take steps to fulfilling their goals at hand (Li and Nishikawa, 2012; (Turner & Maschi, 2014). Furthermore self-efficacy is a personal belief that one can perform a selected task or produce a desired result (Bandura, 2006). The findings within this area are quite varied. Self-efficacy manifested in multiple dimensions in the lives of the women in this study. Participants' contemplations of self-efficacy were multi-determined by the women past experiences, spiritual beliefs, core beliefs.

6.3.2.1 Early factors and adulthood experiences [internal and external resources]

A host of undercurrents in the lives of the participants during childhood reflected their behaviours as adult individuals. The work of Bandura (2006) suggest that human-beings form behaviour as they absorb knowledge while experiencing events, making observations and practicing habits. Many of the women in this study have related different sources of resilience which were influenced by their circumstances. Memories of their upbringings were related as early experiences of resilience by majority of the women in this study. The positive influences that the women in this study had as children from their family domains was reflected in the way women perceived themselves. Almost all women related exerting qualities from their family, specifically their ‘mothers’, whom they also described as being ‘role models’ to them and an important influence for their strength to overcoming personal challenges. It is interesting to note that none of the participants regarded refer to the role of their father as exerting power or influencing them in the childhood. Furthermore, I believe that an encouraging fatherly figure was not the case for some of the participants as they grew up [P3, P4 P8, P9]. Such was particularly the case of participant 3, who held a disapproving memory of her father when she was a child, when his excessive alcohol use, was directly responsible for the dysfunction of the family unit. These finding appears to be well sustained with studies of resilience involving children ability to adapt to severe life adversities (Garmezy & Masten, 1984). Such early experiences of adversity had to an extent influenced how some of the women regarded social life involving men, that is marriage and family.

6.3.2.2 Influence of self-confidence to women’s personal development

As indicated in the literature chapters, a person internal dynamics strongly influences their behaviour. Various scholars corroborate that women are more predisposed to be emotional, identifying, experiencing and displaying emotions in general (Leppin et al., 2014; Rees et al., 2015; Sperlich & Geyer, 2015; Turner & Maschi, 2014; Waterhouse et al., 2016). Moreover, the implications of expressing emotions, specifically adverse emotions, are doubled-edged-sword for women. The study participants, have related several episodes where their emotional predisposition manifested greatly. The lived experiences of adversities which women encountered in life were manifold [Refer to Figure 7]. In some instances, women experienced unfavourable emotions which crowded their judgement to assess existing skills that they could use to overcome the challenges. On the other hand, expressing emotions through shedding tears, proved to be an efficacious process which helped women feel relieved from

circumstances of great affliction. Participants related that following instants of shedding tears, they could feel stimulated to influence positive change into their lives.

These findings offer compelling evidence of the emotional factor that play in women's internal dynamics (Favero & Heath, 2012; Hicks, 2014; Miguda, 2010; Waterhouse et al., 2016). These scholars asserted that women had a natural predisposition to be emotionally attached to occurrences that emerged in their environments. Consequently, understanding women's emotional predispositions is acknowledging that women's outlook on experiences of life are different, which also assists improve a person's capacity to manage emotions if the individual in question is a woman, or in the case of men or management, to approach women circumstances with greater awareness of what women might be going through and empathy.

6.3.2.3 Recognizing personal resources to thrive

The capacity to recognise personal values and qualities is also reflected in the data. Women often credited their achievements to their behavioural qualities. The ability to recognise one own strengths is also fundamental to solidifying self-efficacy. One of the ways that some of the participants could perform better following unfavourable conditions, was assessing their abilities, developing resources, and taking proactive actions. From the workplace perspective, some of the women related that the moment that they realised that they had resources to achieve greater results, they engaged in behaviour which led them to their search better work opportunities for themselves. Two of the participants who resigned their jobs through different circumstances, believed that they had the competences to search for other new occupational opportunities [P9, P10]. Such determination and will-power is found in other studies of self-efficacy (Fida et al., 2016; Rees et al., 2015).

Additionally, several participants credited their own efforts and strengths exerted to stretching their circumstances and achieving the results that they aspired in life. Several of the women self-described themselves as independent from early age. From the perspective of anticipating positive experiences for themselves, some of the women believed that they had the resources to perform important tasks and realise beneficial prospects. For example, one participant in particular, and who was the only self-employed women in this study, the personal and career achievements occurring in her life was attributed mainly personal internal resources of her own for working hard. She also reported her plans to expanding her business activities into training centre, partially because she believed that it was possible to increase the business further with

her knowledge in the industry. A variety of factors were found to influence women's experiences, one of which was reflected in the literature chapter as the 'attribution theory' (Grossman, Eckel, Komai, & Zhan, 2016; Mohammadi & Sharififar, 2016). It has been suggested contrary to men, women are influenced by a tendency towards attributing their positive achievement to luck or external sources like other people. Further, the literature indicates that women also tend to attribute their unfavourable experiences to their ability or inability thereof to convene some certain criteria, rather than the other way around. The findings that emerged from the data in this area are widely consistent with the precepts of the 'attribution theory'. Having said that, the findings also reveal a noteworthy outcome regarding possible changes in women's self-perceptions of abilities [P1, P6, P7, P8, P10], as it was clearly captured in participant's 1 reflections. From this backdrop, it is evident that women are increasingly ascribing their successful experiences to personal internal sources and non-successful experiences to external sources like other people or factors outside their control.

6.3.2.4 Impacts of low self-efficacy

Both in terms of the workplace or personal life perspectives, while most of the women were confident about the future of their professional careers and beyond, a low sense of self-efficacy reflected areas in the lives of some of the participants, which somewhat diminished their effectiveness to completing some tasks. As far as workplace is concerned, two women related that they experienced feelings of frustration when they could not perform tasks which they did not have much expert knowledge about. One of the woman added that she wanted to be considered as valuable resource for her organization and importantly to secure her job and not be made redundant by her employer [P4]. From a family perspective, another participant, found to be very difficult to deal with the whole situation when her husband experienced clinical depression. She related that she did not know about the process of depression and did not believe that she was capable to deal with difficulties attached to the experiences [P7]. These findings suggest that because these women appeared to not have experienced difficulties of similar nature in the past, they did not realize that they had the resources to face such circumstances.

The concern also voiced by most of the women in this study was failing to produce effective results, and not being able to provide for their loved ones. Majority of participants possessed work-related knowledge. Having the know-how of the work influenced how participants assessed their abilities and performance. The importance of self-efficacy cannot be emphasized

too much. Most of the women worked out of necessity and therefore it was fundamental that they were successful in producing positive results at work; something which depended on the level of self-efficacy. The literature of self-efficacy highlights the disadvantages of low-self-efficacy (Bandura (2006). Essentially when a persons' self-efficacy is low, the individual would experience a lack of confidence in themselves and in their abilities. Moreover, a person with low level of self-efficacy is more inclined to doubt their ability to performing well, and consequently are more prone to suffer from unfavourable emotions such as anxiety, fear, and stress. In such case, a pessimist state of mind influences how an individual can thrive in their life environments. Low self-efficacy has also affected the women in personal domains of their lives. Women believed they needed to develop or improve a skill so that they could complete primary tasks more effectively. Also, importantly to note that from a feminist perspective, holding limiting beliefs that being a woman automatically limits a woman from achieving certain goals, can also position women as targets to consenting forms of victimization. As women move away from traditional norms, expanding knowledge in this regards is fundamental to enhance women's knowledge existing workplace regulation which are applicable to them and promote women's self-development.

Some of the central aims of feminism, particularly, Liberal and Socialist Feminism are to advocate equal rights between the sexes within the various spheres of society while promoting systems that recognise individuals [men and women] for their abilities and contributions beyond their gender (Browder, 2015; Collins, 2000; Favero & Heath, 2012; Hicks, 2014; Miguda, 2010; Tadiar & Davis, 2005; Tong, 2009; Turner & Maschi, 2014). The women in this study have indicated diverse unfavourable experiences within the workplace because of gender females, race and their nationality.

Some of the participants faced advancement challenges because they believed that their managers were not supportive of their self-development [P3 and P8]. Conversely, some of the women found dealing with females' bosses or co-workers to be particularly difficult to deal with [P10]. For most the women, both men and women could pose challenges to their personal advancement. For some of the women in this study the on-going experiences of being harassed and bullied and not allowed an opportunity to advance professionally, motivated them to change the situation by recognising their strengths and weaknesses.

Individually, the women in this study have reflected the idiosyncrasies of the Feminism Theory. The concerns that were reflected by the participants allied with concerns within the contexts of Western and African feminism. Participants described common life fears or anxieties that felt apprehensive about. Although interviewed individually, one of the central fear which participants related to similarly was not being able to provide for their immediate families. Fulfilling family requirement was critical for the women's peace of mind and personal gratification. These findings are consistent with research which supported that family life promoted women with mental health (Floderus et al., 2009; Muhajarine & Janzen, 2006). Some of the issues that the participants raised were somewhat associated with traditional and cultural factors in the lives of the participants. Consequently, majority of the participants in this study have reflected occurrences where the choice for a career life prevailed over a choice for a family life, and vice-versa. In some instances, women had to give up their jobs to commit to their family priorities [P3 and P7]. For example, in the case of participant 3 there was no doubts that she had to prioritise her family over her job. Following concerns about her first pregnancy being at risk, a decision was taken by herself and her husband that it would be best that she stayed at home to look after their children, while her husband supported the financial needs of the family. It is certainly a great deal of pressure for working women who plan to form a family by having their own offspring, and to meet family aspiration. Another woman in this study who resigned her job to dedicate herself to care for her husband who was experiencing depression, also described feeling the pressure of family and friends who insisted that she needed to sacrifice her job. The findings of women's taking priorities for their loved ones, surpassed children or husbands. In one instance, one of the participants who experienced painful divorced experience, described that caring for her siblings, her mother and her brother, was of utmost importance at that point in her life considering that she did not have children to care for at the time of the interview. It is evident that the emotional dynamics of the women was significant influence in modelling the lives of the participants in this study.

In my view, self-efficacy influenced the lives of the women in this study early in their lives without participants even realising it (Bandura, 2006; Skipstein, & Demerouti, 2016;). So, because it is out of the common to instil in individuals at young age that innermost beliefs and convictions could influence the outcomes of the events occurring in their lives, people almost behave incessantly without even realizing that thoughts and actions impact the environment around them. In another words the earlier people are taught or become aware that self-beliefs are important and affect their quality of lives, the sooner people will start engaging in conscious

healthy behaviour and attitudes which prepares them to dealing with different and inevitable life experiences more productively.

6.3.3 Research objective three:

- ◆ To understand the extent to which coping contribute to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace

Researchers have determined that a person experiences of adversities or difficulties is primary factor to predicting resilient behaviour. The correlation between self-efficacy and coping is worth noting because essentially when a person believes she or he has the knowledge, skills and abilities, and feel confident to performing a task; more likely than not, the individual is said to be practical about the situation. This is what coping translates to (Rees et al., 2015).

For few of the participants in this study, resilience was not just about believing in themselves or relying in hope that things would fall into place. In many instances, the women had to move away from their comfort zones to carry-out undertakings which were previously not considered as an option for them. Participant 10 who faced bully from co-workers, related that she attempted to support from the top management to have the difficulty resolved, however she related that she waited in vain for a response which never reflected her interests. The realisation that she had the work knowledge, skills and abilities became vivid as she felt the management was not putting efforts to assist resolving the challenges that she faced. Spending time alone reassured her of her strong attributes and that she needed to do something right away to improve her situation. For participant 9, the two years' time spent off work, was reportedly the best thing she did for herself and her family. She managed to rediscover her inner strength and define the things that were important for her and commit herself to consistently follow a way of life that sustained her mentally and physically. It is important to highlight that although some of these women had an option, or had seen an option, for some of the other women in this study it was clear that even though they faced large challenges at work, they were not prepared to risk their current employment and earning power [P4 and P8]. Thus, a way to cope for some of the women were to remain loyal to achieving their work objectives and getting the financial benefits which would support them and their family, despite facing significant adversities.

6.3.3.1 Adversity and theoretical links

About eight of the participants faced workplace adversities. Since findings were subjective to participant's personal experiences, I cannot rule-out the scale of impact that the adversities had on the women of this study, however the hardships which were reportedly faced by women capture the essence of 'significant adversity'. An adversity was described as "a difficulty or an unpleasant situation that directly or indirectly affect the persons' physical and psychological well-being" (Jackson et al., 2007). Women approached challenges from many angles. Most of the participants associated workplace problems as result of organizational conflicts (Favero & Heath, 2012; Hicks, 2014; Miguda, 2010; Waterhouse et al., 2016).

6.3.3.1.1 Perceptions of adversity

The participants understood that challenges were diverse; demanded different from them; and depending on their circumstances could affect them either adversely or favourably. An adversity which was considered a significant distress to one participant was not necessarily a concern for another participant in this study. Not surprisingly, women discernments of the strength of adversity faced by them was appraised by comparing their problems with the challenges lived by other people. They also noted that certain problems were often perceived as gigantic because of gloomy self-absorption, that is, because they were preoccupied with their own feelings and or interest at the time of the situation being experienced. This result has further strengthened my conviction that social factors can determine whether a person will success or fail through unfavourable conditions.

Literature on the potential implications of personal conflicts at the work environment has been extensively explore. Furthermore, the findings form this study indicate that a great deal of challenges experienced at the workplace can be undoubtedly prompted by unhealthy interpersonal relationship in the workplace space (Cohrs et al., 2013; Fida et al., 2016). From this perspective, participants whose job involved interacting with other people, believed that that adversities could be experienced anywhere, and at any time. As participants 5 aptly related:

"... it's not just believing in yourself but you have to understand that it doesn't matter where you go, people will be there, different people with different personalities that you are going to clash with... so in a way yes you, you've got to believe in yourself otherwise you... never going to settle down... because you going to get the same sort of situation, different but the same in the sense that you will not be able to get along with everybody, it doesn't matter

where you go, there will always be some sort of conflict so I can say deal with it, yeah, deal with it..."

This realistic attitude of participant 5 resembles the attitude shared by many of the women in this study, and is consistent with researcher's assertion that adversities come in many forms, and even though it is difficult to anticipate and prepare for them, people can choose how to respond to them (Bolier et al. 2013; Turner and Maschi 2014; Gignac et al., 2014; Rees et al., 2015).

6.3.3.1.2 Opportunities which came with adversity

For many of the participants, adversity was not necessarily a bad news. There were some positive perspectives amongst the participants in this study with regards to the nature or purpose of adversities. Further, research also indicates that when persons are used to cope with stress, they tend to handle emerging difficult life problems more effectively (Bandura (2006). Some of the women in the present research had encountered some physical challenges or severe problems such as cancer and epilepsy but were nonetheless pessimistic about eventual unfavourable experiences. In fact, many of the participants held a rather constructive attitude about adversities. Just one case, was participants 5 who had survived breast cancer. Somehow the experience of going through cancer provided reinforced her belief that she could thrive any challenge that come her way. Interestingly for another woman who also experienced significant marital challenges including physical and verbal abuse, inviting challenges into her life was something that she was used to, and which allowed her to build on her resilience strengths and her capacity to thrive through eventual adversities.

It is evident in this study that the women who faced stressful challenges in life were still able to assert themselves in the most favourable way, and optimising their resources to promote their resistance to life pressures. Also, as indicated a few of the women expressed concern of not receiving external support from work following work-related challenges, yet the women found ways to cope optimally [P3, P8, and P10]. Not to mention that, it does make a huge difference in a person life when a person is prepared with resources to deal challenges. There are several possible outcomes that can emerge from not receiving support following experiences of challenges. Some of the consequences as mentioned earlier was feeling desires to withdraw from the job; or experiences undesirable emotions with result in high levels of neuroticism, and certainly a great deal of diminished performance. In a nutshell coping well is

fundamental since it translates to a person's ability to effect constructive performance towards undesirable experiences. The literature on coping stresses that having the ability to cope makes challenges easier to deal with. Likewise, have resources available but failing to make proper use of them resources equates to inability to cope. Several of the participants indicated that following adversities, they were unable to think of a way forward to sort out the situation that they were in [P1 and P4]. Ironically, only by undergoing an adverse experience, some of them realised their strengths and ways to cope with challenges [P7, P9 and P10]. Just as the other psychosocial constructs of resilience discussed earlier, it is worthwhile noting that knowledge on coping ways should encouraged on women as part of their basic life skills. Applying coping knowledge is yet more pertinent when it comes to resilience, because as individuals go through the process of coping, the chances of reducing self-destructing behaviour, and increasing resilience behaviour becomes higher.

6.3.4 Research objective four:

- ◆ To understand the extent to which neuroticism influence psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace

As indicated in the literature neuroticism is part of the 'big five traits of personality', and considered a primary biological which determines a person pre-disposition to stresses or emotional disorders (George et al., 2011). When deliberating about adversity, personality was frequently mentioned by the participants be a strong predictor to how resilience played out in their lives. Understanding the type of personality that a person associated with and its impact to their environment and vice-versa is critical in anticipating potential obstacles, or in dealing with the events favourably.

The findings underlying neuroticism are in line with literature on promoting resilience (Rees et al., 2015; Hsieh et al., 2016; de Terte et al., 2014). Women in the study experienced different unfavourable emotions following unpleasant episodes faced by them. All women had reported experiencing one or more undesirable emotions [namely: tiredness, sleeplessness, sadness, depression, anger, anxiety, grief]. These unfavourable emotions which followed experiences of adversity are consistent with the negative emotional states which permeate neuroticism as per the model of resilience model (Rees et al., 2016). Furthermore, for the women in this study, the shedding of tears was a natural process which took place when they were faced with significant undesirable experiences. These emotional predispositions are congruent with

findings and discussions evidenced in cross-sectional studies of individuals in high stressful situations (Rees et al., 2015; Waugh & Koster, 2014; Fahlgren et al., 2015; (Morote et al., 2017; Sturgeon & Zautra, 2013), and corroborates with this study findings that women tended to be more predisposed to displaying more intense emotions than men (Favero & Heath, 2012; Hicks, 2014; Miguda, 2010; Waterhouse et al., 2016 2016).

Neuroticism manifested differently in the living contexts of the women in this study. Not all adversities experienced by the participants caused them to experience enduring undesirable emotions like the ones indicated previously. At least three of the challenges experienced by the women has more potentially caused women to experience undesirable emotions. For example, divorce was one of the most dramatic experiences which was common amongst participants and reported as emotionally challenging experiences for the women in this study. In one instant, a woman reported that she had developed epilepsy following constant emotional stresses which she endured during a previous marriage. Secondly, although only one woman reported going through a recent process of grieving the passing of loved one, it seemed experiencing the loss of a loved was an experience, deeply felt by some of the other of women [P4, P7, P8]. And finally, women collectively described common events in the form or anxieties which had the potential to influence their emotional health. Women were asked to indicate and describe a specific fearfulness in life. It was found that the participants held potential anxieties. For example, nine of the participants described feeling apprehensive about death either of a loved one or themselves; losing their jobs; being involved in criminal events, causing harm to other people; and not being financially prepared to support themselves and their loved ones.

Neuroticism has also affected some of women in terms of the workplace environment. Adjusting to conditions proved challenging to some of the women who had to move away from their comfort zones into performing new work roles which they were not so familiar with (Leppin et al., 2014). For example, participant 4 described that ever since she started working within the Town Planning industry she was “flying blind” and that she was simply “walking by faith” as she performed her job. She was scared and overwhelmed, that she would fail to perform well because she did not have expert knowledge in that field. In my opinion this is a common preoccupation shared by several women in this study, particularly the women whose work was main source of income and sustenance of their families [P1, P2, P4, P6, P8]. For these women, the thought of not being able to generate positive outcomes at work triggered

unfavourable emotions in them. The dangers of high levels of neuroticism are confirmed in the literature (Rees et al., 2015; Sturgeon and Zautra, 2013).

When people experience high neuroticism, it is easier to believe that the problem being experienced is never-ending, which then leads to unhealthy behaviour more regularly exhibited. When individuals get too angry, sad, upset, or stressed, their ability to focus and analyse their experiences in a way which favours them gets compromised. Not only it became difficult to identify appropriate remedies to deal with the situation hand, a person sense of self-efficacy and coping abilities diminishes. The findings on early factors lived by the participants, reveal that their behaviour as adults transcended negative childhoods experiences for some of the research participants. For example, after witnessing on-going family conflicts between her parents, participants 3 related that she grew-up feeling anxious about having to experience that stress in her relationship. She was so preoccupied and feared to be in similar type of relationship, that to her surprise, following her first marriage, then she realised that she had fallen victim of her own fears associated with her parents (Broekman , 2011).

Very often people may not understand why certain events in their lives are happening certain way, however that does not mean that things are okay. There are many mental disorders that exist but which may not be recognised by the individuals exposed to them. The women in this study have related different experiences which by the operational definition of the experience are not considered favourable and therefore individuals who may be exposed to those issues may as well be affected by the consequential impacts of the experiences. Oftentimes a person will only realise the significance of their problem when they came face to face to an expert report about their condition. For example, two of the women of the study only came to link the constructs of depression when a clinically performed assessment confirmed the condition, and they had to follow instructions from experts in subject of depression to handle the situation. Sometimes, women accredited the unfavourable experiences they lived to third parties or their environments. Women also related unfavourable experiences that materialised because they believed it was their fault that they were in a specific unfavourable circumstance [P3, P5].

The link between biological factor or neuroticism and psychosocial factors or mindfulness, self-efficacy and coping regarding the women in this study is evident. Literature of psychological resilience extensively stresses adversities and resilience to be inclusive phenomena. One of the goals of this study was to uncover broad insights from women

regarding adversities and to determine the extent resilience manifested and reflected in their lives. The theory of positive psychology (Back, Steinhäuser, Kamal, & Jackson, 2016; Bolier et al., 2013), which is also the platform of the phenomenon of resilience also puts prominence on mental imbalances that follow when individuals face mentally challenging episodes including experiences where individuals invest resources expecting a certain result that does not materialise as expected (Kent et al., 2015). Not surprisingly several of the women expressed taking an approach in life that reflected knowing that not all things which were unfavourable and which they wanted to turn into favourable would turn as a winning outcome for them. The tendency of people to think, feel and react negatively to unfavourable events are significantly related to neuroticism, also referred to in the literature as trait anxiety, negative affect or trait negative affect (Rees et al., 2015). It is not unusual that when certain events take a negative turn as what people might have expected, the people in that situation are likely to engage in negative behaviour, even when the individuals attempt to introduce positive stimulus to mitigate the undesirable experiences. Which is the reason why neuroticism has been related in the literature with conditions such as depression, anxieties and even heart disease (Mallak & Yildiz, 2016; Shrivastava & Desousa, 2016).

While participants in this study did not report coronary heart disease experiences, it was evident that the women were concerned about their health, and wanted to maintain a healthy living. Just like in literature emphasising the benefits of holding positive attitudes, most of the women in this study indicated that living through challenges should not mean that life was over. The results of this study suggest that having the right attitudes is fundamental to promote health and can become a powerful resilience strategy. For example, participant 6 believed that life was full of challenges, and that people should not be fixed in thoughts of emerging victorious in life, but to expect defies in the process as well. Sometimes difficulties also emerged as opportunities. Participant 9 stressed that adversities was an inevitable but necessary experience which needs to take place to instigate resilience in a person. As indicated previously, she found that welcoming challenges in her life prepared her to experience more challenging obstacles more effectively and strengthened her ability to view to adversities from an optimistic perspective.

It has been established that resilience is amongst other things knowing that things may not be one-hundred percent positive, and still attempting to stand your ground and not letting the circumstances determine future experiences. Furthermore, it can be implied that going through

certain unfavourable experiences may indeed be an important process to shaping a person's resilience attributes (Fida et al., 2016). Participant 2 and 8 for instances decided that they needed to change their mind-sets and not try to fight against forces which they could not control. Participant 8 realised that she could not change the fact that her manager was unpleasant toward her or her co-workers, so she decided not to pay attention to the fault-finding remarks and negative attitudes which came from the management, and instead decided to focus on completing her work activities to the best of her ability. Similarly, participant 2 who used to lose her temper at workplace about trivial things with co-workers or customers, including dealing with disgruntled customers. She realised that there would always be people with some different personality from hers who she would need to interact with in her line of work as pharmacist assistance, and realised that she was the one who needed to change her attitude and take control of how she approached people in such unfavourable situations. These findings offer compelling evidence that although women may tend to be display more signs of undesirable emotions, women can regulate those emotions through resilience. Emphasis is placed on applying strategies that aim at minimizing risk factors and maximizing protecting factors (Buchanan et al., 2002; Roh et al., 2015; O'Shea & Dickens, 2016).

6.3.4.1 Lack of knowledge/readiness to confront reality

The lack of knowledge or internal resources to deal with obstacles also reflected the experiences lived by the women in this study. In many instances, whereby the women were unable to manage a challenge, they became even more oversensitive towards the issue. Although participants reported having the ability to deal with adverse events, for many of the women certain episodes proved to be more challenging to deal with than other difficulties. Responses to challenges by the women in the present study reflected some limitation on the psychosocial factors. For instance, it was difficult for participant 7 to understand what caused her husband to experience clinical depression when everything seemed to be going well for him; and to a point where she was forced to leave her career to provide him support. For the women who experienced divorce, specifically participant 10, who was not prepared to get a divorce, it took her four years of experiencing on-going feelings of pensive sadness about the episode.

6.3.4.2 Unfavourable effects of neuroticism

Participant 9 came to the realisation that there were only two options for her: either become aware and behave consciously about what was going on in her life, or not taking conscious

measures and living life aimlessly. She understood that in many areas of her life where she reportedly ‘winged it’, in other words, lived with no specific direction and meaningful goal, that area was not fulfilled. So, she committed to living her life by injecting her attention to the things that were important to her. It was only then when she put her mind to work by writing down plans, taking actions on things that happened and following-up on her plans, that she understood being aware helps you control the direction your life is heading and sustain resilience.

6.3.4.3 Consequences of female reproductive system to neuroticism

The literature did not look at matters around the female reproductive system as to which extent it could play a role to the behaviour of women. However further findings on women’s predisposition to undesirable emotions reveals that taking birth contraceptive pills could impair emotional instability. One participant believed that her ability to control her emotions was poor, and that she used to behave extremely angry towards customers or other people at work [P2]. She believed that her behaviour aggravated due to taking birth control pills. This finding may also incite interest or knowledge on the extent to which a woman’s menstrual cycle, and hormones imbalances could influence their behaviour or mood.

6.3.5 Research objective five:

- ◆ To determine what psychological adjustment strategies working women, deploy to cope with adverse conditions in and out of the workplace

Two main theories are commonly used to examine psychological adjustment in women: risk and protective factors (Buchanan et al., 2002). In this study, most of the research participants believed that their behaviour echoed early lived experiences, and held attitudes which were imparted in them as young individuals. Despite being influenced by different factors; family was a direct contributor to the attitudes and behaviour which women exhibited in women their lives. Some major risk factors were present in the lives of women during their childhood, including:

- ◆ Parental alcohol use;
- ◆ Poverty;
- ◆ Parental unemployment;
- ◆ Family dysfunction;

- ◆ Parental depression;
- ◆ Poor academic achievement;
- ◆ Loss of close family member;
- ◆ Parental/marital conflict;

Further findings confirm that most of the women could enjoy protective factors during their childhood. Most of the women maintained supportive relationships with their family members. This encouraged them to push themselves towards improving their lives. Some of the women were able to find ways to further their education and look for better work opportunities for themselves. Women also deemed important to sustaining their positive attitude and optimism despite adverse circumstances. Findings also indicate instances whereby women proved to be in control of their lives by applying some of the following strategies:

- ◆ Accommodating and respecting other people views
- ◆ Spending time alone to reflecting on the goals
- ◆ Asking for help when it was difficult to perform a task
- ◆ Exercising and eating healthy
- ◆ Preserving faithfulness and spending time in religious activities
- ◆ Not taking obstacles personally
- ◆ Singing religious songs
- ◆ Reading of motivational books
- ◆ Limiting engagement with destructive personalities

The role of resilience on psychological adjustment of the study participants was fundamental to their overall health. Each woman related unique ways used to approach adverse conditions in their environment. As described in the literature, psychological adjusting is a general process which determines a person ability to control their environment. Whereas coping is predominantly practical tool which promotes resilience response following a stressor, psychological adjustment acts as a security measure which involves adjusting a person internal dynamics to maintain proactive behaviour or complete control to neutralise future stressors. As clearly specified in the findings chapter, all participants in this study had been subjective to a form of significant stress at one point in their lives which caused them to endure some undesirable emotions [See Figures 7 and 9]. As indicated earlier, the study participants were diverse in many extents, and although the women shared similar insights about resilience; or

had faced similar challenges, the extent to which they adjusted psychologically varied substantially. Therefore, in attempting to understand psychological adjustment of working women for this study, some assumptions guided my analysis of the data findings:

To begin with, the findings indicated that women were not always able to reach psychological adjustment against the risk factors which permeated their work-life environments. Not only the women adjusted differently, the biopsychosocial components of resilience previously discussed influenced women's ability to adjust in favourable terms. Rees et al., (2015) is correct to argue that a high level of neuroticism can potentially interfere negatively with a person resilience capabilities and consequently a person's ability to achieve psychological adjustment. For the several participants who have reported experiencing anxiety, stress or worry, some of them reported experiencing severe lack of sleep during events of adverse nature. Further, not sleeping resulted in feelings of tiredness and exhaustion and consequently lowered women's performance. Rees et al., (2015) noted that people who may experience high levels of neuroticism are very likely to demonstrate a more reduced ability to reach psychological adjustment. This corroborate with the findings emerged from this study.

Initially, I thought that participants who self-described themselves in positive terms as indicated in figure 5, were more capable to adapt to negative occurrences. However, a more careful analysis revealed that it was not always the case for some of the research participants. A woman who faced different challenges [including growing up in poverty-stricken environment; forced to leave school to search for paid work to support her family; and dealing with unsympathetic managers], and who believed that she was mentally strong to confront any obstacle; **was taken by surprise** when her eight-year-old daughter died. Not only she was in denial for some time, her sadness manifested as she recounted that experience during the interview.

Secondly, the extent to which women could adjust psychologically to the obstacles in their environments was evidenced in participant's earlier memories of past behaviours in contrast of the behaviours which women displayed later-on. Several of the women who at a younger age demonstrated unhealthy behaviours, could feel that they were more poised and could manage hostile conditions more effectively [P2, P3, P4, P7, P9, P10]. The findings revealed that women learnt valid lessons from the difficulties experiences which they lived in their lives. Direct experiences have influenced the ability to balance needs against obstacles in the

environment. Experience allowed women to understand that certain occurrences were not worth stressing about. For most of the women in study resilience was not always about winning the challenges which came in their way but being prepared mentally for any eventuality.

In terms of responding to life difficulties with a sense of readiness to adapting their needs against the obstacles in presented in their lives, it took some women a longer time to adapt and efforts to establish inner balance, than other participants. As previously indicated, a variety of unfavourable occurrences in the lives of women influenced their ability to function optimally. As far as this study is concern, most of women in this study believed that they were responsible to promoting their mental health. The data also have shown that women felt the need to be in control of their environments. Women's levels of psychological adjustment were highly evidenced through the following challenges:

6.3.5.1 Health and resilience connections

The findings demonstrated that despite the gravity of their situations by demonstrating positive attitudes, the women could function more optimally in general. Participant 5 who had survived breast cancer, indicated that following that experience, adverse incidents in her life do not scare her as much. However, some of the women were still apprehensive regarding the possibility that they could experience a form of undesirable episode.

6.3.5.2 Marital and divorce challenges

Divorce was a significant adverse experience to all the women who had been through it [P3, P5, P9, and P10]. It has indicated that participant 10 endured 4 years of feeling downhearted about the relationship which ended in divorce. Apart from the emotional process, for these women it was also painful knowing how family and peers would judge them. This finding also demonstrate the extent to which society influence women's internal dynamics, or emotional predispositions (Coldridge & Davies, 2017).

6.3.5.3 Organisational conflicts

Some participants took steps not to disengage themselves emotionally when they were to network with people who tended to dwell excessively on difficulties or troubles. They believed that if they engaged with individuals whose behaviour held them back from fulfilling their personal targets, they would feel miserable. Some women spent time planning and preparing

for eventualities intelligently so that they could be in better control of managing the unexpected [P1, P8, P9, and P10].

6.3.6 Research objective six:

- ◆ To establish ways in which HRM can promote positive organisational behaviour such as resilience

An important function of HRM is to foster right behaviour and attitudes on employees and play modelling roles towards promoting employee resilience. HRM is the field responsible to nurturing the human aspect of individuals to bring about common results and sustainability to all stakeholders which includes both organisational and individual interests. Since each of the participants in this study worked in different workplaces, most of which an HRM presence was absent; I was unable to obtain extensive findings on the impacts and contributions of an HRM function towards promoting resilience of the women in this study. Notwithstanding the evidence that paid work was instrumental for the women in this study, the life histories which the women reflected on in terms of their work lives, could certainly be augmented by the assistances of the HRM.

The findings show that certain workplace challenges which participants in this study experienced, could have been well alleviated or eased if there were favourable managerial practices in place. In the literature, researchers have determined that emotional strain or tension may result from diverse occurrences. As indicated previously, the workplace can incite adversities as much as it can encourage uncondusive behaviour (Bernabe & Botia, 2016; Cortina et al., 2016). Researchers recognize that palliative care employees for example can be potentially more vulnerable to emotional distress due to regular exposure to more risk factors (Back et al., 2016b). Although it is true that certain professional occupations or forms of work could demand more mental or physical efforts from the people involved with it, the finding emerged from this study indicate that even women whose work did not implicate obvious significant challenges, women were still influenced by unique workplace circumstances which did influenced their ability to function optimally.

Some of the obvious challenges that I have found was organizational conflicts and career opportunities/advancement. For example, some of the participants were frustrated that all their hard work and dedication, was not recognized for career advancement within the organization

[P8, and P10]. Not having the managerial support following aggravated harassment from co-workers, and not intervention from the management, resulted in the resignation of 15 years of work for participant 10. Other women expressed concerns that their own management was deliberately trying to intimidate them through their managerial authority. For instance, participant 3 related that her work supervisor made different attempts to trick her into resigning her job by asking her to sign reports or documents indicating that she participated in some wrongdoings in the company. Like participant 3, participant 8 also held low expectations from the workplace management with regards to moral support. Although having the job title of supervisor in the restaurant, participant 8 could not fully exercise her roles as such since her superiors were apparently scrutinising and undermining her efforts constantly, which limited her ability to oversee the team at the work, and make business decisions on her own. Consequently, it was not inevitable that the women who faced such challenges experienced undesirable emotions about their life at work. In fact, one of the woman expressed that after realizing that she was not appreciated at work, she stopped taking additional work which was not part of her job specification. The most remarkable observation to emerge from the findings on women's experiences of challenges at work was that women who were not satisfied with the treatment from their workplace management believed that the management did not care about their well-being. These findings emphasise the prominence of organizational policies which guide workplace practices (Morote et al., 2017; Rogerson et al., 2016); Turner and Maschi (2014).

Further the participants in the present study cited their experiences and insights on supporting structures within and outside of the workplace. Women described the importance of being affiliated to work environments which are able to support them through difficult times. This finding is consistent with literature that underline organizational interventions aimed to promote overall well-being of employees as vital for all employees including employees who may already demonstrate resilience skills (Bolier et al., 2013; Haracz & Roberts, 2016; Smith et al., 2016). One of the assertions made by this study participants regarding demonstrating resilience at work was primarily that they spend most of their productive time at the work environment, and consequently it was evident that they had to perform tasks at their best to promote desirable results for the employer and for themselves. It was evident in this study that women whose workplace environment had a positive influence on their lives [protective factors], could find ways to manage their obstacles; felt more motivated to performing tasks

outside their job descriptions; were happy to assist others co-workers, and felt an increased feeling of internal cohesiveness to their organisational settings or workplace.

With a few exceptions, my findings also indicated that although majority of the women did not expect their management to assist them in developing resilience, they felt organizations could certainly benefit from their capacity to demonstrate positive qualities at the workplace. Research has determined that resilient employees are positive assets to their organization, and who can better respond to pressure and the demands of their daily lives. Consequently, low resilient workers don't attract employers as much as resilient workers do; in fact, as some research suggest, low resilient employees are the first ones who are laid off during times of employment crises, as they show no thriving abilities. My findings indicate that women were concerned about not being able to perform their jobs satisfactorily and be subjective to unfavourable treatments (Deluca et al., 2010; Fida et al., 2016; Hsieh, Chen, et al., 2016 Chang, & Ma, 2016; Lian & Tam, 2014; McDonald et al., 2016; Rothbaum et al., 2014). It was also evident in this study that participants believed that it was in their best interest to improve/exhibit resilience skills and manage unfavourable conditions by own efforts, as oppose to relying on third parties for encouragement. The findings of this study are significant as the reflect the important the role of biopsychosocial construct discussed earlier [neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping], in the lives of the women in this study. However, it is also instrumental to underline the liability of workplaces including small business which are unable to make implement employee policies aimed at encouraging positive behaviour such as psychological resilience through their management or HRM representatives.

In a nutshell, it is obvious that workplaces should be more engaged in investing resources which can elevate employees' ability to thrive simply because any form of work can directly or indirectly influence a person quality of life. Not only that, individual may also influence the quality of their work with the dynamics taking place in their private life domains. Importantly research has established that people are more likely to overcome adverse situations in a more effective way when they feel supported.

The above discussion of the findings of this study represent the main themes which reflect the aim, purpose and objectives of the current study. While these themes were critical in informing knowledge on resilience of women in Durban organizational settings, some minor findings outside the scope of this paper have also been discovered in the process of analysis of the data,

and are discussed in the following section.

6.3.7 Discussion on minority themes [refer to findings in chapter five]

An awareness of the dynamics at play at the lives of the participants in this study allow us to recognise experiences and general perspectives on the part of the women in this study which are insightful of other optimisations towards women's health.

6.3.7.1 The prospects that derive when 'faith' is stronger than the apparent adversity

One of the most striking result to emerge from the data is that at certain defiant circumstances, the women were prompted by startling enthusiasm to pursuit positive results. Participants went the extra mile by exerting extra efforts to live through the visible challenges. Even without direction of how they would defy the odds against adversities, having the inner strength pushed women out of their comfort zones to give their best. Even though being employed was for many of the women a means to earning an income to fulfil personal objectives, only one woman related primarily searching for paid work as a young adolescent due to privation (Africa Gender Equality Index, 2015). The meaning and implications of poverty was elaborated by some of the women in this study, therefore, the absence of basic amenities coupled with a sense of optimism about future events in their lives proved to be a powerful motivator for the women to fight against the heavy currents of adversities in their lives. Given that the focus of this study was to understand individual resilience of women as to how resilience was promoted, a sense of merit and satisfaction would have been established as women understood that by managing to keep going in difficult circumstances, they had higher chances of changing their circumstances.

6.3.7.2 Digging in the deep end of the essence of being a female

A considerable body of research reflects differences between women and men as discussed earlier in this chapter (McFayden, 2015). Predominant reviews on literature on the extent to which factors such as women's reproductive and sexual health were not primarily covered in the review of literature in chapters two and three. The process underpinning a woman's sexual experience/process was interestingly associated with the process of developing psychological resilience. In other words, learning or developing new abilities may require a person to follow a particular process and may require personal efforts invested to influence the desired outcome. Although an association between the resilience process and the sexual process of a woman was

not a finding which was anticipated; this was not a particularly surprising finding given the fact that participants were encouraged to express their personal experiences.

Further evidence has come to light that women's childbearing could have had implications to women's emotional and mental health (Waterhouse, Hill, & Hinde, 2016; Nilsen, Skipstein, & Demerouti, 2016). Although the current study does not support previous research in this area, it was evident that certain behaviour displayed by the women were direct influence by the women's sexual hormones, menstrual cycles or pre-menstrual syndrome. For example, participant 2, after periods of taking contraceptive pills she became aware that pills increased sensitive to respond to live events more negatively and self-destructive way. It is very likely that women are more likely to show experience and demonstrate unfavourable emotions, attitudes and behaviours during their menstrual cycles, especially when hormones change or naturally or due to the use of contraceptive medications. Exploring further in this area is necessary and may inform knowledge on the role of sex hormones to mental health of women through observed behaviours.

From the backdrop of the above discussion of findings, it is worthwhile noting that although the findings as presented in chapter five are open to further interpretations, the experiences expressed by the women in this study are worthy of note as they provide framework for understanding the subject resilient of working women.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented discussions of the findings emerged from the ten individual women who have participated in this study by providing own insights on own experiences of resilience as underlined in the previous chapter five. The discussion chapter initiated by providing an overall account of resilience through the lenses of feminism views, thus outlining the primary connections between resilience and feminism tenets. Following this preliminary discussion, the six research objectives with regards to building blocks of psychological resilience guided from the resilience model were contemplated separately.

The experiences of resilience which women had lived confirmed the initial assumptions reflected in the biopsychosocial model of resilience used in this study. Whether in the context of work life or personal life, women can benefit from the ability to exhibit resilience qualities. Although this was a relatively small sample of women, confidence in the findings is enhanced

by the high level of similarity of experiences of resilience that women faced particularly the experiences considered mostly common in both resilience and feminist literature reflected in figure 5 and 6. The participants' ability to display or failure to display a certain quality, whether it was neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping, had much to do with the exposure to certain occurrences and the extent to which these builds of resilience overlapped in the lives of women.

The above four builds of psychological resilience were significant in understanding the extent to which they stimulated women resilience. The roles of HRM or management was deemed as pivotal. It also has been evidenced that HRM can contribute to both elevating women optimum function, as it can pose as an obstacle to promoting women's interests. It became evident that even though women personal actions towards individual resilience helped maintain wellbeing, it was instrumental that women obtained external encouragement to thrive, grow and develop.

The above results also denote the significance of qualitative research towards the deeper understanding of resilience of women. In the context of the findings yielded by this study, it is hoped that this study incites interests that contribute to promoting resilience knowledge towards life's adversity. The following chapter concludes the seven existing chapters of this thesis, as well as recapitulating my contributions as the researcher, in addressing the research questions and study objectives, which have been surveyed in relation to the topic of this study.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 Introduction

The aim of this study has been to understand individual workforce resilience of women in selected Durban organisational settings. The resilience of women was explored with a specific theoretical framework guiding this research study. The study used a model of resilience to explain, discuss the subject of this study, to interpret the findings and formulate sets of recommendations. This chapter outlines the seven chapters which this overall study comprised of; provides an overview on how the researcher has addressed the research questions and study objectives; and finally presents key recommendations.

7.2 Overview of the study

The current study is structured into seven chapters. Each chapter has served a specific aim as outlined in the following paragraphs:

In the first chapter [**Introduction**], an overview of the study has been provided. As a significant preliminary section of this study, this chapter has outlined the research background of the study, research problem, research questions and research objectives, and followed by a lay out of the significance and rationale behind the study.

The second chapter [**A Multi-Dimensional Model of Resilience: Implications for Women Within and Outside of Workplace Settings**], has reviewed prevalent theories on psychological resilience around the biopsychosocial model of resilience which represented the underlying support of the theories discoursed in the chapter. Overall, the chapter has reviewed theoretical concepts as indicated in the biopsychosocial model of resilience [neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping], and discussed different other relevant philosophical; psychological and organizational tenets associated with the promotion of individual resilience of working women.

The third chapter [**A Feminist Perspective on Resilience of Women**], has introduced a feminism perspective concerning psychological resilience of working women. The history of

women movements is briefly presented in this section, through the different forms of feminism including Liberal; Radical, Cultural, Socialist, Woman of Colour, and African Feminism. As a fundamental part of this paper the historical theories have set the pace for the discourse and reviews of significant theories which directly contribute to women overall well-being, beyond the workplace contexts.

The fourth chapter [**Research Methodology**], has outlined the methodology and methods of research which applied to address the research aim and objectives of this study, and has discussed the research design, sampling technique and criteria, life history data collection method, data quality control, thematic analysis method, and ethical considerations. The sections described in this chapter could replicated by other researchers.

The fifth chapter [**Data Analysis and Findings**], has provided a showcase of the findings extracted from the data corpus, which have emerged from the life history interviews conducted by the researcher in accordance with the research questions and objectives. The findings have been analysed through the in terms of thematic analysis, and data extracts of the findings have been presented in their corresponding themes.

The sixth chapter [**Discussion of Findings**], has described the researcher interpretation and reasoning around the findings and results in connection to the findings revealed in chapter six are, and it has supplemented the discussion of findings with the theories in the two literature chapters reviewed, which has established the implications of the findings.

The final chapter seven [**Conclusion**], has summarised the overall study. It reiterated the overall research aims and purpose of the study, and underlined the objectives and questions underpinning this study following with a set of scholarly recommendations for future research, as well as practical recommendations for organisational or workplace settings, proposed by the researcher of this study.

7.3 Answering the research questions and addressing the study objectives

The research questions and research objectives underpinning this study were formulated to reflect the elements of psychological resilience attached to the resilience model applied in this study as well as the HR. Each of the research question was instrumental in the design of leading research interview questions [See Appendix A], which have guided the life history interview

process with each of the participants in this study. A synopsis of how I have addressed the research questions and the research objectives of this study is set out in the tabular presentation below, outlining the resultant themes/subthemes which have emerged from the data analysis, and the outcome from the specified research question and study objective.

Table 4. Overview on answering the research questions and research objectives

Research question 1: What is mindfulness and how it contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace?	
Research objective 1: To understand the extent to which mindfulness contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace	
Theme/Subthemes	Synopsis of achieving research question/objective 1
5.4.1 Mindfulness as a building block to psychological resilience 5.4.1.1 Core values and qualities related to resilience 5.4.1.2 Ability to remain focus to achieve important goals and objectives 5.4.1.3 Life challenges demand perseverance 5.4.1.4 Work-life application of current values and qualities 5.4.1.4.2 Having control around life occurrences and what could happen next 5.4.1.5 Sources of motivation and inspiration: The “mother” role model 5.4.1.6 It is not always easy but there is benefit from promoting mindfulness	<p>In this study Mindfulness, has been defined as the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something. In addressing the research question 1, I have developed eight subthemes which emerged during the analysis of the data behind the initial theme 1.1. In the context of this question, in this thesis I have indicated the diverse perspectives from the participants with regards to their outlook on mindfulness. I have underlined theories and unpacked fundamental concerns that affect women both within and outside of the workplace environments. A list of values and qualities emerged following the analysis of participants’ introspections of themselves throughout the interviews. Unfavourable attributes have emerged from the findings as well confirming participants’ awareness of strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, identifying personal attributes of women have contributed to a greater understanding of the extent to which person’s character had on the women overall productivity and confirmed the prominence of mindfulness in the reviews of literature. Through further enquiries, I could ascertain areas in which mindfulness was of utmost prominence for women. I could identify sources which unfavourably and unfavourably impacted mindfulness in terms of how internal and external factors both connected with earlier childhood and adulthood life experiences and which could be traced back to theories.</p>
Research question 2: What is self-efficacy and how it contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace?	

Research objective 2: To understand the extent to which neuroticism influence psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace	
Theme/Subthemes	Synopsis of achieving research question/objective 2
5.4.2 Self-efficacy as a building block to psychological resilience 5.4.2.1 Early risk and protective factors to resilience 5.4.2.2 The effects experiences to self-development 5.4.2.3 Must be able to find your niche and establish self-reliance 5.4.2.4 Proactive techniques to finding a niche and establishing self-reliance 5.4.2.5 Proactive listening abilities can support self-efficacy	Self-efficacy has been described as the extent or strength of one's belief in one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals. The five subthemes attached to initial theme 2.1 reflect vital contributions surrounding research question 2. I have found that generally women believed in their ability to achieve life objectives, at the same time it was not always possible for participants to maintain a positive outlook in life. Several values and qualities which I have presented in the findings, theme 1, reflected discourse of self-efficacy in the resilience literature, and were directly reflected participant's self-confidence in achieving tasks and goals. The participants were different in terms of their strengths and how they viewed certain subjects. I have highlighted contributors for self-efficacy in the context of this study with the potential to encourage self-efficacy.
Research question 3: What is coping and how it contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace?	
Research objective 3: To understand the extent to which coping contribute to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace	
Theme/Subthemes	Synopsis of achieving research question/objective 3

<p>5.4.3 Coping as a building block to psychological resilience</p> <p>5.4.3.1 Life is full of adversities</p> <p>5.4.3.2 Adversities and implications to women</p> <p>5.4.3.3 The peculiarities of approaching adverse experiences</p> <p>5.4.3.4 Experiences of adversity within and outside of the workplace setting</p> <p>5.4.3.5 Approaching challenges from a man's perspective</p> <p>5.4.3.6 Workplace adversities associated with ethnic differences and expat citizenship</p> <p>5.4.3.7 Health adversities and the ability to look at the bigger picture with optimism</p> <p>5.4.3.8 Marriage/divorce can be an overwhelming experience</p> <p>5.4.3.9 Having the ability to maintain a positive outlook towards adversities</p> <p>5.4.3.10 General approach to cope with challenge experiences more effectively</p>	<p>Coping has been defined as the ability one has/or the process to dealing effectively with something difficult. In this study, the research question/study objective 3 has been achieved in terms of the eleven subthemes by stressing diverse mechanisms and supports which helped women to dealing with challenges effectively. It was critical to determine general outlooks about adversity from the perspective of participants in this study, which was supported by further questions thought-provoking questions to the women in this study. The relationship between coping and self-efficacy which was claimed in the literature, has been confirmed by the findings, importantly deeply understand how effectively coping contributed to resilience. I have regularly encouraged participants during the interviews, to discuss the experiences they had have lived in terms of resilience. From the emerging discussions of adversities, categories of challenges which participants experienced was evident and I have displayed graphically in the findings chapter, theme 3, to make it easier to identify adverse lived experiences of the women in the context of this study. Following the reviewing of theories reflecting workplace and personal challenges impacting women in the literature, I have established the link between the adversities which emerged from the study findings.</p>
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5.4.3.11 How I overcame my divorce/marital challenges?	
Research question 4: What is neuroticism and how it influences psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace?	
Research objective 4: To determine what psychological adjustment strategies working women, deploy to cope with adverse conditions in and out of the workplace	
Theme/Subthemes	Synopsis of achieving research question/objective 4
5.4.4 Neuroticism as a building block to psychological resilience	In terms of this study, Neuroticism is referred to as the tendency to experience ongoing undesirable emotions such as anxiety, anger and depression more frequently, intensely, and readily, and for a more enduring time frame. Addressing the research question 4 was a critical process in this study, particularly due to the important role of neuroticism outlined in the theory of resilience. The workplace experiences of significant adversities were found to have been an important cause of most of the unfavourable experiences lived by women. I found that personal life experiences had also been a critical source of distress to women. The study established that certain behaviour of the participants could undermine their resilience, and after analysing relevant data extracts, I could have recognised that the behaviours described by the participants were closely linked with different factors including earlier experiences. I have identified potential signs which may have triggered the level of neuroticism of women during the interviews and after reviewing of data, which was worthy of attention in this study, including anger, anxiety, grief, sadness, and depression.
5.4.4.1 Feeling the worst following unfavourable experiences	
5.4.4.2 Fearing for the worst over actual or potential problems	
5.4.4.3 Experiencing high neuroticism had its undesirable potential effects	
5.4.4.4 There is benefit from experiencing health levels of neuroticism	
5.4.4.5 Ability to control emotions and taking control of undesirable occurrences	
Research question 5: What is psychological adjustment and what psychological adjustment strategies do resilient women deploy to cope with adverse conditions in and out of the workplace?	

Research objective 5: To determine what psychological adjustment strategies resilient women, deploy to cope with adverse conditions within and outside of the workplace deploy to cope with adverse conditions in and out of the workplace?	
Theme/Subthemes	Synopsis of achieving research question/objective 5
5.4.5 Psychological adjustment 5.4.5.1 Resilience may also be strengthened as you grow older and experience events 5.4.5.2 Develop a mental map/plan to reaching psychological adjustment 5.4.5.3 Ability to change and adjust to fit into the reality of the situation	In terms of the literature, Psychological Adjustment has been described as the process of harmonizing and balancing ones needs against the obstacles presented by the environments one is affiliated to. In this study, the research question 5 has been answered by a plot of insights on how women went about balancing their needs against the obstacles presented in their work and life environments. It was indicated that adjusting psychologically was not always easy but that it was a vital route which was wanted to be in control of. I have determined that women's ability to adjust psychologically was possible in many instances following steps which stimulated the increase of their levels of mindfulness, self-efficacy and coping while trying to control and minimise increases on the levels of neuroticism. Some steps included devising and following contextual strategies to maintain and sustain positive health and adopting positive behaviours and attitudes.
Research question 6: How can the HRM promote positive organisational behaviour such as psychological resilience?	
Research objective 6: To establish ways in which HRM can promote positive organisational behaviour such as resilience	
Theme/Subthemes	Synopsis of achieving research question/objective 6

5.4.6 HRM's role in promoting and sustaining psychological resilience	The research question pertaining to the HRM's roles in promoting resilience on women was evident in this study of working women in several ways, as literature reviews have demonstrated. As has been evidenced, all participants were approached independent of their organisational context, and were by no means associated in the context of workplace environments. To address the aim of this study, identifying the right candidates was paramount. I followed the preliminary set of research criteria which were outlined in chapter four. The aim of the study has set the pace in setting the criteria which has contributed to the outcome of ten research participants whose time spent within the workplace environment averaged 18.2 years. I have described this finding as a critical aspect to be noted in this study, which underlines the contributions of employment in the lives of this study participants, and fundamentally how women viewed their workplaces as partners in promotion of resilience. I have established that different organisational contexts or workplace environments could either promote and demote resilience in women differently. One of the significant outcomes which came about from my enquiring about HRM's role, has been that in terms of resilience encouragement within the workplace of the participants it was clear that some employers would gain immensely from supporting resilience of their women employees.
5.4.6.1 Individual perspectives of workplace settings/environment to resilience	
5.4.6.2 Work-life motivators and drivers of women	
5.4.6.3 Family-life motivators and drivers of women fulfilment	
5.4.6.4 The 'nuts and bolts' of the being a career woman	
5.4.6.5 Sharing knowledge and experiences can help promote resilient behaviour	

7.4 Recommendations

In the context of this study entitled: Understanding Individual Workforce Resilience of Women in Selected Durban Organisational Settings, the following three insightful categories of recommendations are deduced to propagate the promotion of knowledge on resilience.

7.4.1 Recommendations for working women of large and smaller workplaces

- ◆ It is evident that resilience is a fundamental human quality which may benefit working women within different organizational settings. The number of values and qualities highlighted in this research were described as fundamental ingredients for better life experiences at work and personal domains [See figure 5]. From the values and quality findings, six distinct themes emerged as key dynamics in sustaining psychological resilience which I consider fundamental that other women make practice of. These are: human relations, strategic thinking, spiritual strengths, internal locus of control, existential loneliness, professional strength. By strengthening these assets, more women are likely to experience and advocate resilience.
- ◆ Although women's concerns as outlined in this study did not altogether constitute significant adversities, this study has demonstrated that whether a problem is perceived as big or small, it often depends on whose perspective the concern is taken from. I do encourage women to make themselves invest in the knowledgeable about resilience and take the time to deepen their understanding on how the biopsychosocial factors of resilience [mindfulness, self-efficacy, coping, and neuroticism] function in terms of the model illustrated in this study. Over and above that I think that women in the real world, should be expressive about the issues which concern them, and importantly where possible, women should reach for help and support from family and friends, colleagues and mentors or professional third party capable to assist them find more industrious ways to manage the realities of their lives.
- ◆ The findings also suggest that engaging in some form of relaxation activities such as doing meditation and reflexology, reading a book, watching entertainment, and performing physical exercises were effective non-work activities that greatly reduced women's tension and anxieties.

7.4.2 Recommendations for HRM Managers of large and smaller workplaces; HR consulting companies; and HR regulatory institutions to promote resilience

- ◆ Some of the findings reported here suggest that women did not always expect their organisation or management to assist them or provide them with tools to lessen the adversities they faced. In as much as women need to invest personal efforts towards withstanding situations which present them with challenges, workplaces are expected and should demonstrate corporate responsibility towards the personnel. With an increasing demand in the need to promote health within workplaces globally, more workplace settings are required to be proactive about resilience interventions to improving the well-being employees. I then recommend that useful instructions which recognize the prominence of psychological resilience towards overall health of employees, be built into policies that are easy to implement, monitor and evaluate, and which can fit into different organisational settings in Durban within the South African context.
- ◆ The findings also indicate that despite the obvious impacts which may derive from experiencing adversities, such demanding experiences may in different instances present women with opportunities for growth and preparation to handle similar demands more knowledgeably in future events. All things considered, it is essential that the HRM be a partner in this process of building individual resilience which occurs when individuals are mentally and physically capable of thriving in the face of adversities. The learning process which occurs when women go through the process of becoming better at resilience needs to be formalised or better structured.
- ◆ The HRM should be able to formally understand the theoretical background of psychological resilience, and can make a proper assessment on the level of resilience of their women staff to influence the right set of actions. This means that the HRM needs to demonstrate high expertise around neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping. It is fundamental that the HRM carefully creates an environment that stimulates resilience and protects women against negative consequences of adversities. Since adversities test the level of psychological resilience which resides within individuals; where possible organisations and workplaces should be encouraged to introduce ‘deliberate challenging situations’ to incite employees to change attitudes on challenges, and help them increase their abilities to display resilient qualities in subsequent and unanticipated unfavourable conditions. This should ideally be non-

work mastery activities which may help provide a balance between the work and personal lives of women.

- ◆ For workplaces who are already using initiatives which promote women resilience capabilities, it's important for them to engage with employees and reassess initiatives which may or may not be in favour of the staff involved, and essentially ensure that initiatives are regularly updated to reflect facts and contextual information.
- ◆ Workplaces need to be consistently reminded that significant adversities also demand psychological resources to regulate thoughts, feelings and behaviours of the people in that situation, and therefore workplaces and the HRM should encourage women who engage in non-work related activities designed to help women regenerate psychological strength. Organizations could use the results of this study to design resilience programs that enhance of employees' knowledge on psychological resilience so that they could be prepared and even identify potentially stressful situations and be in control of their lives.
- ◆ Over and above what has been recommended in this section related to the HRM, the management of workplaces, and the HR regulatory institutions, the results obtained from this study which included women from multiple organisational settings and industries, are encouraging of resilience policies. Therefore, it is essential to emphasise that the adoption of policies aimed at promoting psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace shall be expedient for women, workplaces, communities and society at large. Further, the HR regulatory institutions are urged to mitigate the impacts of psychological resilience constructs as outlined in this study. The adoption of policies will assist workplaces develop interventions which can reflect their organisational settings and promote self-management tools for all employees, thus reducing the ascribed causes of impacts of adversities. Importantly, by establishing interventions and self-management tools psychological health barriers²⁶ which increase the taking of time-off due to medical interventions will be mitigated.

²⁶ These types of barriers include: tiredness, sleeplessness, sadness, depression, anxiety, anger, grief, tearfulness

7.4.3 Recommendations for Scholars of HRM; Psychology; Management; Social work; Mental health; and Gender towards future research

- ◆ When interpreting the findings of a qualitative study, it is important that scholars recognize some of the strengths and limitations of the approach in connection to the study. In my view the characteristics of the sample is a notable strength of this present study. Although this study was conducted within the South African context, I have intentionally chosen to focus on women only. While the sample size for this study was ten women, half of the sample were South African women and the other half were non-South African women but certainly African women working and residing in Durban/KZN. There are perhaps three overarching messages for future research to emerge from this: firstly, additional studies to deepen our understanding of the perspectives of all-inclusive African women in South Africa could be carried out. This may also influence the sample size to increase, which may increase generalisation of results in light of African women. Considering that, I suggest that scholars use the same qualitative approach to collecting data collection approach used in this study [life history], or other approaches such as narrative and ethnography data collection approaches. This may also provide more applicable interventions which promote resilience of African women. Secondly, studies focusing on South African women need to be conducted on resilience, this is particularly important as to explore how women within diverse cultures in South Africa experience resilience. Thirdly, I suggest that future work be done to target both men and women in terms of the current methodology and methods which has been employed in this study.
- ◆ During the two years that I have spent conducting this research there were a few theoretical and practical understanding which I have developed throughout the different phases of the research process. One example, is the data collection process. I have realised that a few sensitive factors could pose a threat in the ability of the researcher to gaining of authentic rich data collected and cost the quality of the study. When considering life history data collection instrument from my experience, it can be assumed that data from different angles would be easy to collect. However, as much as the study participants are expected to tell a history to the researcher, it is possible that study participants may for some reason unknown by the researcher, choose not to share certain information with the researcher which may or may not be of critical use for the researcher. As indicated, I have sourced participants through purposive and

snowballing sampling process, and despite receiving some rejections, I believe that I have been successful in the data collection process overall, which I believe was the consequence of displaying soft skills in the process. I realised that soft skills are fundamental tools for scholars, particularly in the branch of qualitative research. Participants may in instances be unable to disclose information because of their relationship with the researcher; the environment and the conditions on which data collection is taking place; their personality and very likely their current state of mind which may be influenced by events occurring in their lives or even personal choices made by them, which may influence their readiness to share certain information with the researcher. And for all these reasons I emphasise that academics assess well the methods intended to be used in their academic investigations from all different possible angles so that they achieve good standard of the research study.

- ◆ While as a researcher I attempted to remain fair-minded during the research process, as a female researcher, I could resonate with insights that emerged from the findings of women, such as the issue regarding the predisposition to displaying unfavourable emotions due to menstrual cycles which certain women experience. Participant 2 was one of the women in this study who attributed her past tendency to showing strong negative emotions to the fact that she was taking contraceptive pills. Since these factors emerged in the gathering of insights on neuroticism, I suggest that future research in this area be carried out in as far as how it relates to neuroticism, as it could shed light on the extent to which neuroticism impacts psychological resilience of women in general.
- ◆ In the context of resilient women, the social phenomenon of superwoman syndrome – that is, the tendency of women to feel the need to succeed in managing all areas of their lives including a household, bringing up children, and working a full-time job. The findings also indicate that women anxieties were also influenced by a sense and desire to performing all activities in their lives. It would be valuable that researchers explored the role of biological, psychological and social factors in influencing such behaviours in women.

7.5 Conclusion and recommendations for future studies

In summary, the theoretical framework reviewed in this study, and findings reported here suggest that psychological resilience is a fruitful avenue for working women in Durban

organisation settings. This chapter has outlined the seven chapters which have formed the structure of this overall study. It further provided succinct explanations on the direction taken to achieve the research questions and research objectives of this study; and outlined instrumental sets of recommendation for:

- ◆ Working women of large and smaller workplaces,
- ◆ HR Managers of large and smaller workplaces; HR consulting companies; and HR regulatory institutions to promote resilience
- ◆ Scholars of HR; Psychology; Management; Social Work; Mental Health, and Gender towards future research

Further to the what has been outlined with regards to the above-stated recommendations for scholars, this present study has consequently given rise to insights in need of further investigation. Accordingly, future studies in the context of resilience of women, should consider taking the following directions:

- ◆ Future studies should replicate this research by using the same methodology and methods, and determine the usefulness of the bio-psycho-social model and its factors namely neuroticism, mindfulness, self-efficacy, and coping towards resilience individual of women.
- ◆ A comprehensive Feminism-based studies must be the foundation of future studies which focus on female the female gender.
- ◆ To increase generalisation of results, future studies should focus on larger sample sizes of working women within KZN, as well as other provinces within South Africa.
- ◆ For a greater insightful research on individual resilience, scholars should perform cross-sectional studies to establish the links and association amongst the bio-psycho-social variables presented in this study, following by longitudinal studies to determine cause and effects of the variables to the subjects under investigation.
- ◆ Scholars should apply appropriate ethical measures throughout the process of research studies to eliminate or reduce potential barriers or limitations which are against qualitative scientific work and which can as well be unfavourable to the population under study.

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LIST OF APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTION GUIDE

Research Topic: Understanding Individual Workforce Resilience of Women in Selected Durban Organisational Settings

“Resilience is the ability of a person to recover, re-bounce, bounce-back, adapt or even thrive following misfortune, change or adversity” (Garcia-Dia et al., 2013).

Theme one: Mindfulness as a building block to psychological resilience [Mindfulness is the quality or state of being conscious or aware of something]

Main research question one: What is mindfulness and how it contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace?

Sub-questions of research question one:

- ◆ How would you describe yourself?
- ◆ How do you take back your attention to things that are important to you?
- ◆ What’s your general philosophy in dealing with adversity at the workplace?
- ◆ What do you feel most proud of in life and why?
- ◆ Who do you most admire in life and why?
- ◆ What ways you ensure you stay in the present moment to do your best at work during the day?
- ◆ How you ensure your thoughts, words and actions are in alignment?

Theme two: Self-efficacy as a building block to psychological resilience [Self-efficacy is the extent or strength of one's belief in one's own ability to complete tasks and reach goals]

Main research question two: What is self-efficacy and how it contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace?

Sub-questions of research question two:

- ◆ Name one of your greatest strengths and describe how you use this strength effectively?

- ◆ Describe what in your opinion can be the consequences from not effectively managing adversity?
- ◆ What is a skill that you would like to learn and why?
- ◆ When facing difficult tasks how you ensure that you will accomplish tasks?
- ◆ Why did you choose your current profession?
- ◆ Where do you see yourself in five years?

Theme three: Coping as a building block to psychological resilience [Coping is the ability one has/or the process to dealing effectively with something difficult]

Main research question three: What is coping and how it contributes to psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace?

Sub-questions of research question three:

- ◆ Tell me about a time where you had to solve a challenging or uncomfortable situation. What did you do? What was your thought process? What was the outcome? What did you wish you had done differently?
- ◆ What practises and strategies work best for you to handle difficult situations and keep you on track on things in and out of the workplace?
- ◆ How do you stick to your aims and accomplish your goals?
- ◆ How did you learn to cope with an awful situation?

Theme four: Neuroticism as a building block to psychological resilience [Neuroticism is the tendency to experience ongoing undesirable emotions such as anxiety, anger and depression more frequently, intensely, and readily, and for a more enduring period]

Main research question four: What is neuroticism and how it influences psychological resilience of women within and outside of the workplace?

Sub-questions of research question four:

- ◆ Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems. What was the problem? What potential measures were developed?
- ◆ What behaviours (Positive or Negative) you tend to fall back on when faced with adversity, pressure or uncomfortable situations?

- ◆ What workplace and personal issues do you remember were most challenging in the past or at present? What would you say were the least effective methods in overcoming those challenges?
- ◆ What do you see are the greatest challenges/weaknesses or most rewarding aspect of working in your current job?
- ◆ What are you most afraid of in life?

Theme five: Psychological Adjustment [Psychological Adjustment is the process of harmonizing and balancing ones needs against the obstacles presented by the environments one is part of]

Main research question five: What is psychological adjustment and what psychological adjustment strategies do resilient women deploy to cope with adverse conditions in and out of the workplace?

Sub-questions of research question five:

- ◆ What was one of your most defining moments in your life?
- ◆ Based on your experiences what physical and emotional changes do you notice in your body before and after you are faced with adversity, pressure or uncomfortable situations?
- ◆ How do you ensure that your behaviour, thoughts, emotions and feelings are under-control?
- ◆ How does/how has resilience work/worked for you? In other words, what kept you focused or what made you persevere and not give up?
- ◆ How to you build and maintain a resilient psychological state?

Theme six: HRM's role in promoting and sustaining psychological resilience

Main research question six: How can the HRM promote positive organisational behaviour such as psychological resilience?

Sub-questions of research question six:

- ◆ Can you describe the environment of your current workplace, and explain how does it demand resilience from you?
- ◆ What motivates you to do your best at work?

- ◆ What workplace pressures are most likely to affect you?
- ◆ What workplace support/facilities are available for you? Or would want to have available at the workplace?
- ◆ Did you have a mentor available during demanding times in your workplace?
 - ◆ If yes, please discuss the benefits you received by having this mentor
 - ◆ If not, please describe what would be like to have someone to provide you the right support when you needed

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

UKZN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HSSREC)

Information Sheet and Consent to Participate in Research

Date: 18 September 2016

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is **Nuria Leandra de Jesus Cadete**. I am a Master's Degree Student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) within the School of Management, IT and Governance. Should you have any concerns or queries you can contact me on 079 901 9919 or alternatively you can contact me on 211560754@stu.ukzn.ac.za or nuriacadete@hotmail.com

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on: **Understanding Individual Workforce Resilience of Women in Selected Durban Organisational Settings**. This research project aims to provide insights into resilience its' key dimensions of lived experiences of women. Resilience is the capacity of individuals to react to challenging conditions or forms of adversities more positively. You are being invited to be in this study because you are a woman and have been identified as a potential participant who can add valuable contributions to the study of resilience.

This study will require your involvement into the procedure: a life history interview with the researcher where broad questions will be asked regarding the subject of resilience. The duration of your participation if you choose to enrol and remain in the study will last about 45 minutes to an hour for each procedure. During the sessions, you are encouraged to express your views freely. There are no right or wrong answers and all information provided is completely confidential. The study is funded by the National Research Foundation.

There are no known risks associated with this research. There will be no direct benefit or compensation to you for your participation in this study. However, I do hope that the information collected for this study may assist female individuals improve their quality of life by advancing or confirming existing knowledge on the builds of psychological resilience to preparing them when faced with adverse experiences within or outside of the work environment.

This study has been ethically reviewed and approved by the UKZN Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (**approval number: HSS/2045/016M**).

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me before, during or after the research. In the event of any problems or concerns/questions you may contact the researcher at 079 901 9919 or nuriacadete@hotmail.com or the UKZN Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee, contact details as follows:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557- Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Your participation in this research project is voluntary and greatly appreciated. Please take your time in deciding whether you wish to participate in this project. In the event of participant's withdrawing from the study, participants will not incur any form of penalties or form of liability nor the relationship you have, if any, with the researcher will be affected. The potential consequences that may occur is that this would impact on the completion of my Master degree.

If you decide to take part in this study, please continue to read and sign the attached consent form. After you sign the consent form, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. The participant will need to inform the researcher formally so that the information provided by them will not be reflected in the thesis following the process of analysis of the findings. There will be no costs incurred by participants as a result of their participation in the study. There are no incentives or reimbursements for participation in the study.

Any information which will be provided by you is entirely confidential. The researcher will not use your information for any purposes outside of this research study. Additionally, the researcher will not include your true name or any information which could identify you in any reports of the study. All electronic copies will be password protected and will be stored on a hard drive. The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

CONSENT

I, _____ have been informed about the study entitled: Understanding Individual Workforce Resilience of Women in Selected Durban Organisational Settings by Nuria Leandra de Jesus Cadete.

I understand the purpose and procedures of the study as listed above.

I have been given an opportunity to answer questions about the study and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time without affecting any of the benefits that I usually am entitled to.

If I have any further questions/concerns or queries related to the study, I understand that I may contact the researcher at 079 901 9919 or 211560754@stu.ukzn.ac.za or nuriacadete@hotmail.com

If I have any questions or concerns about my rights as a study participant, or if I am concerned about an aspect of the study or the researchers then I may contact:

HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS ADMINISTRATION

Research Office, Westville Campus

Govan Mbeki Building

Private Bag X 54001

Durban

4000

KwaZulu-Natal, SOUTH AFRICA

Tel: 27 31 2604557 - Fax: 27 31 2604609

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:

Audio-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Video-record my interview / focus group discussion YES / NO

Use of my photographs for research purposes YES / NO

Signature of Participant

Date

Signature of Witness

Date

(Where applicable)

Signature of Translator

(Where applicable)

Date

APPENDIX C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

05 December 2016

Ms Nuria Leandra de Jesus Cadete (211560754)
School of Management, & Governance
Westville Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/2045/016M

Project title: Understanding Individual Workforce Resilience of women in selected Durban Organisational settings

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 18 November 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Dr Shaun Ruggunan
 Cc Academic Leader Research: Professor
 Cc School Administrator: Ms Angela Pearce

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000

Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 **Facsimile:** +27 (0) 31 260 4609 **Email:** /

Website:

APPENDIX D: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STRATEGIES

Quantitative Strategies /factors	Qualitative Strategies /factors	Explanation of qualitative strategy	Criteria of qualitative Strategies	Application of qualitative strategies
Internal Validity	Credibility	The level of quality of a research study to be believable and trustworthy	Triangulation	Promote understanding by using multiple sources of data collection so other researchers are able to judge the accuracy of findings
External Validity	Transferability	The quality of transferring or exchanging research results to different contexts	Thick description	Other researchers can read and compare details of the methods used on the research in question to determine whether the results findings can apply to other contexts
Reliability	Dependability	The degree in which research findings are reinforced by data collected.	Inquiry audit	The researcher involved in the investigation reports each process of the study in detail
Objectivity	Conformability	The degree in which the researcher has influenced the process of the research study	Conformability audit	The researcher documents, and records the procedures taken during the research process to allow external auditors to determine the veracity of the data

APPENDIX E: THE ESSENCE OF BEING RESILIENT: A PERSONAL VIEW FROM THE PARTICIPANTS OF THIS STUDY

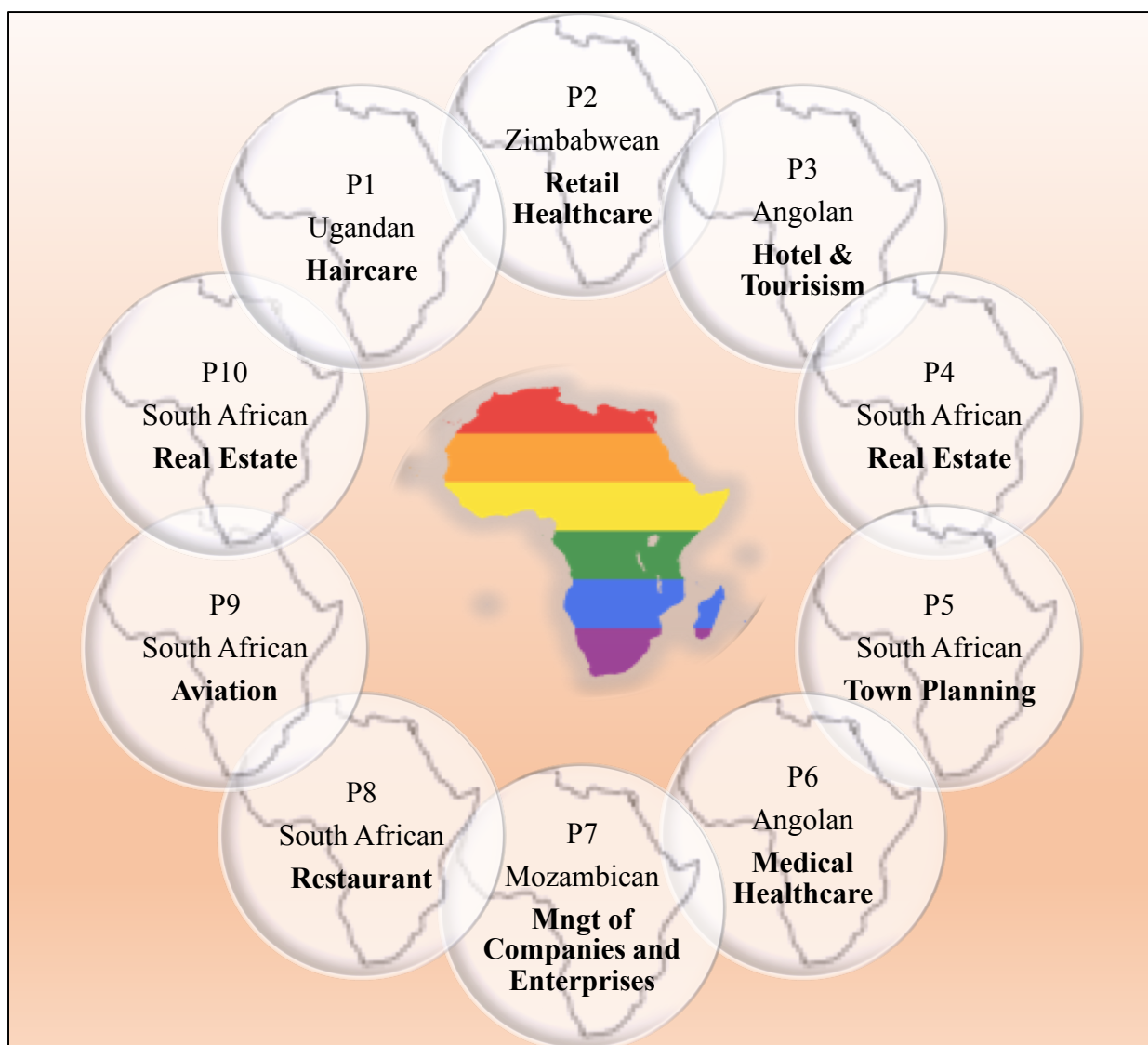
<p>“um being strong... it has really made me achieve what I want, If I wasn’t strong I couldn’t achieve, I couldn’t be me today. So being strong It has done a lot in my life. I don’t know if I was more than being a business person, because to me I don’t feel that I can work for someone, So I always make a plan to make sure that something is always available for me, I always think, I always make a plan; What is the next? ... If this Salon fails, what am I going to do next? I don’t sit on one thing, that’s me. That’s the</p>	<p>“... Like I said when I’ve got challenges, right? What I do now I look at that challenge then I say okay fine, this is a challenge, how am I gone tackle it? What I’m gone do for me to pass through this challenge; to conquer this thing? And then I look at it, I look for a solution. If I can’t and then I’ll just like you know let it go but not cry anymore like I used to do...” (Participant 2)</p>	<p>“uh, I think God... I’d say first God because I can’t acknowledge just fully myself. I think God and my mom...” (Participant 3)</p>	<p>“As a person we have to fall, like when a child is learning to walk, they first crawl, and then they go and move on to holding on to things and then eventually they do walk on their own. But you get some kinds they just stand up and then they walk without having touched like, they were just crawling and then they just stand up and then they just walk umm I think...it depends on the type of situation that you are facing, how to use your resilience in that situation umm... it is something that</p>	<p>“...resilience means uh getting the best out of every day that you can with the circumstances that was given to you on that specific day.... if you not positive, you, you’re definitely not going to achieve anything, you have to believe that that things will get better... (Participant 5)</p>
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reason I say I'm not scared of risks..." (Participant 1)			we are born with, but it's just a matter of how we use it, but at the same time it is something that we are not aware that we have inside of us, you have to get those challenges in order to bring out, I think that's how I can explain it." (Participant 4)	
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<p>“No I think, I think is the way we grew up because we did not grow up in very privilege uum environment we had to fight for everything that we wanted, to go to school, to go to varsity to go to everywhere even to work even to come to South Africa it was not like give thing you know you have to go yourself and then fight for it, I think, through, through all this process and then you learn to mature and then you look at the things differently you know, even if you know even if a little thing that you get in life you will see it as achievement you see and then you know as you go you go</p>	<p>“... always positive, always positive, always. Even death in the family did not make me mop around... you’re sad, you’ll think but eh when I didn’t have my dad uuh I thought okay I’ve still got a mom, and I have my, my husband my sons so not that person takes away but you are, you’ve got a mother platform, this is your mom and dad platform, they gave you eeh how can I say?... They gave you the foundations, now I’m using these foundations to go into another platform which is the family that I hold, I couldn’t say my dad is no longer here, how am I gone cope? You have to... Life goes on and my life. Your mom and dad gave you the, the</p>	<p>“It’s working well, it’s working well, I think so yeah it’s working well cause, there, it helps you, it helps you not to answer the things that you shouldn’t be answer cause where I am, where I am there is not much of a gleams around it, so it’s me, it’s like a pure, you know it’s something pure, you don’t need tea spoon to scoop something out, yeah so it helps, you don’t have anything hanging you don’t have people who hate you, you don’t have people who send I will catch her someday or you don’t have all those negativity around you. Even though you cannot prevent, people’s minds or people’s thoughts, they might think of something, something else, something bad you know, but you</p>	<p>“Yoh it has uh... being resilient, it has, that’s what has... worked for me because if I did not have resilience I will, I would be broken you know. I think for me, maybe just so that we understand it you know similarly: resilient is just having that inner strength to deal with issues, to deal with problems you know uuh, I think also for me you know resilience is just having the ability to be calm because when you’re calm you are centred you’re solid and you can see things for what they are and you can, and you can deal from you know from a point of strength of knowing,</p>	<p>“When you saying resilience, I’m going to interpret it as standing my ground, and when to interpret it as standing my ground I’m going to say it’s not an easy thing to do and uh if you’re doing that be sure that you’re doing it for the right reason and you know what you’re doing, you know what you are talking about... but there’s many different ways of standing up and being resilient...: 1 (One) you can physically stand up and be resilient which is a big gesture; or 2 (Two) you can work in, you can work</p>
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and then the achievement start one two three four and become bigger and bigger, it might appear for other people not really a big achievement but for you, for where you started from, it is achievement so you value that yeah... and then it gives you like strength to carry on..” (Participant 6)	platform, what are you doing now? You’re not by them, you mop around? No... some days you feel sad but then you say okay let me shake myself off because nobody’s gone cure this sadness and they will be with me again you know or I’ll go and see them again...” (Participant 7)	cannot skip that so that is why you need to focus on in prayer so that in ever someone, or someone thinks of doing something bad to you it can be stopped just because you prayed and by doing good and for being positive to most people cause you can try to be positive to someone and they will change the tin and to say ooh she thinks she’s God you know..” (Participant 8)	so without resilience I would be broken you know...” (Participant 9)	beginning that conversation: tell people why you, you prefer it that way so that you take them to the process and bring them to the understanding so that you’re arriving together at the end result... So, for me...resilience would be a journey...” (Participant 10)
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APPENDIX F: WORKING INDUSTRY



**APPENDIX G: PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH ON HANDLING ADVERSITIES AT WORK: A PERSONAL VIEW FROM THE
PARTICIPANTS OF THIS STUDY**

<p>“Um...I believe in keeping quiet, keeping silent, and focused on my work” (Participant 1)</p>	<p>“... it’s basically choosing your battles. There are battles that you can fight, there are battles that you cannot fight, and give it time, as time goes, you discipline, you show work and people they will one day they will realize that ‘no, think we should um change our behaviour’... Now I think I’m more accepted, accepted for small occasions... they’re still um... this human nature coming out but I feel like hum I’ve gone a long way...” (Participant 6)</p>
<p>“...the philosophy that I have in my life is, you know when something is draining me, is putting me down, pushing me; the best thing I do it is just to sing. Sing out of my problems, say a song, I can just sing anything and that makes me you know relieve from all the pressure that I have, all the challenges I have... Singing can relieve me from stressful moments...” (Participant 2)</p>	<p>“...so what I do, what I do, I walk away when I see adversity, away to my own space. I walk away from negativity of those people. And then what I do in my mind I say I’m stronger, I’m better than that so therefore they can’t touch me, they can’t touch me. It’s sort of a block eeh in my mind, they can’t see it, but is almost like I’m ignoring their attitude towards me, and I carry on with my own life...” (Participant 7)</p>
<p>“My philosophy of leaving in a harmonious peaceful manner and respect each and every culture.” (Participant 3)</p>	<p>“I don’t have a good voice but I sing, yes I sing, when I sing you won’t see a tears coming out cause you know you dealing with human whatever you say, whatever comes out of your month they might hold it against you on the next day, so I sing when they try to frustrate me cause they can do that a lot and harder, they can do that, they want to spoil your day, they can do it, so in order I sing, they even tell me that I don’t have a good voice but that doesn’t stop me, I sing and I smile, I</p>

	sing and I smile just to ignore them and concentrate on the job or whatever I need to do...” (Participant 8)
“Uhhh in the workplace, I try to remain calm.” (Participant 4)	“... I think the philosophy is, number one at work you are here to do a job, we are all here to do a job, whether we like it or not we’re signed up for it, and uh I’m very nice at work but I’m hard and I always say you know when it comes to the job at hand and when it comes to my clients because we dealing with you know it’s relationship management, I have no sense of humour when it comes to that, so the philosophy is always about we just have to get the job done, we have to get the job done, for as long as we we’ve woken up in the morning and we are here at work, whatever that we have to do either be adverse, be difficult, be seeds, be, be disgusting, the fact that we’ve gotten up and we’ve reported for work and we are here we just we just have to just buckle up and just do it. Buckle up and... that’s how I deal with adversity...” (Participant 9)
“You know what, um I would say accept people for what they are, appreciate them for what they are, don’t look for faults rather look for the, the better qualities in a person because you will find if you do it that way that you will, you will actually see better qualities instead of the fault and if there’s something in a person that you, you find that needs attention, then you do it in a nice way and you try and build up that person, uhhh can I say confidence instead of criticizing all the time, you, you, you give them, you praise them for what they do right and first, and then you say: ‘maybe you can give a	“Well...There are a lot of adversities, because one: you have your personality, and your personality says you know, calm – cool – collected – considerate: and then you are exposed to an environment where you’ve got to perform, and some of that does not fit in very well. So, it’s brings out the... you’ve got to be a stronger character. And if you have to be strong and you have to give instructions take instructions, plan, others things come handy.” (Participant 10)

better of attention to, of a, to that detail you know' or uhhh you know 'be more precise with things or try not to be like the rain', ... Whatever the fault is, first praise and then you, you say just know that you can improve in certain areas..." (Participant 5)

