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Work life balance: organizational leadership and best practices to overcome burnout for female realtors

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Pepperdine University
Graduate School of Education and Psychology

WORK LIFE BALANCE: ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND BEST PRACTICES TO
OVERCOME BURNOUT FOR FEMALE REALTORS

A dissertation proposal submitted in partial satisfaction
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

by

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April, 2023

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
DEDICATION	ix
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xi
VITA.....	xiv
ABSTRACT	xv
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Background and Historical Context	1
Gender Norms Within the Real Estate Sector	2
Challenges in the Real Estate Sector Leading to Burnout.....	3
Work Life Balance Within The Real Estate Sector.....	5
Leadership Impact in the Real Estate Sector	9
Statement of the Problem	13
Purpose of the Study.....	14
Significance of the Study.....	15
Definition of Terms	15
Limitations of the Study	17
Chapter Summary	19
Chapter 2: Literature Review	21
Overview	21
Historical Context of Female Realtors	22
History of the Real Estate Industry	26
The Scale of Professional Opportunities in Real Estate	27
WLB	28
Elements of WLB	31
Women in Real Estate	34
Real Estate Demands and Responsibilities.....	38
Burnout in Real Estate.....	39
Differences in WLB Based on Gender	42
Challenges of WLB on Leadership	43
Leadership Theories	45
Leadership Performance	46
Work Environment for Women Realtors	48

Work Satisfaction and Family Satisfaction	50
Benefits of WLB.....	52
Best Practices for WLB	55
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs	55
Challenges Faced by Women Realtors	58
Chapter Summary	73
Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology	74
Re-statement of Research Questions	74
Methodology.....	78
Research Design	81
Participant Selection	85
Sources of Data.....	87
Protection of Human Subjects' Consideration	88
Data Collection Method	90
Interview Protocol	91
Interview Techniques	91
Reliability and Validity of the Study.....	92
Statement of Personal Bias	99
Bracketing and Epoche	99
Data Analysis.....	100
Coding	101
Inter-Rater Reliability	102
Chapter Summary	103
Chapter 4: Findings	104
Introduction	104
Participants	107
Data Collection.....	108
Data Analysis.....	110
Inter-Rater Review Process	111
Data Display	111
Chapter Summary	143
Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations.....	145
Summary of the Study	146
Discussion of Findings	148
Study Conclusion.....	168
Recommendation For Research.....	170
The Attitude Model	171
REFERENCES	174

APPENDIX A: CITI HSR Certificate	183
APPENDIX B: IRB Approval Letter	184
APPENDIX C: Recruitment Script	185
APPENDIX D: IRB Informed Consent Form	186

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Prima Facie Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions	96
Table 2. Expert Review Validity	98
Table 3. List of Participants and Corresponding Interview Dates.....	110
Table 4. Thematic Analysis of RQs and Corresponding IQs	144

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.....	56
Figure 2. IQ1 Coding Results.....	113
Figure 3. IQ2 Coding Results.....	115
Figure 4. IQ3 Coding Results.....	117
Figure 5. IQ4 Coding Results.....	120
Figure 6. IQ5 Coding Results.....	122
Figure 7. IQ6 Coding Results.....	125
Figure 8. IQ7 Coding Results.....	128
Figure 9. IQ8 Coding Results.....	131
Figure 10. IQ9 Coding Results.....	133
Figure 11. IQ10 Coding Results.....	135
Figure 12. IQ11 Coding Results.....	138
Figure 13. IQ12 Coding Results.....	141
Figure 14. Dr. Carmen's Attitude Model	171

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my father, Soren Sarkis Der Ohanian a pioneer entrepreneur in Iran's steam machine industry. My father implanted in me, the spirit of excellence and integrity in every detail of my life and inspired me throughout to achieve anything I wanted. Mostly, he always discussed about our hope in Christ, that Jesus will come back again. "For the Lord himself shall dissent from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch angel and with the trump of God: and the death of Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together, with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air: so, shall we ever be with the Lord" (1Thessalonians Chapter 4: Verse 16–17). This study is also dedicated to my lovely mother, Mariam Angel Simoni who taught me to put my trust in God first and foremost, and encouraged me to chase my dreams without giving up on anything. For her sacrifices, I am forever grateful and I love both her and my father infinitely. To my brother, Ardashes Sarkis Der Ohanian, growing up, we always loved and honored each other as siblings and best friends. I love you.

My highest love and gratitude goes to my firstborn daughter, Maya for imparting power into my life. To my twin daughters Milana and Mia, I am grateful for their love and understanding and for also imparting wisdom and generosity into my life. I am honored to be the mother to my three blessed daughters who understood me and helped me throughout my doctoral journey and never left my side and to all three, I love you infinitely. I trust in God's favor that my daughters will innovate opportunities through intellectual, and spiritual leadership, which will manifest through abundant solutions to excel and exceed in creation and continuance of the cycle of prosperity.

This study is also dedicated to the Realtors and brokers, and to the idea that successful Realtors can achieve higher success if they hold onto the right mindset. Without exception, 5% of a person's success has to do with strategy and 95% has to do with mindset. This study is dedicated to improve the quality of Realtors' and brokers' lives by elevating the quality of thoughts individually. We are all creative, powerful people, working towards the same objective, "Amateurs compete, professionals create." According to Philippians 3:5, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Jesus Christ." The Bible portrays the mindset concept strongly. Thus, this study is dedicated to all Realtors for their unlimited hours of dedication to their jobs and families.

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“God’s gift to us is more talent and ability than we will ever hope to use in our lifetime. Our gift to God is to develop as much as we can in this lifetime.”

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ABSTRACT

Women Realtors in residential real estate have a difficult time avoiding burnout and are commonly ineffective in achieving work life balance (WLB). This qualitative, phenomenological research study focused on understanding the issues of WLB and burnout which female Realtors faced, and best strategies in overcoming these issues. There were four main research questions and a total of 12 interview questions which were used as a method to collect data for research purposes. Fifteen participants who met the criteria of inclusion as discussed in Chapter 3 participated in this study, and were located using LinkedIn, and the National Association of Realtors. The interview questions were semi-structured, open ended questions that were approved for this study. Based on the answers, the data was analyzed to find themes. These themes then created the findings which showed that women Realtors enjoyed their careers in real estate, and although it is a demanding job, they were able to overcome burnout and find balance between their work and personal life through years of experience, understanding what success meant to them, and learning to release feelings of burnout. The Carmen's Attitude model was created based on participants' answers to share what women Realtors can do to help find balance in work and personal life in order to avoid burnout.

Keywords: leadership, real estate, Realtor®, women Realtors, WLB, burnout

Chapter 1: Introduction

Female Realtors face the critical challenges of balancing both their professional and personal lives. Women working in the real estate sector as agents find it challenging to establish a viable and healthy balance between work responsibilities, childcare, and family activities. The demands and responsibilities for female Realtors present significant obstacles to overall life and work satisfaction. According to Chung and Van der Lippe (2018), cultural attitudes in the context of family obligations present outstanding WLB (WLB) challenges amongst female Realtors. The perceptions of WLB highlight several issues on societal expectations among women in this profession. Consequently, this phenomenon increases the female professionals' susceptibility to WLB due to the societal and community pressures for women in this sector to conform to the traditional norms. In this case, the demographic issues related to marital status and profession influence the differences in family roles between men and women (Chung & Van der Lippe, 2018). Women prioritized family over their work and identified with family responsibilities.

Background and Historical Context

According to the National Association of Realtors (NAR), since the establishment of the NAR, women have participated in real estate dating back to 1794 (NAR, n.d.). Additionally, women entering the real estate industry have led the residential real estate market, yet, have not broken into the commercial market which is more lucrative and demanding. Thus, although women have been in real estate, they have not been able to break through all sectors of the real estate market, including major leadership roles within the sector because there has not been enough women in these roles in contrast to men.

The establishment of real estate dates to the 1840s, with the number of women significantly skyrocketing over time. Robbins (2017) revealed that during the NAR creation in 1908, men dominated the workforce; however, the industry's developmental journey has witnessed a considerable number of women joining the real estate sector. The NAR registered the first woman member in 1920, and the number of female memberships rapidly increased over the next 40 years to significantly serve in real estate boards.

Eventually the male-dominated real estate boards forced women out and female Realtors sought to start their organization parallel to NAR called Women's Council of Realtors (WCR) in 1938. Nonetheless, most real estate boards were able to drop gender-based cutbacks from the early 1950s, according to the NAR report. Surprisingly, 65% of Realtors are female, yet, as previously stated, women are not as represented in leadership and executive roles. Being committed to developing female talent should help with the change in leadership demographics so that women Realtors are promoted to all leadership levels.

Currently, 56% are licensed female brokers, 66% are agent licensees accounting, 63% are 24-hour sales agents, and 69% are part-time sales agents (Robbins, 2017). Therefore, this study sought to analyze the aspect of women Realtors in real estate regarding gender, WLB and burnout, leadership and leadership theoretical frameworks, ethics, path-goal, and advantages for women in real estate.

Gender Norms Within the Real Estate Sector

In real estate, the gender aspect is essentially viewed from the contrasting perspective rather than the individual features of men and women. Generally, it is assumed that men's prowess is significant to that of women. Therefore, this lessens women's contribution in the gender-neutral aspect. Additionally, gender stereotypes directed towards women concerning their

development and responsibilities in the community as they rise to higher statuses influences perspectives regarding their productivity and performance in the real estate sector.

The pronounced gender divide in the real estate industry has been studied, and some of the reasons behind the disparity include the fact that most women take more time deciding upon the house they desire to move in to, and when to do so. Conversely, men are more flexible. Regarding executive positions, women take significant time deciding the seats they wish to occupy; however, once they decide, it is too late and these positions are taken (Steffansson Pauli, 2016).

Challenges in the Real Estate Sector Leading to Burnout

To most women Realtors, job satisfaction represents the level of content or fulfillment that is equal to what employees experience in an organization. Huang and Hsiao (2007) defined job satisfaction as a positive emotional response based on the experience of an employee's work obligations. From the perspective of the female Realtors, job satisfaction directly correlates with the workplace environment and conditions. In contrast, job dissatisfaction does not imply a lack of job satisfaction; the elements of work-family balance in the real estate industry influence the level of contentment with their duties in real estate (Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). Huang and Hsiao (2007) suggested that job satisfaction is associated with leadership performance, mental health, motivation, and overall life satisfaction. Most importantly, job satisfaction significantly influences performance and emotional health. Wepfer et al. (2018) pointed out that motivational factors and the right WLB can increase job satisfaction.

Still, the workplace environment and conditions influence job satisfaction based on work-life initiatives and organizational culture. Čulibrk et al. (2018) contended that job satisfaction represents one of the most studied concepts in organizational psychology in the context of

positive relationships and leadership performance. There are several detrimental repercussions for work time harmony, including decreased family involvement, more tension in relationships, less interaction with children, higher risk of substance misuse, and a decline in their life quality (Wepfer et al., 2018). The adverse effects of work include elevated levels of tension, reduced levels of work satisfaction, and higher rates of non-attendance. There are problems with work time harmony for all individuals; moreover, this can also create much pressure for the person, impacting their health. Harmonizing work and family responsibilities can be a struggle, especially in some fields and at times more so than others. New waves of workers joining the workforce contribute to a new dilemma for those who respect conventional work-family balance: the notion that work often comes first.

Jones's (2018) article on women's history in balance and burnout in real estate characterizes the nature of this industry to include extreme time spent away from home, strict schedules, and long working hours. In this case, Realtors are essential in providing the necessary information and additional consent to both the buyer and the sellers for a successful marketing manner. Chapralis (1988) held that female participation in real estate is not an epic mystery because gender has been part of this sector for decades despite their obligations in raising families and participating in other family activities. Previously, men made up 100% of the workforce in many sectors. However, new policies and regulations have come into play in real estate, highlighting the need for gender balance. For instance, women Realtors face barriers with the glass ceiling and the fight for equal representation continues (Tussey, 2019). According to the latest Coldwell Banker survey, 75% of men were more likely to hold higher executive leadership positions than women, and of this, 20% were also more likely to ask for raises and promotions. From this survey, it was also found that 32% of women were not as motivated in

holding higher leadership roles in contrast to their male counterparts. Moreover, the creation of new boards and organizations provides an opportunity for qualified women to become members. Some innovative women considered in real estate include women with deceased husbands or daughters whose fathers are Realtors, mother-offspring group, or a married family team (NAR, n.d.). Others include female rental or leasing agents or office workers who, during extreme economic periods, were forced to auction real estate properties (Steffansson Pauli, 2016).

In real estate, burnout refers to a decline in productivity or job satisfaction among real estate employees related to stress, fatigue, and poor WLB. The significant demands of the real estate sector can adversely affect a Realtor's health, thereby endangering their careers. Everything runs smoothly during the early days, and the female Realtors become dedicated to their work. Therefore, this increases the chances of women overlooking the inconveniences that comes with the business, such as long working hours. With time, their hard work becomes unappreciated. As a result, female Realtors develop a norm characterized by hard work, long working hours, and limited focus on personal health, leading to burnout. Some signs of burnout are becoming ironic and cynical at work and a lack of willpower or motivation (Steffansson Pauli, 2016).

Work Life Balance Within The Real Estate Sector

Leadership ethics are fundamental in any job category. The success of female leaders in real estate depends on their capacity to practice basic leadership ethics that are essential in building a stronger team of leaders. Various organizations have come up to assist in governing, educating, and the inter-transfer of knowledge and skills through newly developed strategies. According to Northouse (2018), leadership ethics are principles comprising of five pillars: respect, service, justice, truthfulness, and unity. Ethical leadership has its patterns, including

respect for other people, serving the rest, showing justice, building the community, and honesty. Female Realtors should demonstrate honesty and truthfulness. The capacity for female Realtors to establish and apply ethical leadership in their different work classes enhances women's intrinsic values.

Many scholars argue that work-family issues and disagreements affect the productivity of women in their respective professions. Women experience extensive patterns of work-family disagreements. The reason is that women are obliged to carry out family responsibilities at home and nurture their children. Due to the lack of WLB among women Realtors the huge workload related to experience and flexibility results in a busy lifestyle for women Realtors. Previous studies on the qualitative aspect of the culture and how female real estate brokers operate have not yielded any conclusive results. The reason is that women real estate brokers try to balance the changing leadership roles and understanding of the business when pursuing WLB strategies.

Connectedness is defined as networking with others to help change lives by associating with like-minded persons with a shared vision. Connectedness and linkage help female Realtors in this sector develop tolerance to the existing and newly developed connections between various aspects of the real estate business. Through this connectedness, women are empowered and gain the confidence necessary to face any coincidences and inconveniences related to their day-to-day operations in the real estate business. Significantly, these relationships can be life-changing occurrences because of interactions and the sharing of ideas between female Realtors and top women leaders in real estate. Such encounters teach female leaders the worth of their energy and time.

The change process is mutual but fundamental in any job category. Change is inevitable in any occupation that faces disparities. Therefore, resolutions have to be implemented to attain

successful change. These resolutions include developing a sense of urgency, creating guiding principles and conditions, building a vision and strategy, empowering for a wide and broad vision and action, and communicating the vision. According to Verheul et al. (2002), women can successfully achieve change through collaboration with like-minded professionals. Additionally, women professionals should develop a vision, learn their roles and rights in the business, and utilize guidance and counseling to balance nurturing responsibilities and participation in real estate business operations. Notably, there is the need to initiate new cultural approaches, defined as the norms or way of life of a certain group of people.

Most women Realtors find the real estate industry attractive, especially the residential real estate sector which they have dominated by 65% in the last 10 years. However, women hardly serve in the executive-level dockets compared to men in this industry. A 2015 study by the Urban Land Institute confirmed that very few women engaged in leadership activities in real estate firms. The survey findings illustrate that women occupy about 25% of the real estate and land use organizations, which is a very low figure. Therefore, the chances of women occupying many leadership positions in this sector are minimal. Based on the survey's findings, only 14% of these women are Chief Executive Officers (CEO; Horton, 2019).

Women are more likely to involve themselves in smaller real estate organizations. In addition, most women often begin their small businesses to create a workplace of their own, reflecting their aspirations and values (Draycott & Kline, 1995). Significantly, most women find it easier to excel in smaller real estate firms than the bigger ones, partly due to the favorable competition levels in the smaller firms. Per the study findings, 12% of the number surveyed held president, CEO, executive director, and relevant positions. Besides, only 7% of women chief executive officers govern real estate firms with more than 100 employees. Many women

professionals find it challenging to handle pressure and stress that begins with family responsibilities (Goodfellow, 2017). Many women prefer skipping a number of responsibilities to focus on developing their families rather than their career development. On the other hand, men have the advantage in taking over higher leadership positions because they are motivated toward optimizing their careers. Consequently, women attempt to learn new things in the real estate industry and professionally conduct themselves at their workplaces to give them more chances of securing executive leadership positions (Horton, 2019).

From the perspective of organizational culture, WLB refers to the equally deliberated time employees allocate to meet their expectation based on work commitment, family responsibilities, and pursuit of personal life. By extension, the significance of WLB evolves for the real estate brokerage workforce in light of health, hobbies, spirituality, and psychological wellbeing. The organizations have a moral and ethical responsibility to assist their staff in attaining WLB via training and time management initiatives. The initiatives ameliorate the harmful effects of an imbalanced WLB such as depression, stress, and relationship struggles in the family. The poor WLB affects both the companies and the workers in light of limited staff commitment and reduced productivity. Organizational culture in the context of WLB challenges represents a group of people struggling to understand and cope with problems in the real estate brokerage (Aluya, 2009). For the female real estate brokers and agents, organizational cultures develop from emotional, psychological, and behavioral aspects of WLB. Beliefs, cultural attitudes, and values influence behavior for real estate brokers and agents (both men and women). For female Realtors, the belief and cultural attitudes about gender roles and domestic responsibilities present a tendency to hinder access to gaining higher leadership positions. In this

case, the personal choice to balance work life with family life affects women's performance based on limited time.

Leadership Impact in the Real Estate Sector

Leadership performance relies on the foundation of individuals working together in teams to align the organization's interests through human behavior (Soo-Cheen et al., 2020). As such, leadership performance manages and modifies leadership behaviors based on outcomes and policies. The connection of WLB with leadership in real estate presents a sophisticated phenomenon. Researchers have conducted studies to determine the link that connects leadership performance with WLB for female presidents within colleges in the U.S. Results from the studies indicated a positive correlation between sound WLB and leadership performance success. Heath (2012) concluded that the success of female leadership in different roles is connected to fulfilling WLB. Organizational cultures that promote supportive systems for WLB have an affirmative and direct influence on leadership performance. Consequently, transformative leadership performances foster robust value systems of organizational culture (Meng, 2014). By extension, a robust and resilient culture emphasizes a healthy work environment for agents and brokers by fostering a healthy WLB that generates a positive leadership performance.

Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in determining individuals' reactions in leadership positions towards the challenges they encounter. According to Andrews (2017), emotional intelligence represents a skillset that gives an individual the awareness and mastery of their emotions in the way that aids their rational thinking process. The set of skills developed in emotional intelligence helps the leaders cultivate and advance critical judgment abilities in challenging leadership roles. The capacity to master the skill of emotional intelligence and apply them to challenges such as WLB eludes myriad agents and brokers in contemporary society

(Carbajal, 2018). The dynamics of the real estate workplace environment and work pressure make it essential to integrate emotional intelligence skills within the realm of real estate WLB. Since WLB affects women's ability to take up leadership roles, emotional intelligence provides an edge that improves female leadership performance in real estate brokerages. In other words, the skill set of emotional intelligence offers women a competitive advantage considering the challenges that work-life imbalance instigates on women leadership. While work-life imbalance affects leadership roles for female real estate brokerage, the leaders can alleviate work-life imbalance via organizational culture and work-life initiatives. The leaders who display good emotional skills to their subordinates increase the employees' ability to cope with the changing work environment. Carbajal (2018) stated that the leadership model that accentuates a supportive system through emotional intelligence and organization culture increases workplace productivity. Emotional intelligence competencies provide a broad scope of leadership performance and work-life cultures that ameliorate the challenges of WLB for agents and brokers.

Before the 1950s, women were mainly employed in the plantations, factories, and shop attendants (Goldin, 2009). The women who had college-level education had to endure the men's cultural attitudes and beliefs in their families about female employment. As the knowledge industry continued to develop and evolve, the female workers joined the occupations that required brainpower rather than mechanical jobs. According to Fernández (2013), the end of World War II instigated the need for a labor force in real estate and other financial services. These opportunities opened avenues for learners, including women, to join the universities and colleges. The overall percentage of educated women increased in the population and shifted the workplace environment's social dynamics. Goldin (2009) estimated that the rate of female entry in the workplace increased exponentially in the early 1970s to approximately one million

annually. The increase of the women labor force initiated a paradigm shift in the social realm because the gendered roles and the cultural attitudes presented expectations for family responsibilities and child caring (Steffansson Pauli, 2014). The setting created working mothers who were expected to advance the careers and professions and provide fundamental care for the children.

A social factor emerged that made the family a stakeholder in the organization based on WLB challenges (Fernández, 2013). The work-life and family life dynamics initiated an organizational culture of interactive planning to minimize the conflict. The conflict in WLB emanated from the female labor force based on the demands of the family responsibilities (Goldin, 2009). The phenomenon prompted organizations' response to alter their inflexible strategies and practices to minimize the challenges of work-life imbalance. The transition instigated an organizational culture that values the collective psychological inculcation in light of the influential work-life culture and suitable workplace environment. Hence, the intrinsic nature of family and WLB continues to evolve to require an adaptive model of organizational change to accommodate work-life initiatives. Leadership plays an essential role in integrating the WLB model that includes families as stakeholders in organizations with the traditional model of work in real estate brokerages and agencies. The lack of WLB for agents as well as brokers in real estate hinders the transition of the traditional mode's work-life initiatives because of the limited female leadership roles.

Modern-day, many women are drawn mainly to the real estate industry. This is mainly due to the favorable conditions that seem to encourage more women to join this industry. However, this was not always the case. The real estate industry has come a long way and has undergone a revolution. According to the NAR (n.d.), 65% of Realtors are women. That means

that majority of the Realtors registered in the U.S. are women. This is a testament that the real estate industry is not what it used to be, as it is now more welcoming to the female gender.

The NAR was established in 1908, and its membership was comprised of only men. The first-ever woman to join this association was Corrine Simpson who was a broker hailing from Seattle, and she joined the association in 1910. Further, women became real estate brokers early in the 19th century. In addition, during this time, the real estate industry was considered a safer white-collar job compared to other professions that existed during this time. It was more welcoming to women because traditionally, women are considered homebuilders.

Women grew weary of the meaningless marginalization by the NAR and went ahead to create an alternative organizations that catered to women Realtors (NAR, n.d.). The NAR did not ban women from joining the organization, but other real estate organizations that required real estate board membership placed a ban on women. These boards did not accept women Realtors to join them because the industry was highly male dominated during that time. Because of this, some of the high level women Realtors decided to create their own female based real estate boards similar to the ones they were banned from. For instance, one board that was created was called the Realyettes. Other women based associations and boards started arising throughout the nation. The boards owned by women Realtors paved the way for more women to join the real estate industry, and make money as agents or as other parties involved within the real estate business sector.

Gender norms have existed for a long time, and they define what roles a man and woman should play in society. However, these norms are primarily traditional, and they embrace a regressive mentality that should be non-existent in the 21st century. There have been gaps that exist between men and women in the real estate sector. Women are on the receiving end, and

they face gender inequities with each passing day. The first instance of these gender norms is that women's leadership is mainly lacking in the commercial market. As much as most Realtors are women, they occupy entry-level jobs and do not move up to more medium to high executive roles as fast as their male counterparts. As such, women Realtors are not as present in the commercial market, which has more executive-level positions and influential posts.

In comparison to residential real estate, women Realtors find the commercial real estate industry to be immensely diverse (NAR, n.d.). Only 36.7% of women made up the commercial real estate workforce from 2020, and the pandemic essentially stopped the progression of women entering this part of the real estate industry. However, there are a number of groups, forums and organizations that provide support to women who desire to see more gender parity in commercial real estate.

Statement of the Problem

Women who work as Realtors in the real estate sector experience challenges related to establishing a viable and healthy balance between work responsibilities, child care, and family activities. The demands and responsibilities for female Realtors in real estate present significant challenges to overall work and life satisfaction. Chung and Van der Lippe (2018) contended that cultural attitudes in the context of family obligations present substantial WLB challenges amongst women brokers and agents in real estate. WLB perceptions highlight several issues on societal expectations that affect women professionals. The phenomenon increases the susceptibility of women professionals to issues related to WLB resulting from societal and community pressures regarding the need for women to conform to traditional norms. In this case, demographic issues, primarily marital status, and profession, influence the differences in family roles between men and women.

Purpose of the Study

This research sought to collect and measure the successful experiences and recommendations regarding the lifestyles of 15 successful female Realtors. The study's objective was to determine the impact of the female Realtor's lifestyle while educating, equipping, and enabling ambitious female real estate agents to attain a higher level of success while ensuring effective WLB. The purpose was to create a training program that the researcher could then use to help female Realtors with enabling an effective WLB.

Over time, the human behavior guiding men's career path forced them to prioritize their work obligations over family responsibilities. Conversely, many women prioritize family over their work, and they identify with their home responsibilities. Thus, the study sought to find best practices regarding how women Realtors achieved WLB through strategies experienced Realtors have practiced throughout their career. Additionally, this study sought to understand the motivations and mindsets of women Realtors when achieving higher career success and WLB.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to determine what challenges women in real estate face within their profession. The following research questions were used to collect data for this phenomenological study and were the basis for achieving the objectives of the study:

- RQ1: What challenges do female Realtors face within their profession?
- RQ2: What strategies and best practices do female Realtors employ to overcome the challenges they face?
- RQ3: How do Realtors define, track, and measure their success?
- RQ4: What recommendations do current female Realtors have for aspiring female Realtors?

Significance of the Study

The results of this study will address gaps and limited information related to Realtors. The burden resulting from balancing responsibilities and personal life enhances the risk of stress among female professionals in real estate. The study will concentrate on the shortcoming that leads to poor WLB among female Realtors, make suggestions and offer solutions to promote wellbeing. Recognizing the existing issues among female colleagues is effective in understanding and improving WLB. People accept advice originating from those in the same field or with similar professional experiences. On the other hand, the study focuses on the connection between success and WLB among female Realtors in real estate. Thus, the findings shed light on the practical strategies essential to boosting wellbeing and job satisfaction. It is anticipated that this study will reveal the urge among female Realtors to gain knowledge and self-education. Furthermore, the results of this study can help women Realtors achieve accurate self-awareness while inspiring other female Realtors working in the industry.

Definition of Terms

This section defines the various terminologies and serves as a reference tool throughout the study.

- *Accurate Self-Awareness*: The terminology describes an individual's weaknesses and strengths, focusing on growth and development based on previous experiences (Goleman, 1998).
- *Achievement*: The term encompasses the determination to progress or advance to meet excellence standards (Goleman, 1998).
- *Adaptability*: This refers to the capacity to remain calm and maintain a comfort zone during unexpected circumstances (Goleman, 1998).

- *Commitment*: This entails developing and focusing on achieving a goal or objective (Goleman, 1998).
- *Communication*: This is an act of receiving, listening and providing proper messages for others to decode and understand (Goleman, 1998).
- *Conscientiousness*: This is an act of remaining responsible and ensuring integrity for own performance (Goleman, 1998).
- *Emotional Awareness*: This relates to the ability to acknowledge emotions that impact performance and the capacity to use values in guiding decision making (Goleman, 1998).
- *Emotional Competence*: This involves using emotional intelligence to develop a desirable behavior and contributes to high performance (Goleman, 1998).
- *Influence*: The ability to impact one's behavior, development, or character (Goleman, 1998).
- *Initiative*: This entails leveraging an opening or moment to attain specific objectives or goals, positively influencing performance (Goleman, 1998).
- *Leadership*: "Leadership is the ability to influence a group toward the achievement of visions or goals" (Robbins & Judge, 2011, p. 376).
- *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*: This refers to a model described by Maslow (1954) in which meeting individuals' basic needs boosts motivation and performance.
- *Optimism*: "The ability to persist in pursuing goals regardless of difficulties and hindrances" (Goleman, 1998, p. 122).
- *Physiological Needs*: The basic needs that one ought to have for the existence of life (Fallatah & Syed, 2018).

- *Real Estate*: This describes property, which may constitute buildings or land.
- *Real Estate Business*: This refers to the various forms of real estate, residential, industrial, raw land, and commercial (Rogers & Koh, 2017).
- *Realtor®* is a federally registered name and mark which means that a real estate professional is identified as a member of the National Association of Realtors® and adheres to the Code of Ethics by the association.
- *Success*: This is a means of quantifying an accomplishment.
- *WLB*. This refers to maintaining a balance between professional responsibilities and family obligations.

Assumptions of the Study

During research implementation, the researcher made the following assumptions:

- By definition, respondents comprised of women Realtors from California.
- Respondents had a viable Realtors' license.
- Respondents had been subject to similar experiences in the real estate industry.
- All respondents were honest and willing to take part in this study.
- Respondents provided the researcher with practical suggestions for WLB.

Limitations of the Study

The study presented the following limitations:

- Since the study was conducted by a female Realtor, there was the potential for bias.
- The respondents may provide false information.
- There was the potential for bias arising from the interview questions, which could impact the validity of the findings.
- The authenticity of the participants was not guaranteed.

The set of questions in the interview questionnaire were generated from existing literature and was evaluated for validity by a highly competent team. Notably, the interview questions were semi-structured. However, using a pre-arranged questionnaire for the interview could introduce unintended bias. Additionally, the relationship between the researcher and respondents could also lead to bias. The current study focused mainly on female Realtors in real estate, specifically the residential sector. The study emphasized achieving WLB in this population based on the obstacles and hindrances encountered in weighing between professional roles and family activities. Lastly, the study established practices and strategies integral to boosting WLB for female Realtors.

Overview of Chapters

The study was divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 provided a brief introduction and background of the topic. The chapter also stated the problem under review, the primary and specific research questions, and research significance. Moreover, this section defined the key terminologies, explored assumptions, and identified study limitations.

Chapter 2 focused primarily on reviewing existing literature in line with the research questions. Therefore, this section discussed the historical background of the real estate sector, and disparities women faced as they entered the industry. Furthermore, the chapter provided an in-depth assessment of leadership, theoretical framework, and the respective theories, including the contingency, expectancy, and trait theories. Lastly, the chapter discussed Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs based on Maslow's (1954) model.

Chapter 3 described the methodology adopted for this research. Thus, the section discussed the study design, restated research questions, provided sampling procedures, and sources for data collection. Significantly, this chapter described the data collection strategy,

research ethics, and approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Lastly, the chapter highlighted the process for determining validity and reliability, personal biases, techniques for interviewing respondents, and data analysis.

The research findings was presented in Chapter 4 with themes that came from the interviews and the data analysis conducted by the researcher. The themes and participant information was discussed along with quotes from participants that aligned with the themes. Lastly, Chapter 5 provided a detailed discussion of the outcomes based on the data, and offered recommendations and implications for practice and further research. It was hoped that the research findings could influence future studies in women in real estate.

Chapter Summary

In the contemporary real estate industry, WLB represents one of the challenges for both genders in the workplace environment (Steffansson Pauli, 2014). However, women remain the most affected by the challenges of WLB because of gender inequality and gendered roles in society. Chapter 1 discussed the study's theoretical framework regarding the personal and professional experiences and journeys of female Realtors in real estate. Over the past three decades, female Realtors have increasingly dominated this industry. According to NAR (n.d.), the membership profile indicated that 65% of all Realtors are female. Moreover, women are increasing in numbers within the real estate industry.

Currently, there are more than 50,000 female Realtors in California. All of these professionals have a NAR membership, and most have completed degrees in higher education. Today, the rapid growth of women in real estate justifies the fact that female clients make most of the home-buying decisions since women understand each other regarding family needs and expectations. It is hoped that the current study positively influences Realtors, real estate agents,

brokers, leaders, scholars, policymakers, and educators, among other professional groups and their overall understanding of WLB.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Overview

As stated previously in Chapter 1, female Realtors face challenges in having a healthy WLB due to the many responsibilities they have, such as child care, activities, and so forth. These demands presented barriers for women Realtors in establishing careers and higher leadership roles within the real estate sector, as well as significant challenges to attaining WLB. According to Chung and Van der Lippe (2018), family obligations present substantial WLB challenges because there are high expectations from the community, and society as a whole. The phenomenon increases the female professionals' vulnerability to the problem of work-life imbalance based on these societal and community pressures so that they conform to these traditional norms. Thus, these issues influence the vast differences in family roles between both men and women. It can be seen that men have the ability to prioritize work obligations, making them more productive, while women prioritize family and the responsibilities of the home. Societal norms posit that men are the breadwinners, therefore, they have less pressure to have WLB. Hence, women take the burden of the familial responsibilities over careers which can decline productivity as a result of the lack of WLB.

The literature review is structured to elaborate on the aspects of WLB that create challenges for female real estate brokers. The first section depicted the historical context of female brokers and the labor workforce's rise in the male-dominated industry. The second section discussed the connotation and the elements of WLB. The third section conversed over the struggles of women in real estate from a historical standpoint. The fourth component described the demands and responsibilities in real estate based on the impact on WLB, while the fifth section examined the differences in WLB between men and women. The sixth section studied

the leadership challenges that work-life imbalance caused for women in real estate. The seventh and eighth sections described workplace environment and satisfaction in work and family respectively while considering the impact of WLB. Finally, the last two sections depicted the benefits of WLB and the consequences of work-life imbalance.

Historical Context of Female Realtors

The real estate sector for Realtors embody the culture and a history of demanding schedules with a working environment indicative of prolonged working hours (Molinaro, 2006). The time spent beyond the designated working hours is extremely long vis-a-vis the job's full-time duties. While Realtors play a significant part in the real estate realm based on linking prospective sale of a property, the process that involves the transactions remains time intensive. The activities and duties that the Realtors perform to match the prospective buyers to the sellers of property influence the working environment to highlight the challenges. Men dominated the real estate industry for several decades until the late 1970s, and during this era, the women required a male co-signer to acquire property in the sector (Hornstein, 2002). The first woman Realtor joined the NAR in 1910 to begin working in competitive real estate boards. The contemporary paradigm shifts in the 21st century saw the number of female real estate agents surpassing male agents. Thus, the phenomenon of gender reversal and the inclusive organizational culture encouraged more women to venture into real estate brokerage. The NAR (n.d.) conducted research that found out that 56% of the women are licensed, real estate brokers. In addition, according to the NAR, the percentage of women Realtors increased to 65% in contrast to the 64% the year prior.

According to Hornstein (2005), the history of Realtors selling property depends on the region. In the U.S., brokers began these transactions that match the buyers to the sellers of

houses from 1900 to date. For over 165 years, the real estate industry has been operating under agents and real estate brokers. Before the formation of NAR, homeowners were selling their residential real estate on their own without Realtors. However, after the formation of the NAR in 1908, transactions and real estate sales, especially in residential homes, were made either by the homeowners or their brokers and agents, giving the homeowners choices on ways they could sell their homes. Before 1908, there were superficial legal relationships between the clients, the home or property owners, and the brokers. Sellers of the homes in California were represented by the listing brokers, while sub-agents worked with the buyers (Moga, 2020). Whether in a residential or commercial property, the seller was the most significant party during the sale of any property. All the agents and the brokers were under the allegiance and influence of the seller and owner of the property.

In addition, some of the property owners worked directly with the brokers in the transaction process. The brokers and their agents would look for the potential buyers alone, but the owners would also get involved. Depending on the rates and the overall prices of specific property, or the location of a particular piece of land, the sellers had higher authority on whom and how much they could sell their property for. Such is the case, because of the added advantage of having the allegiance of the brokers and agents at their side; both sellers and buyers were able to have representation when selling or purchasing homes. Without representation, buyers would have a difficult time placing offers on the property and sellers would not have knowledge of how much to sell their properties for (Moga, 2020). Concurrently, most of the first brokers and agents worked independently and directly with the property owners. The agents and brokers in California had exclusive contracts that they gained from the homeowners and property sellers. These contracts did not allow the property owners or homeowners to list their property

with anyone other than the first agents assigned to sell the property under the agreed contract. Such agreements between the agents and the homeowners, or property owners marked the beginning of real estate, which was practiced in California and the entire United States. However, such rules were improvised and adjusted with the formation of the National Association of Real Estate Exchanges (NAREE) in 1908.

The first documentation of home sales began in 1908 following the establishment of the NAR (Hornstein, 2005; Singh, 2014). The formation of the association facilitated the process of real estate broker certification because selling property was acknowledged as suspicious transactions. The terminology, *real estate broker*, emerged at the start of the 19th century, and was defined to mean dubious occupations (Bilfinger as cited in Hornstein, 2005). At the time, the American popular culture linked real estate brokers to men, with only a few women becoming real estate brokers as a full-time occupation. Hornstein (2005) stated that the census conducted in 1910 indicated that 98% of the real estate brokers were men. Women's involvement increased in the early 1910s when the first woman Mrs. Corrie Simpson joined the NAR. Following women's recognition from the introduction of women Realtors in 1927, the scope and reach of female brokers increased exponentially. The Conference of Women Realtors held in the same year developed the foundation and controversy surrounding the subject of gender equality in light of the roles and responsibilities of women in society.

According to Grace Perego (as cited by Hornstein, 2002), at the convention, the women were not supposed to be limited to the homes. The economic constraints that followed the Great Depression affected the women Realtors in the 1930s and 1940s to the extent that approximately two-thirds of the female brokers left the industry (Hornstein, 2002; Molinaro, 2006). In the modern real estate industry, WLB represented one of the challenges of both genders in the

workplace environment (Steffansson Pauli, 2014). WLB became evident in 1970 following the evolution of the labor workforce and cultural attitudes on domestic roles (Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). Hence, women entered the workforce, and the transformation enabled the female workforce's participation in both family and work realms. As the number of women continued to rise exponentially in the labor market, the relationship status of women workers comprised of married women (57.4%), divorced women (59.7%), and women who were separated from their spouses (61.7%). Women who had never been married represented approximately 63.5% in 2020 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). For this literature review, the term work-life is utilized interchangeably with work-family life to promote inclusivity for the women's family responsibilities and those without. More specifically, WLB entails the individual's choice to make work, family and society their main priorities (Hilbrecht & Lero, 2014). The work-life system for a work environment in the real estate brokerage depends on organizational culture. The presence of work-life initiatives in the workplace environment in the form of organizational policies determines the impact of WLB on women's leadership performance.

According to the NAR (n.d.), their membership profile indicated that women Realtors make up 65% of their population currently. Other breakdowns include 56% of licensed brokers, 66% of sales agent licensees, 63% of full-time sales agents, and 69% of part-time sales agents (Arndt et al., 2017). Additionally, a study conducted by the NAR (n.d.) in the U.S showed that in all the states, the agency's population was 50% more women. This indicates the general population of women involved in the real estate sector exceeded the male population of Realtors and brokers combined.

History of the Real Estate Industry

Men throughout history have dominated the real estate sector. Women have had little or no say in this industry, and this scenario is fast changing worldwide. However, the real estate industry is still characterized by inequity (Acker, 1992). This inequity is not a new concept because women have been on the receiving end since the real estate industry began in 1794. Under the U.S. labor laws, the real estate industry was made a legitimate business in the late 1840s. As the years progressed, the NAR was established in 1908 and was constituted entirely of men. The first woman joined the NAR in 1910, and this was a colossal win for women all over the world as this marked the beginning of a new era in real estate. However, this win was not without its struggles, as after 1910, women, for the next 40 years, struggled to join real estate boards. The resistance and discrimination were hard-pressing, and the women who fought bravely to join real estate boards decided to create the Women's Council of Realtors (WCR) in 1938 as the women's division of NAR. The WCR was established to serve as a parallel organization to the NAR. Female membership in the association has grown steadily over the years and the NAR has since seen a total of seven female Presidents—most recently, in 2022 NAR President Leslie Rouda Smith was elected to serve the NAR. As such, the struggle finally paid off as many of the real estate boards decided to drop gender bias in 1950 (Women in Real Estate, n.d.).

According to a profile released by the NAR (n.d.), the median age of a Realtor is a 54-year-old who has attended an institution of higher education. Further, according to other NAR statistics, Among broker licensees, 61% are female, compared with 67% of sales agent licensees. Additionally, the current number of part-time female sales agents are 70%, while 65% of full-

time sales agents are female. According to this set of data, women are now dominating the residential real estate industry.

Women are excellent multi-taskers who have empathy, are assertive, and bring game-changing insights that help elevate any real estate firm (Steffansson Pauli, 2014). Many women in some of the largest firms hold executive positions, and they thus realize a broader market that only serves to prove the effectiveness of women in the real estate sector. In addition, women have natural attributes that have been shaped by ancient gender roles, such as building strong network connections, negotiation skills, and persistence in work. Women were also homemakers who held down the fort as the men went out to work. Therefore, this has also served to attract more women into the real estate industry. These attributes are necessary for the real estate sector, enabling women to become good at what they do. Real estate is also lenient towards women because it allows them to fulfill their life goals and have enough time for family. Unlike other sectors where women are forced to choose between long working hours and the family, real estate enables women to have the best of both worlds.

The Scale of Professional Opportunities in Real Estate

Many women who want to venture into the real estate market now start at the entry level. Here, many women are brokers or part-time agents. They then proceed up the corporate ladder and hold administrative positions and senior roles. However, some women are bolder and start by forming large teams and incorporate small entities. The sector also has prerequisites such as well-paying jobs and other opportunities for women. Most agents are paid from a commission. The commission allow women to have savings and also contribute to their household's upkeep. Further, with a bit of experience in the field, women are also taking opportunities as trainers and

mentors to new Realtors. They have roles as property advisors and trainers in institutes that offer degrees and accreditation courses in real estate.

As with any other masculine-dominated sector, women have had their share of gender bias. However, the tides are fast changing, and there are now more equal opportunities for both genders than there ever were. In earlier times, the industry did not bear any strong opportunities for women, but a revolution slowly took place as the days progressed. The industry is rewarding and challenging, but women Realtors are taking up leadership roles and slowly amassing exceptional skills that expand any firm's vision (Wilson, 2020).

The NAR opened its doors to women and encouraged them to apply for board member positions in 1973 (Hoffman et al., 1992). At the end of 1973, women made up 17% of the members. By 1975 women accounted for roughly a third of total membership when the board welcomed applications from Realtors, and by 1978, the NAR board had more women in its membership than men. Women's interest in real estate has always existed because of the desire to help families. This interest preference is mainly occasioned by flexible work schedules that enable women to work on their careers and families, low entry barriers, and good earning. Real estate is a great option for women searching for lucrative careers or looking for a part-time job.

WLB

WLB embodies a significant subject in the business realm that instigates a critical study point. Most of the research studies conducted on WLB corresponds to human resources management, employee turnover, and company policies. Employee wellbeing and wellness is an important aspect for organizations to understand as family life, including child care and spousal commitment, are imperative for employees to be productive in the workplace (Feeney & Stritch, 2019). Thus, WLB represents the overview associated with the concept of an adequate family

life based on the time spent with loved ones and taking care of their responsibilities. In his research study, Chauhan (2010) postulated that both family life and work-life represent significant features in women's lives. The study concluded that the conflicts in family life emanate from an imbalance in WLB.

Most importantly, Chauhan (2010) elaborated that the idea of WLB involved controlling employees' work responsibilities, the work environment, as well as tasks on the job. In this case, the organization's ability to improve the wellbeing of their employees, based on the activities the employees consider as enjoyment, determines the level of work life satisfaction. The WLB represents a worker's ability to fulfill their commitments to family and work with minimum conflict and satisfaction (Burg-Brown, 2013). According to Burg-Brown (2013), WLB revolves around creating and maintaining the right work environment with a robust support system that enables the workers to increase productivity while fulfilling personal responsibilities and caring for their families. The conflict between work and family arises when the intensity of the job or the workloads creates fatigue, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion, which interferes with family commitment. Work and life satisfaction motivate the element of happiness that helps to create the right WLB. Therefore, WLB from the perspective of the Chauhan's (2010) school of thought represents an employee's ability to control and maintain social life elements, health, exercise, and emotional wellbeing at an optimal level based on individual comfort. Consequently, the stability between the employment duties and caring for the family amidst the contemporary social life exemplifies a comfortable WLB.

Biron and Burke (2014) postulated that organizations have a moral and ethical responsibility to assist their staff in attaining WLB via training and time management initiatives. The initiatives ameliorated the harmful effects of an imbalanced WLB such as depression, stress,

and relationship struggles in the family. The poor WLB affects both the companies and the workers in light of limited staff commitment and reduced productivity. Biron and Burke recommend that organizations strive to generate a favorable WLB. Burg-Brown (2013) stated that the labor force dynamics has increased significantly in the 21st century among female Realtors. As more women move past the patriarchal norms in the society that confines them to household tasks, the controversy of WLB continues to evolve. The transformation of the employment landscape to empower women has instigated a positive influence on economic prosperity. However, the phenomenon has initiated the inquiry about the importance of child responsibilities based on the needs of women. A balance between these ideas develops the idea of WLB.

The primary restraint in female labor participation originates from achieving a balance between home and work duties (Burg-Brown, 2013). The challenge of balancing the family and work-life depends on reconciling the extended working hours via a time management scheme. According to Feeney and Stritch (2019), men have the flexibility to choose the extent of the participation in home errands in contrast to women. Unlike men, women have limited choice in the context of performing the household chores and child responsibilities. Poirier (2009) theorized that the work environment and support systems play a significant role in influencing WLB. According to Burg-Brown (2013), women in the labor workforce have several competing interests and responsibilities: household tasks, volunteering activities, marriage, caring for the children and the elderly, and societal expectations. The popularity of the WLB as a discourse has continued to increase as more women continue to venture into the real estate labor market amidst the impact on family domains.

Elements of WLB

Several elements impact WLB, including work environment, social environment, family, and individual behaviors. According to Poirer (2009), the work environment is a determinant of WLB. For example, Poirer cited the flexibility at work when one woman recalls taking her sick child to the office. The flexibility of the work-life culture in the organization enabled the woman to take her daughter to work and as the sick child slept under her work station, she continued to perform her work obligations. The case study of the flexible arrangement enabled the female Realtor to take care of her sick child and work responsibilities simultaneously.

Overall, the brokerage firms have a responsibility to support the worker and help attain a WLB. A dominant support system based on family helps to alleviate the challenge of WLB. As such, a shift in the family responsibilities paradigm creates a support system that determines work satisfaction. Family life represents one of the essential elements of WLB in light of the role expectation among female Realtors (Feeney & Stritch, 2019). The family responsibilities such as taking care of the children, the elderly, and marriage require the women's attention most of the time. These responsibilities shorten the hours committed to work, which in turn generates a work-life imbalance.

One of the most critical determinants of WLB are individual behaviors (Burg-Brown, 2013). The individual behaviors that augment work orientation and competitive behaviors have a high tendency to attain work-life imbalance compared to calm and patient personalities (Feeney & Stritch, 2019). The obsessive work behaviors denote neglect towards family responsibilities to illustrate the epitome of work-life imbalance. Likely, organizations that do not realize women's significance and value to any organization are more likely to miss out. Gender diversity and having women in the workplace, especially in the real estate industry have been highly linked to

high performance and the overall success of many organizations (Ballakrishnen et al., 2019). For the longest time, the real estate industry has been viewed as a men's industry since the majority of the real estate agents and licensed Realtors were males. As a result, more women, especially young females, adopted the culture that the real estate industry and all the relevant professions in that sector were highly suited for their male counterparts, which was not the case.

Nonetheless, there are several key points that organizations, observing gender diversity and hiring women in the workplace, ultimately endure. First, some of the most successful organizations, especially those in the real estate industry with more women representation in their workplaces and boards, perform better financially than those who lack female representation. Second, compared to the male-dominated teams, gender-diverse teams in real estate organizations have been proven to have higher profits and sales revenues. Third, gender-diverse business units that have a higher percentage of women, specifically in the real estate sector, are seen to have a higher than average revenue than those organizations with less diverse business units. In addition, there are also other benefits of having women representation in the workplace other than the financial gains. According to research, an organization that has more women in the workplace creates a working environment that is conducive and better to work at, not only for women but for all genders.

It has also been proven that organizations with a higher percentage of women in real estate business units have fewer burnouts, more meaningful work, more organizational dedication, and more job satisfaction. Positive employee retention and engagement have also been seen in organizations with more women employees. Such is the case because women follow an organizational culture that cites positive engagement keenly, opportunities to make a difference, have jobs and duties that fit well with other areas of their lives, and enjoy working

and performing their obligated tasks and responsibilities (Dashper, 2019). Regardless of gender, ethnicity, leadership level, organization size, and the age of the employee's organizations, such benefits regarding women have proven to be essential and persistent. Real estate agencies in California, such as the Sotheby's International Realty in Santa Barbara, one of the best known and most successful real estate agencies, has a higher number of female Realtors. Such diversity made the organization one of the best, not only in California but also in the U.S. For organizations to create a gender diversified workplace and attract, promote, and retain more women, the organizations must consider creating a more open environment for women to feel they belong and are accepted into the workforce (Sotheby's International Realty, 2018).

In all careers other than those in the real estate industry, all employees, including women, prefer staying with their current employers if their job descriptions and duties fit well with their lifestyle. In addition, the employees should believe that their responsibilities in the organization allow them to make a difference and enjoy their work and experiences in the corporate workplace. Therefore, women need a 9-5 job and a calling that offers personally meaningful work which connects to their WLB, sense of purpose and values (Krivkovich et al., 2017). Organizations should hire women, not only for the sake of gender diversification, but for those whose calling resonates with the company, its mission, and purpose. Callings are seen as jobs that people see as the central part of their identity and make them feel drawn to pursue, which is essentially meaningful and enjoyable for them.

In addition, women work better in an organization that provides employees with flexibility in how, where, and when they work. For organizations to attract and retain talented women, they should give them flexible schedules, paid leadership development, healthcare benefits, and opportunities to move up into leadership roles (PR Newswire, 2021). Additionally,

leadership opportunities are also vital for women, especially in the real estate industry that men in leadership highly dominate. For organizations to inspire more women to work in the real estate industry, organizations need to provide more leadership development programs. However, men in leadership positions often have more resources than women, especially in team size, supervisor support, and funding. As a result, more organizations need to ensure neutrality and gender diversity for leadership opportunities, encouraging more women to have confidence in their qualifications in their leadership roles.

Women in Real Estate

In recent years, real estate has been recognized as a man's world. However, breaking into the industry has been difficult for women predominantly until the 1980s where they could not purchase real estate without a male co-signer. Historically, there have been women in the real estate industry since its establishment. According to McDougall (2016), although the first woman joined the NAR in 1910, women have had to fight for almost five decades to serve on real estate boards.

The NAR was established in 1908. There were no women known in real estate. The purpose of the association was to unite the real estate men of America. In the 1920s, special women divisions were created to cater to women who aspired to be brokers in real estate. By then, there was a very successful women's division established by the California Association of Realtors (CAR), which later became a model for the Women's Council of Realtors. These associations attracted more women into the industry. As a result of these divisions, several women joined the NAR; however, their role was only primary sale agents. This restriction limited them to a small number because they were not brokers. This trend continued for many

years until a survey was conducted in 1949, which showed that of the entire population of real estate agents and brokers, only 2% were women (Rogers & Koh, 2017).

Later in 1973, there was a shift in the trends when NAR opened its membership to Realtor associates, commonly known as sales agents. With an open membership, more women flocked to the business, and by the end of the year, 17% of the population was female. Two years later, the NAR had 435,500 members, with women contributing to a third of the membership. By 1978, the women had surpassed men in percentage. In 1992, Dorcas Helfant was elected the NAR's first female president, and four years later, several women presented broker licenses for the first time. The position Helfant had as the president brought a significant shift after several years of male dominancy. The female population increased in numbers by more than half compared to all other years (Mercorella, 2016).

Being a real estate broker is one of the most lucrative professions that can earn great success. As a result, both women and men have ventured into the profession; however, men have dominated this arena for a long time. In 2015, the total number of real estate transactions was over 5 million (Mercorella, 2016). There is a difference in the population of men and women in diverse forms of real estate.

According to Mercorella (2016), women were first involved in real estate in 1794. Later, by the year 1880, they started taking over the jobs of agents and brokers. Additionally, the percentage of men in commercial real estate brokerages are more than that of women; likewise, the population of women in residential real estate is higher than that of men. For instance, the estimated population of men in commercial property brokerage was 77% compared to 23% of the women. On the other hand, the population of women in the residential real estate properties was 62% compared to that of men, which was 32%.

The sector has been getting more competitive; therefore there is an increase in female agents in the industry. Today, numerous real estate industries have experienced a radical transformation in the role that a woman plays, and relocation and real estate are immune to these industrial changes (Armitage & Steffansson Pauli, 2016). In real estate's prior generations, the women occupied secretarial positions; however, the shift into the Realtors' positions, though at a somewhat sluggish rate, began to grow from 1880 and onwards (Andersen et al., 2020). More significantly, it is best to stay away from gender typecasts when exploring why most women are attracted to the real estate industry, but it is also factual that ancient gender roles have positively influenced the evolution.

As a matter of fact, numerous women possess the professionalism, knowledge, empathy, and instinct to create great Realtors. Women can access the necessities of the prospective party within a short period of time due to their emotional intelligence and intuition. These characteristics not only provide women with the ability to work in real estate successfully more than their male counterparts, it also gives them skills necessary to sell real estate to their customers, although it is crucial not to generalize (Armitage & Steffansson Pauli, 2016). An additional factor bringing women into the real estate industry is their flexibility that the industry offers in terms of working hours. However, with observations frequently scheduled outside of conventional working hours, for instance, weekends and holidays, this affords the women who are balancing family work and with the opportunity to play a significant role in the functioning of a booming real estate industry. Consequently, the flexibility of working hours are ordinarily more available in the real estate business than in some other fields. This has certainly facilitated several women's transformations into the profession either for the first time, or to come back

once again into the real estate business if they had taken time off to take care of their familial obligations.

There are a growing number of women with knowledge of the business and are now taking up the professional real estate industry and working independently as Realtors (McDevitt, 2010). Some elementary capabilities that require an individual to become a better Realtor are strong familiarity with local residence, active network connection, and well-founded negotiation skills. Since these traits occasionally come naturally to most women, they become quite useful in their jobs and gradually transform them into an industry altogether. Women are generally considered to portray a greater level of sympathy, diligence, and they also tend to be more patient and sensitive to their client's need hence a higher customer satisfaction rate. Typically better at harmonizing family and work, women are good at multi-tasking, an essential element of the real estate industry.

Today, most firms acknowledge the benefits of diversification under the current female economy. The female economy nowadays controls up to 75% of all the purchases (McDougall, 2016). Industries are gradually transforming the needle by embracing feminine talent's upsurge into executive obligations, creating prospects to lead to industrial programs and break traditional barriers. However, the modern real estate industry provides abundant opportunities to engage with an extensive collection of individual rights from owners, clients, and developers, which is not an excellent confidence promoter, but also offers thrilling daily challenges that hasten the learning curve.

Women mostly began by working in the administrative and entry-level positions in the real estate business and swiftly climbed up the commercial ladder with talent and hard work. Some even formed special teams in collaboration with other small bodies in that connection,

while others hire their band and set up their organizations. Other than paying well, professionalism in real estate also presents different possibilities for qualified women. With some considerable experience on hand, women could also consider mentoring new property advisors' training at numerous institutions that offer certification and degree careers in the sector. There are abundant cases where women have set up services necessitated by a real estate potential buyer, for instance, loan assistance, vendors, and interior designing help.

Unfortunately, a career in real estate is not a cakewalk for women even though they have now verified their value in the real estate industry. Like any other male-dominated industry, women have faced their share of gender discrimination, but there are a good number of equal possibilities for both genders today, unlike earlier (Steffansson Pauli, 2014). Today, real estate presents a substantial opportunity for women to market themselves to strategic clients as it comprehends the intelligence, strength, and a raised corporate generosity that a prosperous female real estate broker or agent brings with her (Armitage & Steffansson Pauli, 2016). Looking at the current scenario whereby women Realtors have risen to touch the tip of the iceberg, a career in real estate is both rewarding and challenging.

Real Estate Demands and Responsibilities

Schaufeli et al. (2009) articulate that burnout represents one of the primary elements of work-life imbalance. The phenomenon increases the risk of decline in productivity for real estate professionals. The Realtors have the constant pressure to work hard and increase their commitment to their responsibilities and duties. According to Xavier (2019), burnout refers to the exhaustion of an individual's mental capabilities from stress in the work environment. In addition, Xavier added that stress at work augments an indicative environment for psychological health. The demands of the real estate brokerage and transactions result in stress accumulation

that extends to family life. Runsbech et al. (2016) explained that women Realtors have a satisfying experience when they start their duties and responsibilities in the industry. The real estate business instigates innovative learning incentives, flexibility in the work schedules, and the urge to develop professionally, which causes the women to ignore the long working hours, the intrinsic stress, and the problematic clients they encounter during the real estate transactions.

Burnout in Real Estate

Love et al. (2011) and Rawlins (2008) both stated that burnout affects the interaction between Realtors and consumers. The subject of coping with burnout in the real estate industry gets little consideration for the Realtors. The propensity associated with real estate burnout among the female Realtors can be minimized by introducing orientation coping strategies. Stress in the work environment epitomizes a primary determinant that influences female Realtors' psychological health, performance, and organizational productivity depending on the characteristics of the agency responsibilities (Jones et al., 2006; Love et al., 2011). The continuous interactions of the agents with the customers represent one of the causative factors of stress among women in real estate brokerage (Rawlins, 2008). In this case, the dynamics of the housing market escalates the supply and demand phenomenon to increase the responsibilities and work pressure for the agents because of the fact that agents are always on the call; occasionally buyers and sellers contact their agents outside of business hours regarding their feelings associated with the ongoing daily changes happening during close of the escrow.

Love et al. (2011) recommended that the stakeholders in the real estate industry should identify the factors that contribute to the female Realtor's feeling of burnout. The overwhelming consequence of burnout among women Realtors in the work environment presents a critical challenge based on the WLB associated with productivity and health factors. The women's

psychological and physical wellness in the real estate sector affects both their life satisfaction and job satisfaction. Love et al. conducted a study on burnout among Realtors by identifying the factors associated with the work environment that creates the problem. The study found that the hours at work per week determined the challenge Realtors faced due to emotional exhaustion. An increase in the working hours had a corresponding susceptibility to burnout. Similarly, the number of clients the real estate agents visit determine the likelihood of emotional exhaustion and burnout. The number of clients visited also determines the compensation matrix for the real estate agent; thus, the agents strive to visit more clients to increase their commission and earnings. The drive to achieve rewards contributes to feelings of burnout that causes adverse effects on their WLB.

Nevertheless, when the new real estate agents' intriguing nature diminishes, female Realtors adopt a pattern of repetitiveness and boredom from the demands of Realtors. The repetition of the long working hours represents a roadmap for burnout. Runsbach et al. (2016) acknowledged that real estate harbors more burnout experiences than other sectors. Similarly, the women Realtors lack the awareness to identify the patterns of work schedules and the long working hours as a risk to their WLB. More studies should focus on the burnout issues in different sectors to accentuate awareness and promote education. The initiative has the potential to layout solutions for reducing Realtor burnout. Burnout in the real estate industry entails several elements that contribute to the problem. The extensive working hours and mental exhaustion that comes with daily transactions describe the extent of burnout among female Realtors. Biron and Burke (2014) pointed out that the feelings of irritation and impatience towards clients represent burnout symptoms among female Realtors.

Galaty et al. (2002) articulated that Realtors' success depends on the interactions that focus on the clients. The real estate agencies generate a form of legal relationship that highlights the liabilities and duties that guide the practice of real estate agencies. According to Galaty et al. the interaction between the real estate agents with the consumers and other parties forms a complicated relationship based on the legal responsibilities assigned to the broker towards the buyers and seller of property. Real estate burnout largely refers to a real estate employee dropping one's power in the job. The significant desires in attaining success within the real estate industry can have a negative effect on the Realtor's physical health and therefore, could jeopardize their careers. During the early days in the business, everything runs smoothly, and the female Realtors are more dedicated to their work. This would make women overlook the inconveniences that come with the business, such as long working hours. However, with time, their hard work becomes unappreciated, and therefore female Realtors experiencing this phenomenon as a reoccurrence result in feelings of burnout. Some signs of burnout are becoming ironic and cynical at work, and lacking the power to stay productive in a consistent manner (Steffansson Pauli, 2016).

A study done by Budhwar et al. (2006) depicted that the largest problem encountered by female Realtors in the current society is managing their WLB or their dual responsibilities of being company managers and homemakers. Women deal with vast amounts of stress induced by the pressure and workload to prove their abilities. This induces stress in the female workers because of dissatisfaction (Beatty, 1996). One of the biggest challenges that female Realtors in higher leadership roles face is the negative treatment at the workplace which praises the centrality and dominance of male workers, while placing women as inferior and less important (Repetti & Wood, 1997). Because of this stereotypical belief system, female Realtors are given

less challenging work and do not participate in important organizational meetings on many occasions.

Differences in WLB Based on Gender

According to Steffansson Pauli (2014), the main component of complete work-life satisfaction is matching the time spent at work and home. Also, longer work hours can impact health, safety, or efficiency. Gender stereotypes also affect how individuals spend their time from the perspective of WLB (Steffansson Pauli, 2014). For instance, men spend most of their time on paid work while much of the female labor force focus most of their time on family responsibilities (Glasgow & Sang, 2016).

Married women face limitations in career success because they are expected to attend to household duties. Ensuring that children's needs are fulfilled is a big concern for working mothers (Glasgow & Sang, 2016). Because of this limitation, there is more pressure for women to meet deadlines and complete tasks within their team in contrast to men. The apparent lack of commitment of women to work in a job under pressure causes frustration and a desire to sideline women in terms of work distribution. There are substantial gender variations in how people perceive equilibrium. New policies aimed at supporting WLB for men and women can only have the desired impact if they target gendered family arrangements (Glasgow & Sang 2016; Steffansson Pauli, 2014). WLB requires a feeling of accomplishment in all aspects of a person's life while also requiring a personal sense of strength and commitment. Balancing work and life is a test for everyone in the workplace, and especially for parents. This dilemma can contribute to both personal and social issues. WLB is a term that is appropriate in how individuals prioritize business and personal affairs. WLB is a common problem across societies, and different techniques have been created to alleviate it.

Work has long been a critical priority of human lives. Gender is one of the fundamental attributes used to differentiate sex. An assumed social norm prescribes the roles that men and women are to play. It reflects on the physical, social, and physiological contexts related explicitly to men and women (Chung & Van der Lippe, 2018). The roles of women and men are different depending on the culture and societal norms. Over the past few decades, there has been an increased interest in investigating the factors that affect workers' satisfaction, and gender disparities have been a subject of the study (Ajala, 2017). Regardless of society, women have been regarded as caretakers, mothers, and wives whose primary roles are child-raising and household duties. Males were always known as the breadwinners in society.

Women's household role and childcare demand versatility, which helps them, balance work and family duties more comfortably than men (Glasgow & Sang, 2016). Women tend to be attracted to occupations where they are most likely to be successful. Although neoclassical economic theory suggests that occupations may evolve into female occupations due to sex stereotyping, human capital contributed to incorporating women into flexible employment (Ajala, 2017). Therefore while household tasks raise women's desires for versatility in employment, the stereotyping of specific jobs can also affect the type of roles open to them.

Challenges of WLB on Leadership

WLB plays a vital role in promoting female Realtors into leadership roles (Soo-Cheen et al., 2020). Similarly, the women Realtors in leadership positions face unlimited responsibilities, primarily balancing their professional careers and family life. The competing interests of the family life and work-life present significant challenges for women because they interrupt the success of women's careers in real estate brokerage. The activities that dominate a female real estate broker's personal life include spirituality, health, family, and leisure. According to Soo-

Cheen et al., the conflict that work-life imbalance develops, causes anxiety, limiting the ability to attain full potential in leadership roles among women in real estate. Thus, as women attempt to balance additional responsibilities from their leadership roles, they experience pressure and feelings of burnout. Residential real estate forms most of a person's wealth portfolio, which prompts the customers to hire Realtors to coordinate the transactions (McCormick, 2015). Thus, the real estate demands take a toll on the emotional wellbeing, happiness, and overall life quality of female Realtors within the industry. Consequently, the optimal WLB which Realtors desire, require innovative leadership to promote, educate and empower the women to cope with the underlying pressures of work to achieve balance.

According to Boardman (2013), most of the NAR leaders have been male. While the female labor force has participated in real estate brokerages for several decades, their leadership progress has not been acknowledged in the public sphere. The dilemma that Boardman presented in his argument was that while the female workforce increased exponentially within the real estate industry, their leadership roles remained limited. Leadership refers to a process or portfolio where a person can influence other people towards attaining a common goal. By extension, the leadership responsibilities can help other people develop their careers and personal life via strategic goals. Leaders have the power to influence attitudes and behavior based on the organizational cultures. WLB influences the bases of power that help to maintain the leadership positions. Women's susceptibility to work-life imbalance compromises their leadership roles by limiting the bases of power that influence individuals in real estate brokerage. Power forms part of the influence process because it can enforce the organizational culture.

The success of female Realtors involves the practice of ethical commonalities in leadership. The Women's Council of the National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB)

assists women in this sector based on leadership and education about the challenges of the problems such as WLB. The leaders influence individuals by assisting them to learn their values, demands, and commitments while incorporating them with the vision and mission of the organizational culture as well as understanding values-based leadership. Ethical leaders are responsible for treating individuals with equality and fairness because the followers make autonomous decisions to follow the leaders. On the same note, the female leaders have the responsibility to be truthful and honest. The experiences of female Realtors about leadership roles and the challenges of WLB provide significant insight into female leaders' success in real estate brokerage (Aluya, 2009). Since individual behavioral patterns influence individuals, the challenges of WLB among women in real estate limit their chances of success.

Leadership Theories

From a theoretical perspective, the path-goal theory, as a leadership framework, presents a reliable and supportive process for successful women in real estate brokerage as leaders (Northouse, 2010). These leaders choose the most supportive behaviors that suit the needs of the women in light of the work environment. In this case, the leadership theory provides a support basis applicable to WLB by considering the needs of women in real estate agency. Creating the supportive workplace environment that eliminates the conflict with family life, the path-goal theory ameliorates the challenges that emanate from work-life imbalance. Most importantly, the leadership framework involves establishing the employee within the work environment, choosing a leadership style, and accentuating the motivational aspects that aid the workers' success. Therefore, the path-goal leadership theory helps the leaders guide the Realtors based on the profession of choice by attaining everyday goals and responsibilities in the workplace. The

tools acquired from the theory provide a support mechanism for the Realtors by decreasing the barriers towards achieving the right WLB.

A critical analysis of the Philadelphia board application indicates that more male Realtors apply to become members immediately after obtaining the license than the women in the brokerage industry (Hornstein, 2005). Female Realtors applied to join the membership boards after working in the firms for a long time than men who join the boards from different business foundations (Hornstein, 2002). Green (2013) posited that leadership challenges among women revolve around balancing both work and family. The women in real estate brokerages leave work early not to indulge in leisure but to take care of children. Green also inferred that ambitious women make personal decisions to follow leadership, while encountering the constant conflict in the domain of WLB.

In a male-dominated industry such as real estate, the underrepresentation of female leadership responsibilities results from the gendered roles that point to domestic errands. The female Realtors who participate in most domestic responsibilities have limited working hours and mostly prefer to work part-time. As such, they have challenges developing their leadership careers in the real estate industry. The cultural attitudes ought to undergo a paradigm shift to initiate the proportional participation of men in family responsibilities in order to ameliorate the challenge of WLB (Kellerman & Rhode, 2014). Thus, this paradigm shift has the potential to help women attain prosperous leadership in the real estate industry.

Leadership Performance

Leadership performance relies on the foundation of individuals working together in teams to align the organization's interests through human behavior (Soo-Cheen et al., 2020). As such, leadership performance manages and modifies leadership behaviors based on outcomes and

policies. The connection of WLB with leadership in real estate presents a sophisticated phenomenon. For instance, Mangels (2008) conducted research to determine the link that connects leadership performance with WLB for female presidents within colleges in the U.S. Results from the study indicated a positive correlation between sound WLB and leadership performance success. Heath (2012) concluded that the success of female leadership in different roles is connected to fulfilling WLB. Organizational cultures that promote supportive systems for WLB have an affirmative and direct influence on leadership performance. Consequently, transformative leadership performances foster robust value systems of organizational culture (Meng, 2014). By extension, a robust and resilient culture emphasizes a healthy work environment for agents and broker by fostering a healthy WLB that generates a positive leadership performance.

Before the 1950s, women were mainly employed in the plantations, factories, and shop attendants (Goldin, 2009). The women who had college-level education had to endure the men's cultural attitudes and beliefs in their families about female employment. As the knowledge industry continued to develop and evolve, the female workers joined the occupations that required brainpower rather than mechanical jobs. According to Fernández (2013), the end of World War II instigated the need for a labor force for the real estate and other financial services associated with the sector. The opportunity opened avenues for learners, including women, to join universities and colleges. The overall percentage of educated women increased in the population and shifted the workplace environment's social dynamics. Goldin (2009) estimated that the rate of female entry in the workplace increased exponentially in the early 1970s to approximately one million annually. The setting created working mothers who were expected to advance in their careers and professions to provide fundamental care for the children.

A social factor emerged that made the family a stakeholder in the organization based on WLB challenges (Fernández, 2013). The work-life and family life dynamics initiated an organizational culture of interactive planning to minimize the conflict. The conflict in WLB emanated from the female labor force based on the demands of the family responsibilities (Goldin, 2009). The phenomenon prompted organizations to respond to alter their inflexible strategies and practices to minimize the challenges of work-life imbalance. The transition instigated an organizational culture that values the collective psychological instilling in light of the influential work-life culture and suitable workplace environment. Family life's intrinsic nature continues to evolve to require an adaptive model of organizational change to accommodate work-life initiatives. Leadership plays an essential role in integrating the WLB model that includes families as stakeholders in organizations with the traditional model of work in real estate brokerage and agencies. The lack of WLB for Realtors in real estate hinders the transition of the traditional mode's work-life initiatives because of the limited female leadership roles.

Work Environment for Women Realtors

The workplace environment for real estate has the potential to be frantic and high pressure (Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). From the consumers' perspective, the choice of the real estate broker to guide the transactions for matching the buyers to the sellers is always conducted carefully. The real estate structure generates a workplace environment that enables the female agents to find an amicable relationship with the consumers. In this professional relationship, the agent and the consumers determine if they can invest their time and resources. Most importantly, time represents an essential element of the transaction process. Workplace environment contributed to the emergence of women real estate sector in the 20th century. The work

environment elements, such as the need for competence, trust, and time, became the foundation for the women to engage in leadership roles. Hornstein (2002) cited that the National Real Estate Journal written from the point of view of Louise Slocomb of Portland in the 1920s, he embraces the real estate work environment in light of trust. Slocomb, as cited by Hornstein, implied that the women are homemakers and thus, they should be trusted with the real estate transactions as they have the idea of what the comforts and convenience of a suitable home can be for those interested in purchasing residential property.

The female Realtors conduct their business transactions in the office setting. The real estate environment involves long working hours that include mostly weekends (Munn, 2009). Similarly, the brokers and Realtors work outside the office, visiting various properties and meeting with customers to complete the sales process. Therefore, the work environment requires the real estate agents to have vehicles to facilitate their transport as they inspect the property and visit the customers. The workplace environment can result in work-life imbalance based on the limited time and lack of support system from the real estate firms. The workplace environment affects the level of commitment for female Realtors as they strive to meet the job demands. While the real estate agents attempt to meet their work's obligations alongside family responsibilities, stress and depression can result, making the employee susceptible to diseases and other physical ailments.

Workers need to recognize that WLB is often about one's attitude toward work. Besides developing innovative workplace opportunities, employers should also enhance the efficiency of the positions they provide to their workers. A positive community and a content workplace environment foster a healthy WLB (Xavier, 2019). When workers are content with the job they

love, work can feel more rewarding. Therefore, employers should emphasize fair wages, friendly working practices, development prospects, and social interactions (Feeney & Stritch, 2019).

Regarding work-life problems, the focal point was on the impact of organizational programs and strategies developed. According to Xavier (2019), supporting workers who face work-life conflicts is of utmost importance. Accomplishment is the successful completion of something through repeated actions or acceptance to receive what is required. The notion of pleasure does not imply satisfaction. Rather, it reflects pride, pleasure, joys of life, and a sense of health. Life's successes and happiness go hand-in-hand with each being very important. The idea of WLB is that it can be attainable through changing the attitudes toward cultural, social, economic, and technological advances (Feeney & Stritch, 2019). Flexible executives can make changes to the workplace atmosphere, whether workers raise issues concerning WLB (Munn, 2009). To increase workforce productivity, ensuring workers have the time they need away from the workplace is the best way to attract skilled workers and make them lifers, regardless of potential demographic disparities (Feeney & Stritch, 2019). Understanding the effect of multiple working environments is becoming a new challenge.

Work Satisfaction and Family Satisfaction

Job satisfaction represents the level of content or fulfillment of workers in an organization's present job obligation. Huang and Hsiao (2007) define job satisfaction as a positive emotional response based on the experience of an employee's work obligations. From the perspective of the women Realtors, job satisfaction directly correlates with the workplace environment. In contrast, job dissatisfaction does not imply a lack of job satisfaction; the elements of WLB in the real estate industry influence the level of contentment with the agent and brokerage duties (Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). Huang and Hsiao (2007) suggested that job

satisfaction is associated with leadership performance, mental health, motivation, and overall life satisfaction.

Most importantly, job satisfaction significantly influences work performance and emotional health. Wepfer et al. (2018) pointed out that motivational factors and the right WLB can increase job satisfaction. Still, the workplace environment influences job satisfaction based on work-life initiatives and organizational culture. Čulibrk et al. (2018) contended that job satisfaction represents one of the most studied concepts in organizational psychology in the context of positive relationship and leadership performance. However, there are several detrimental repercussions for burnout from excessive work, including decreased family involvement, more tension in relationships, less interaction with children, and a decline in their quality of life (Wepfer et al., 2018). The adverse effects of work include reduced levels of work productivity and satisfaction, and higher rates of non-attendance due to physical stress and strain. Harmonizing work and family responsibilities can be challenging, especially in some fields and at times more so than others. New waves of workers joining the workforce contribute to a new dilemma for those who respect conventional work-family balance: the notion that work often comes first.

From a worker's perspective, family satisfaction represents the attainment of a close relationship with friends and family members based on personal happiness (Elangovan & Rajendran, 2021). Family satisfaction extends beyond immediate relatives like children and spouses to cover extended members such as cousins and uncles. According to Elangovan and Rajendran (2021), work and family refer to the most critical roles in a person's life because a conflict between the two results in overarching consequences for the organization and the workers. More specifically, family satisfaction has a significant influence on a person's

wellbeing, which affects work and leadership performance. Elangovan and Rajendran concluded that a positive and direct correlation exists between high family satisfaction and work contentment that generates more employee engagement. The challenges between work and family based on work-life imbalance reduces fulfillment among female Realtors. Both family roles and work responsibilities have equal importance in a person's life. The concept of WLB has always intrigued the individuals who concentrate on work-life quality based on the overall concern of the quality of life. The model of work-life culture represents an abstract of an individual's extent of job satisfaction. The concept aims to offer a quality life for the worker while maintaining productivity in their workplace environment.

The feelings of motivation and work satisfaction increases job satisfaction significantly (Valaei & Rezaei, 2016). The demands and responsibilities for female Realtors to pursue WLB emerge from shifting industry dynamics and the evolving organizational culture. Real estate firms should provide work-life initiatives that facilitate the broker and agents to perform their roles and duties effectively to improve productivity. WLB influences the attitudes of the female Realtors towards the firms they represent. The factors that affect satisfaction include the workplace environment, the available reward system, marital status, and the experience in the real estate brokerage. According to Valaei and Rezaei (2016), the workload does not affect job satisfaction. The women in real estate brokerage and agencies face the challenge of WLB based on several factors such as work satisfaction, family satisfaction, leadership roles, and cultural attitude from gendered roles.

Benefits of WLB

An exponential increase in female labor force involvement and the male-economy models resulting demise has frequently resulted in a double burden in unpaid and paid work

environments. Besides, with the aging of the labor force in numerous countries, there are skyrocketing concerns about how personnel can address the needs of their extended families and their immediate families. According to Chan et al. (2020), when work takes up a considerable amount of an individual's working hours, their personal relationships agonize as well as their well-being. Without WLB, an individual encounters more stress and anxiety, misses crucial events and milestones, has frequent trade-in time, and takes on unhealthy routines for time-to-time on more work. By achieving a better WLB, an individual can enjoy benefits, such as improved sleep, better physical and emotional health, stronger relationships, and more enjoyment in life. Most Realtors find their productivity and sales increasing the more they attain WLB. However, it may seem counterintuitive that doing less work every day would make an individual more successful; but taking time away from work can escalate involvement, improve client service, boost productivity, and lower the number of sick days an individual takes.

Achieving WLB requires an individual to prioritize their time by making a list on what they should do and identifying what requires time and attention. Adhering to a WLB is significant for relationships and health and enhances employee's productivity and, ultimately, their general performance. Real estate businesses that gain a reputation for implementing WLB have become attractive, especially when considering how difficult it can be to attract and maintain younger workers these days. In today's fast-paced and impulsive business world, it is difficult to achieve WLB as individuals grow progressively much connected through societal and technological media (Burg-Brown, 2013). It is becoming more challenging to separate work from individuals' personal lives. Investors in real estate expect more from their people, leading them to feel more pressure to achieve more significant outcomes. Consequently, the pressure leads to longer working hours with less time wasted or spent at home. As a Realtor, there is a

responsibility to assist the entire team, while managing the demands of their personal lives since the most involved employees may still find it challenging to find a balance in their lives.

Overworking employees makes the risk of jeopardizing more than just their societal lives; their physical and mental health becomes at risk. A poorly managed WLB can lead to numerous symptoms that can affect an individual's well-being and productivity levels. However, engaging individuals to look after themselves and find WLB will significantly reduce health challenges and absenteeism. In the real estate industry, this will grant an organization's effectiveness during business hours, and individuals would want to be part of the business and culture. Most people drive themselves into real estate with the belief that by being self-employed, they have the privilege to work with flexibility and still succeed; unless they have the discipline to constantly dedicate themselves to their work, they will not succeed. Obtaining an improved WLB takes work, even for the most effective Realtors. Drenzo et al. (2015) postulated that success fluctuates from management and achievement of suitable distinctions to attain WLB in the real estate sector. Therefore, when reclaiming individual and professional experiences of priorities and demands, most people prefer to be the most substantial to them is their comfort.

Nonetheless, according to Haar et al. (2018) WLB has no definite meaning. Consequently, WLB echoes that every person recognizes the ultimate work combination and family duties and pleasure outside the working environment. Drenzo et al. (2015) articulated that it might be easier to implement 38 hour work weeks for the labor force to have an effective WLB. In other words, WLB can be observed as combining the consecutive demands of life and work accountabilities. Burg-Brown (2013), echoed that accountability in both work and home life is driven by the principle that individuals seek to have balance in both worlds.

Best Practices for WLB

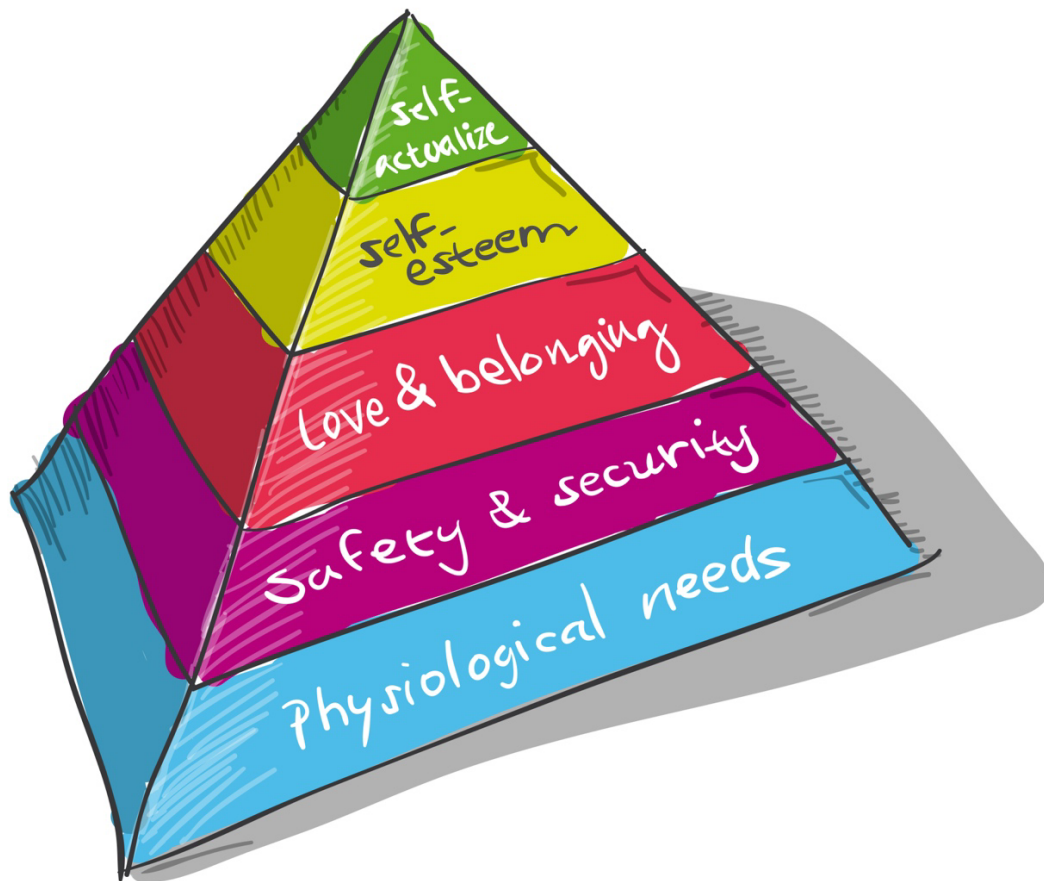
Female Realtors encounter numerous difficulties in combining their professional and personal lives, partially because of their demanding professions. Realtors are experts in the area of knowledge and skill. Understanding the needs of being mobile is essential when juggling the Realtors' WLB. Thus, WLB displays an emotional impact (Tupponce & Robertson, 2019) on the individual. Contentment, wellbeing, and quality of life are usually essential to the success of a person. Organizations that offer WLB have better work dynamics, which creates a positive environment for women leaders who want to combine work and life (Pitre-Wilson, 2018).

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory created by Abraham Maslow (1954), shows improved practices in individuals attaining their needs in a balanced way. However, information on WLB for women in the real estate sector is limited. Better practices are required to develop and impact the female real estate demographic. The change for companies remains a key issue (Bowen, 2021). In many areas of life, understanding the effect of the various levels of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has proven to be successful. The shift may also be significant to the livelihood of individuals (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Note. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs pyramid.

According to Bowen (2021), Maslow identified the five human needs which are: physiological, security, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The pyramid concerns the lives of people and businesses. Maslow believed that a person must satisfy every need to progress to the next level of the pyramid. Hence, Maslow's pyramid may assist women Realtors in achieving the fundamental aspects of security and belonging within the real estate industry.

Physiological Requirements

Maslow's theory explains the needs humans have in order to achieve success. The first need, physiological, is important because it is the basic necessities that an individual needs, such as shelter, food and safety (Fallatah et al., 2018). Each of these needs are broken down into categories as discussed.

Physiological Needs. Abraham Maslow defines physiological needs which depict the basic needs that one ought to have for the existence of life. These needs include food, shelter, sleep, and water (Fallatah et al., 2018), from the perspective of women in real estate, this category includes time, flexibility and convenience, conducive working environments, and rational working hours. When one is satisfied with these needs, they are then able to focus on higher needs.

Safety and Security Needs. These are the needs that define the individual's demand for safety from any harm. The majority of women are stuck in this phase due to insecurities that unfold every day. There is great competition at work, so they have to work harder to maintain their relevance and secure their employment in contrast to their male counterparts. For women Realtors, they have to meet family responsibilities, which may be impossible to meet if they are overwhelmed. Finally, dealing with clients who may call at inopportune times can create an unfriendly environment that affects both familial and social stability (Fallatah et al., 2018).

Love and Belonging. Belonging in the workplace is essential, especially for female Realtors. When an individual feels that they are part of the team, they are empowered. This need starts at a basic unit of life, and it progresses to more advanced interactions, according to Fallatah et al. (2018). As such, women in real estate need to work together on the main objectives within the industry. This can be achieved through teamwork, and having leaders who are passionate

about their juniors, have a collective decision-making process, and genuine concern for their colleague's general welfare.

Self-Esteem Need. Maslow defined the need to develop internal factors such as confidence, achievement, independence, respect for self and others, and the need to be unique among other individuals. This need is always possible when individuals have achieved the first three levels in the Hierarchy of Needs (Fallatah et al., 2018). In addition, Fallatah et al. (2018) described that female real estate brokers still face challenges in this sector because it is believed that real estate is a male-dominated business. As a result, some buyers and sellers may not develop trust and confidence to trade with them. This works against actualizing self-esteem. Therefore, such women need to be empowered through motivation, promotions, and assigning them to higher leadership roles.

Self-Actualization. This is the highest level of Maslow's set up in the Hierarchy of Needs. Few people often reach this level because they stumble on the other needs before attaining this level. People at this level have obtained acceptance, experience, creativeness, morality, self-value, purpose, potential and freedom, to achieve self-actualization. This is when an individual has achieved WLB. They can run their profession diligently without worrying about others' personal lives because they are already in line with their lifestyle and activities. Female Realtors in the real estate sector who have reached this level can be considered successful when they have reached this level of self-actualization (Fallatah et al., 2018).

Challenges Faced by Women Realtors

Many women face barriers being involved in some of the most successful and thriving businesses, especially for the firms that are male dominated. There is still considerable underrepresentation of females in various male dominated industries. The causes behind these

challenges are connected to the lack of role models, stereotypes associated with the nature of women's work, cultures in the workplace that do not promote women, and structural problems that are present in those organizations.

The pressures of work and the organizational environment are the main effects of the absence of WLB female Realtors face in the real estate industry. For instance, Realtors have to work long hours and are inconvenienced since they do not have the limited hours of a workday as most professionals, working 9-5 jobs (Ishaya et al., 2011). Women face different challenges in the real estate business, but the primary notion is that the glass ceiling is present in the offices. The glass ceiling is a metaphor used to describe the way women are obstructed from progressing in their work environments. It is invisible, yet, it is a barrier that women must "crash" through.

Family Responsibilities

A woman has to follow the doctrine, culture, and spiritual beliefs. In most cases, these dictate that the husband's word is final. In the current society, a woman has to be more assertive and show a sense of independence in order to have an equal ground in the household. When such matters build-up, stress becomes elevated for female Realtors. The lack of WLB can cause stressors for women working in the real estate industry (Noor, 2001).

Career Development

Career development and progress is a challenge that female Realtors experience. Contrary to the norm where women work more, spend extra hours in the office, and have more sales, C-level and the top roles often look down upon women in the real estate sector. Progress for female Realtors in the real estate industry may be restricted. When brokerage ownership is being handed over, men are more likely than women to receive this responsibility, thus, women work harder to show their capabilities in handling brokerages.

Mentorship

Mentorship in any career or stage in life is paramount for one to produce progress. Finding a mentor for the female Realtor becomes a challenge because they already face discrimination in the industry. Handling extra training sessions and coaching extra hours from the regular working hours is hindered by conflicting planning. A mentor gives significant guidance and headway in career development. Research shows that most renowned musicians pay homage to a mentor early in their careers.

Gender Discrimination

In male-dominated industries, females are at a disadvantage in ways that are either subtle or more offensive. Several brokerage firms are still hyper-masculine, and it is more challenging each day for females to make headways in such firms. Work ethics and the workplace environment that are regressive continue to take place in many real estate brokerages, often going against the goals of the female Realtor. As a woman strives to achieve a WLB, the people are them criticize them.

Women will have to let go of one thing to acquire the other. Often, for female Realtors, it is a choice between managing their careers or their family life. Women show extreme success in cases where they take part in small enterprises, and for that reason, there is an increased percentage of women leaving brokerage firms to start their own. Females play an essential role in cultivating specific values in companies that let me take positions of leadership. A culture shift is needed in established real estate firms to enable change and offer more opportunities for female Realtors.

Measured Success

A Realtor, as a licensed individual, represents buyers or sellers of real estate properties during transactions. They belong to the NAR and are required to abide by the association's ethical guidelines. This profession has plenty of women because of its attractive flexible schedule, reasonable pay, and ease of entry. However, just like any other profession, it has its own challenges. A major challenge is that women often have a lower rate of success due to the existent pay gap between males and females in real estate. A report that was conducted to test the issue showed that in 2017 the gap was about 29%, favoring the men (Cassells, 2017). This is a discouraging factor because in many situations, men and women are both doing the same work and bringing in roughly the same number of clients. The study showed that even in female-dominated offices of real estate, the men were more valued and highly paid. Despite having more experience, female Realtors are not considered to have the capability to hold leadership roles.

This issue of gender discrimination is persistent in the business and causes female Realtors to be undermined, and their progress hindered. Thus, attaining WLB for a female Realtor can become extremely challenging (Jones, 2018) especially when they are trying to increase their revenue growth. When female Realtors take maternity leave, have extended weekends off, or even choose to spend time with their family they are considered to be less assertive than their male counterparts. This results in the undermining of the female Realtor, which makes them work harder to achieve the same respect and dignity that male Realtors receive (Jones, 2018). Although there are many women in the real estate industry, they continue to get discouraged and drop out as a result. These days, many brokerages have started changing their ways and have been working on eliminating discrimination issues so it is easier for female Realtors to thrive in the industry.

Female Realtors must consider their personal safety. For instance, meetings that occur past business hours can be very risky for women, even when they are in the office. Female Realtors have to consider their safety when conducting open houses in risky areas, or in late hours. They are also subject to stalking, and unwelcome advances from people (Leonard, 1998), especially considering that the job requires them to arrange meetings with complete strangers. This can affect the female Realtor's sense of security as discussed in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, and they need to take proper action to overcome this challenge. Female Realtors are advised to take self-defense classes, and keep their personal information private, revealing only the necessary business details. This helps to avoid incidences like house break-ins and similar happenings. Female Realtors should share their schedule and location with a trusted individual in case something happens and they find themselves in danger. It is unfair that women have to experience this in the business, but they have no choice other than to take appropriate measures to stay safe.

In the real estate business, success is defined differently by each Realtor. Returns cannot be improved without measures of success. The standard definition of success in the business is when the goals set by the individual are constantly reviewed and achieved within the specified period. To measure success, various metrics can be utilized to calculate the rate of success of a realtor (Sperrazza, 2006). For example, one of them includes the ratio of listings to meetings. A listing is a document that gives a Realtor the right to sell a particular property and receive a commission from the sale (Geckoboard, 2021). In terms of success, average commission per sale is a metric that measures how much the Realtor receives per each property sold. Women may have an advantage over men in this area because they are considered to be more empathetic and understanding (Insight Software, 2021).

Consequences of Work-Life Imbalance

WLB can be defined as prioritizing both the individual's professional and personal life and how these activities influence the balance people seek to achieve. There is no definite explanation for WLB. However, WLB may also be explained as the ability to balance both work productivity and quality of life. A study conducted by Jones (2018) indicated that specific changes in an individual's work and personal life can affect their productivity, which results in the need to understand how to balance both work efficiency and the ability to enjoy their personal lives. Therefore, when one cannot achieve this balance, they may start to struggle in their careers and their personal lives. Due to the stress they find themselves in, their productivity tends to decrease, and that is when balance is lost. This can place an individual's career at risk and personal life can become compromised.

Another argument about WLB is that success varies from achievement and organization to various events to achieve a WLB. Therefore, an individual's well-being is the only value that remains important when people are engaged in the execution of their plans. WLB is divided into two-pieces: the psychological and applied piece. The applied piece connects with regular issues such as challenges, work deadlines and planning. In contrast, the psychological piece is approached by the understanding that female Realtors have a sense of striving balance that is achieved by how they attribute participation in various roles of work and personal life and drawing a boundary between the two. Usually, the psychological piece varies from an emotionally stable state to an emotionally unstable state with significant stress and feelings of overwhelm (Jones, 2018).

In examining a study conducted by McDougall (2016), WLB can be expressed as a conflict between work and life. Misunderstandings may originate from various roles women in

the real estate undertake. Furthermore, McDougall's study suggested that WLB is an experience where there is a mismatch between the family and work. That is, involvement in the work and not the family roles become challenging under the family's involvement and not in the workplace. In this case, the conflict emerges when there is an increase in demand. Work and familial life roles become imbalanced. This makes their role more difficult due to an imbalance between time and involvement with family, the self and work. Finally, the study posited that WLB conflict brings interference to the context of the family set up through work and familial roles.

A study conducted by Bjuggren et al. (2018) suggested that those who worked more were likely to have difficulty achieving WLB. This is because the participation in these activities was associated with extreme tiresome and pressure to get clients who buy or sell, which affects most women Realtors, who are also grossly engaged in family activities. Bjuggren et al. described a superwoman syndrome where women in leadership undergo external pressure and self-imposed expectations. The understanding that women like to take over the responsibilities in a family setting has contributed more to external pressure. Since women often dominate family activities, this has increased the pressure to cope in this field because real estate can be very demanding. Additionally, Bjuggren et al. also indicated the only way to achieve success for all people involved in real estate was to remain connected to their mobile phone every moment throughout the day. As such, the chance to have enjoy their personal life outside working environments can be difficult.

A study conducted by Rogers and Koh (2017) on women in real estate proposed that most women desired completeness in their lives characterized by successful incorporation of work and life and acquiring a balance between the two, while handling other personal activities.

As compared to men, most of the female Realtors were able to attain this equilibrium easily. The study concluded that four criteria helped determine the rate at which one achieved comprehensiveness. These criteria included:

- defining clear priorities,
- setting boundaries with both work and life,
- a reflection on spiritual nourishment that may involve participation in exercises, participation in religion and other breathtaking activities one may be passionate about, and
- identifying multiple roles that they can learn and multitask.

This study concluded that these four elements may be a difficult task female Realtors to achieve due to high job demands. However, gender analysis describes that most men do not get any close to the realization of this completeness because they get consumed with the desire to earn more. This can be compared to women who have to balance personal responsibilities such as family and work

When Realtors understand how having a low work balance influences the better parts of their lives, they may avoid the harmful consequences. One of the most harmful consequences of work-life imbalance is the weakening of an individual's health conditions. Multiple work demands on a person's schedule may increase his or her stress level. According to Jones (2018), the intensified pressure has a greater chance of weakening an individual's immune system and aggravating medical conditions symptoms. Upon dealing with a work-life imbalance situation, it is essential to uphold mental and physical health. Individuals ought to boost their immune systems by eating healthy, having enough sleep after a long day of work, and regularly exercising. In line with that, most physicians recommend communicating with a support system,

for instance, families and friends, if the pressure is overwhelming (Direnzo et al., 2015). These physicians play a significant role in assisting overworked real estate agents to manage their stress and find a WLB. Realtors may be comfortable working 40-hours per week. This may happen while handling further obligations in supplementary environments rather than work-associated duties. As a result, workaholic Realtors are disappointed and unfortunate, mainly because they cannot achieve objectives due to work-life imbalance in all their sectors.

Work-life imbalance can generate strain in an individual's relationship. If Realtors are always working or heavily stressed, they may not be capable of offering their next of kin, friends, or children the moment they need. Besides deteriorating physical and mental health conditions, the work-life imbalance can cause fatigue and exhaustion. An individual might be able to participate or focus on family activities during his or her time. The impact of WLB on real estate relationships is also crucial to consider. Realtors who are engaged and well-rested are more likely to deal effectively with high-pressure conditions in their work environments. Agents in real estate are already stressed from a work-life imbalance. However, to handle the pressure of work-life imbalance, Hilbrecht and Lero (2014) articulate that the Realtors should volunteer with non-profit organizations. Hilbrecht and Lero continued by echoing that volunteering can ease the feeling of burnout and enhance emotional well-being. Individuals should be sure to manage their time prudently, though, to not add to their hectic day hence choosing carefully the organizations they want to work with and balance their time. WLB can be a conflict and a methodology of inner-role struggle. The pressures from family and work environments are similarly incompatible; hence engrossment in work is becoming more problematic under participation in the family. Both of these situations are made more challenging by the work-life imbalance, hence may cause severe effects to the health of Realtors.

The adverse consequences of work-life imbalance on a real estate agent or broker can result in low production, deprived performance appraisals, and expensive mistakes. Consequently, to create a happy WLB between personal time and work, Realtors need to monitor the work-life imbalance triggers. According to Drenzo et al. (2015), American mental health endorses asking for flexibility where possible to get closer to the balance that applies for individuals. However, the flexibility may include working more hours or working from home a few times a week so that Realtors may meet their commitments besides their personal responsibilities. Overworked female Realtors should also consider exploring solutions to share the workload and discuss the potentials with their team, with the intention to transform to higher leadership roles. Thus, to achieve WLB, female Realtors must understand the ways they can find balance in their lives both personally and professionally if they want to be successful in the real estate industry.

Leadership Theories

Real estate is a fast-paced, competitive occupation that requires constant dedication to job activities and attention to detail. Although the field is associated with many rewards, some drawbacks significantly affect women Realtors. The challenges women face in real estate have intensified according to research conducted by Coldwell Banker organization (NAR, n.d.). At least 63% of women Realtors face a glass ceiling. When the NAR was established in 1908, no female members were on board. The formation of the Women's Council of Realtors in 1938 made female real estate professionals create their board. Although women have the largest workforce in the real estate industry, they experience various challenges due to burnout and poor WLB exposure; for instance, they face gender discrimination and other forms of gender based bias. Thus, Goleman's (2017) situational leadership theory, Heifetz's theory of adaptive

leadership, (Heifetz et al., 2009), and servant theory leadership could help women Realtors achieve a better WLB and eliminate burnout.

Goleman's (2017) theory of situational leadership integrates the notion of emotional intelligence. He developed the theory by describing various leadership styles. Additionally, Goleman stated that emotional intelligence was concerned with effective leaders' competencies. Hence, Goleman's six leadership styles included pacesetting, authoritative, affiliative, coaching, democratic and coercive. Based on the pacesetting leadership style, leaders set aggressive goals and standards and expect excellence from the employees. The style can be applied to highly motivated employees and competent employees. Pacesetting leaders tend to set standards for performance, which can contribute to burnout in employees for working for long hours to achieve the predefined goals.

As defined by Goleman (2017), pacesetting leaders are obsessive about doing things faster and better, where in most cases, they pinpoint less-performing employees and demands more output from them. Based on the issue of women Realtors, it can create a negative work environment as Realtors may become overwhelmed by the demands of leaders for excellence. In addition, as depicted by Goleman, the employees may feel that the pacesetting leader is not trusting their work. The pacesetting style correlates with a coercive style that demands immediate compliance. Thus, Goleman illustrated that coercive leadership undermines leaders' prime tool of motivating employees, leaving the majority to be alienated from their jobs. Even though this style works appropriately during times of emergency, it has devastating effects during healthy business situations as it can create long-term impacts on the workers.

Although women in real estate may work harder, put more hours into their duties, and sell more, they are often overlooked in opportunities to hold executive roles and career

development. Women and men have similar facilitators for career advancement, and women need to achieve equal promotion to contribute to WLB. The pacesetting and coercive leadership styles are highly associated with the male-dominated culture in the real estate industry. Therefore, effective leadership is vital for eliminating burnout among women Realtors and enhancing a balanced work-life without gender discrimination.

The welfare of women in real estate can be fostered through an affiliative leadership style. Goleman (2017) suggested that when a coercive leader demands, “Do what I say”, the affiliative leader says, “People come first.” Generally, this leadership style incorporates employee morale-boosting and positive reinforcement, where the leader encourages employees to foster connectedness and bonding. This illustrates that affiliative leadership better eliminates burnout and creates a sense of belonging. In addition, it contributes to WLB, since leaders can regularly review women Realtors’ workloads and offer flexible working conditions. Goleman depicted that this leadership style is concerned with employees and drives flexibility in working environments, building trust and risk-taking, including allowing habitual innovation. In addition, affiliative leadership eliminates negative feedback and leaders are able to motivate workers. Therefore, Goleman showed that affiliative leaders have the ability to help their constituents in creating a sense of belonging. Generally, this leadership style serves a better place in helping women Realtors overcome burnout and have a better WLB. It creates team harmony, boosts employee morale, and aids in repairing broken trust.

Another Goleman (2017) leadership style vital for helping women Realtors is the coaching style, where the leader is highly concerned with assisting individual employees in developing their talents and skills. Coaching leaders help employees identify their weaknesses and strengths for better career aspirations, including helping them to create long-term goals. In

addition, Goleman (1998) depicted that, coaching leaders make agreements with their employees on their roles and responsibilities and develop work plans to help employees. As a result, this enhances reduced burnout as job agreements are made on individual potential. Helping employees identify their weaknesses allows them to emphasize their mistakes, thus making them do their tasks effectively. The real estate industry requires individuals to have diverse skills such as ability to negotiate while keeping integrity intact, problem-solving skills, and a great work ethic. Coaching leaders help employees develop skills, making them carry out their tasks without stressing themselves, similar to the case of women Realtors.

In his theory, Goleman (2017) also includes a democratic leadership style, which is concerned with incorporating employees into the decision-making process to present their views and give them a voice in the final decision. In a male-dominated workplace, women are rarely given a chance to participate in the decision-making process. Democratic leaders eliminate this aspect and create equal opportunities for all genders to participate in the decision making process.

Finally, authoritative leaders do not play a significant role in eliminating burnout and creating a WLB. In fact, authoritative leaders command their employees to complete tasks, does not involve them in the decision making process, and may be demanding leaders, which can lead to employees feeling burnout. In addition, authoritarian leaders are highly committed to the organization's goals. According to Goleman (2017), they help frame individuals' tasks in conformance to the grand vision of the organization but authoritative leaders do not assist with WLB due to their micromanaging characteristics.

Heifetz's theory of adaptive leadership also plays a significant role in the case of women Realtors to enhance better life-work balance and overcome burnout (Heifetz et al., 2009).

Adaptive leadership entails a practical approach to solving business issues and providing guidance to leaders to identify and focus on the vital aspect of business operation. Heifetz et al. (2009) suggested that adaptive leadership is concerned with change that necessitates the capacity to thrive. New environments in organizations require new strategies and abilities to thrive under challenging circumstances instead of perishing or regressing. This conforms to the theory by suggesting that it makes organizations succeed in the face of challenges as leaders focus on making major decisions. Their leadership style is characterized by open feedback; leaders are equipped with adaptive skills are always ready for inevitable changes. Due to its focus on helping organizations thrive in challenging circumstances, the theory requires leaders to consider the welfare of the workers to maximize output. The case applies to women Realtors, where the approach helps them from burnout and achieve WLB.

Adaptive leadership can be activated by leaders practicing several behaviors, which Ronald Heifetz defines in his research (Heifetz et al., 2009). Firstly, Heifetz et al. (2009) suggest that the first step when dealing with the adaptive challenge is to get on the balcony to examine how the organizational system responds to it. Adaptive leadership necessitates leaders in appreciating the sophistication and obstinacy of the status quo. In most cases, cultures, structures, and organizations define the organizational system and may become deeply ingrained so that they are difficult to reshape. In addition, conforming to Heifetz et al.'s research, organizations are made up of subsystems that may include cultural norms and some protocols. Some subsystems may create adaptive pressures that may result from workload balance or poor WLB, making the workers experience burnout. The theory helps leaders appreciate the elegance and tenacity to address adaptive challenges in the real estate industry.

In addition, the theory based on the aspect of diagnosis helps in discovering structural business implications. Heifetz et al. (2009) suggested that an organization's formal structure creates an environment for all overarching system activities. The formal structures may reward certain behaviors, thus contributing to increased employee morale. The reward may include promoting women Realtors in the real estate industry to higher positions based on their performance measures. Various researches have revealed that women in real estate face an upward mobility challenge due to the gender leadership gap. Men are 75% more likely to hold a leadership position than women in real estate business. Adaptive leadership helps in examining this issue. The theory is vital for regulating distress, thus making a leader create conducive emotional space to address the issue of adaptive challenges such as reduced WLB and burnout. In addition, theory helps project leadership voices below to ensure all employee voices are heard.

Finally, servant leadership theory also plays an essential role in real estate to help fight for the rights of women Realtors (Greenleaf, 1991). The theory was first proposed by Robert Greenleaf (1991) and generally is a theoretical framework that entails leaders to motivate others and portray the role of serving others. Greenleaf said that great leaders are first seen as servants. Several views define the servant leadership theory. Firstly, service to others, where a legitimate leader arises to help others, but not for self-interested actions. The theory also defines a holistic approach to work, promotes a sense of community, and shares power in decision-making. Through creating empowering environments, fostering talents of others, and nurturing participatory, servant leaders create motivated and effective leadership, including creating a successful organization. Through sharing power in decision-making, employees such as women Realtors are in position of presenting their views about the challenges they are facing, thus contributing to reduced chances of burnout and effective WLB. It suggests its extensive

application as a theoretical approach to organizational management and the workplace. The theory is characterized by various attributes such as commitment to the growth of others, empathy, awareness and persuasion. Generally, due to sharing of power, the theory is vital for helping women Realtors overcome burnout and achieve a better WLB.

Chapter Summary

In conclusion, women Realtors have experienced challenges in real estate, especially in attaining leadership roles. While the industry has been male-dominated for many years, women have obtained their real estate licenses and are leading the residential real estate market despite the fact that leadership positions are still mostly male-dominated. However, women Realtors have had a difficult time reaching WLB because of the constraints of time and balance between work, personal life and family life. As a result, this has contributed to burnout and reduced WLB. For women Realtors to find WLB, it is essential for them to understand their motivations, values and purpose. Additionally, Goleman's (2017) six leadership styles shows which style is more effective to help women achieve WLB. Heifetz et al. (2009) discussed adaptive leadership, which helps examine organizations' adaptive challenges. For organizations to help women with achieving WLB, it is essential for them to promote flexibility and have leaders that exhibit leadership styles that are adaptable. Finally, servant leadership theory (Greenleaf, 1991) also plays a vital role in helping women Realtors attain WLB. Servant leadership defines what is expected of a leader, such as serving others, creating a sense of community and fostering the sharing of power in decision making. Therefore, these theories help women Realtors overcome burnout and have a better WLB.

Chapter 3: Research Design and Methodology

The purpose of this study was to explain the strategies and skills that successful Realtors utilized to examine the challenges of WLB and burnout, understand how their strategies and skills contributed to the study of successful Realtors who are actively involved in real estate market, and interpret how participants' strategies and skills were reached by utilizing a phenomenological approach with qualitative research. (Creswell, 2019). This chapter described the methodology of qualitative research and design with a phenomenological approach. The logic for choosing this study, the population, and the sample response alongside the sampling method was discussed. The methodology covered research design, target population, sampling design, sample response rate, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques. The human subjects that were interviewed were guaranteed confidentiality. The validity, reliability, ideas, perspectives, and personal biases of the researcher was addressed. Data collection process and interview protocol as well as the process of analyzing the data was presented.

Re-statement of Research Questions

The following research questions were used to collect data for this phenomenological study. This research questions and the corresponding interview questions were the basis for achieving the objectives of the study.

- RQ1: What challenges and obstacles do female Realtors face in their professional lives?
- RQ2: What strategies and best practices do female Realtors employ to overcome the challenges they face in their professional lives?
- RQ3: How do female Realtors define and measure and track their success in their professional lives?

- RQ4: What recommendations do current female Realtors make to aspiring female Realtors to become more successful in their professional lives?

Nature of the Study

In this study the principal researcher applied a qualitative phenomenological methodology. Qualitative methodology is used to obtain information from lived experiences through various ways, such as grounded theory, narrative, and ethnography as a means of exploring information from participants through tools, such as field observations and interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As such, this study researched the phenomenon of women Realtors and the best practices and strategies of having a better WLB. Phenomenology is a science which examines a particular phenomenon or idea. It is an inductive and descriptive method of inquiry. There are various benefits obtained from performing qualitative research design through following a phenomenological approach to gain deeper insight on the real estate industry. For instance, the real estate industry concerns are multifaceted since the industry concerns are operational, financial, legal, regulatory, human resource specific, economical, and developmental. Real estate is usually a large investment for clients because clients put real value on the real estate's structural integrity and therefore need to be fully aware of their own investment. Subsequently, the economy becomes increasingly more globally competitive, hence, research that makes sense of qualitative data is crucial.

The phenomenological method is considered relevant to provide depth into thematic areas relevant to the business environment because it focuses on what really matters at a fundamental level. Also, the real estate industry is generally studied within various disciplines which requires numerous approaches working towards one goal. Qualitative research is a

powerful tool which offers deep insights into an issue that is hard to investigate without it due to its complexity and many layers (Maxwell, 2013).

There are five different qualitative studies a researcher may choose to do based on the type of conceptual framework of the research being examined. The five studies are (a) narrative, (b) phenomenology, (c) grounded theory, (d) ethnography, and (e) case studies (Creswell, 2007).

This study's conceptual framework follows the qualitative phenomenological research study which the similarities of women Realtors experiencing burnout and having better WLB.

Therefore, qualitative phenomenological research has the following outcomes:

- the natural setting invites a researcher to discover the expressed phenomenon through the stories,
- the researcher is the sole data collection instrument,
- all the information is collected by and through the interviews,
- data is being observed through themes after being coded and analyzed,
- the story of each participant is being examined and,
- the data is generally interpreted for the entire study (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The study sought to conduct qualitative research involving the use of the qualitative phenomenological approach because of the method to determine the hardships and struggles experienced by female Realtors, while maintaining the integrity and transparency of the study. Through semi-structured interviews the researcher would be able to investigate the research questions that offered insight on the issues that female Realtors experienced. The following discussed the assumptions of qualitative research and strengths and weaknesses associated with this type of study.

Assumptions of Qualitative Research

In qualitative study design, the research questions are the focus of the research process (Creswell, 2007). Therefore, the theoretical framework is observed by the collection of the data and after being analyzed to get to the report. The main goal of qualitative research is to discovered experiences rather than predictions, so there is a value-based understanding of the “why” behind the stories that are being researched. The assumption of this study happens between the researcher and the participants through the virtual meetings that are mutually scheduled and are based on understanding and empathy. The findings are based on individuals informed experiences.

Strengths and Weaknesses of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is useful in complex matters because of the shared stories by the interviewees (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The stories in phenomenological qualitative research is one of the strengths that provides more information for the data collection process. Qualitative research provides more ways for data collection purposes such as, interviews, surveys, or focus groups, written documentation, or case studies (Maxwell, 2013). The emphasis is on the understanding of the why people ponder and act the way they do. For the study’s findings, phenomenological qualitative research study provided the best understanding of the unsurpassed practices and strategies employed by the participants. Although there are some weaknesses to phenomenological study, such as the direction of the study, and the fact that the participants are chosen through purposive sampling over other sampling strategies. In addition, there are not enough participants in a study as a small pool of the population is used, which contributes to the weakness of this study’s approach since this may lead to loss of the voices that are not given the chance to be heard. Thus, the purpose of this study was to identify the strategies women Realtors

used to conquer the burnout while maintaining the WLB and building a successful strategy to overcome the challenges. Therefore, the phenomenological study was used to understand the experiences of participants and the interviews so that the researcher would use the information to analyze the data to find the themes to conclude the findings of this study.

Methodology

According to Creswell and Poth (2018) the purpose of describing a methodology is to answer a principal researcher question on the subject matter. This research study is a qualitative phenomenological study that was conducted on women Realtors in residential real estate who experienced the burnout in WLB and overcoming the challenges occurring within the individual due to this phenomenon. The data is collected through semi structured interviews (Grossoehme, 2014) to develop an empirical review and study on the research questions being asked. The methodology of this research focuses on the questions being asked of the participants while developing the literature on the past findings by other researchers (Moustakas, 1994). The research design guides the study for the researcher to follow. Methodology is described by Creswell (2007), as the means and ways of doing something. Interviews are recorded by the consent of the participants and the data was used and analyzed to find the themes to pursue the final findings.

Phenomenological Approach

The qualitative phenomenological study explores the experiences of successful Realtors based on their strategies and skills on the job. Little information is known about the strategies and techniques Realtors utilize to succeed. More specifically, the WLB in the context of the real estate industry presents significant challenges. The phenomenological research methodology is utilized to explore how successful Realtors struggle with WLB; especially considering leadership

challenges and job satisfaction to be prosperous in the industry. All the participants have been working as Realtors for more than 5 years. This chapter explores the phenomenological methodology utilized to research Realtors' experience based on their strategies to maintain profitability. Understanding the lived experiences requires a phenomenological approach to answer the study's central objective (Creswell, 2019). In this case, the phenomenological research concept understands the participants' viewpoints and perspectives in female Realtors about the strategies they employed to succeed. The phenomenological research methodology and the key applications of the study enable the researcher to understand successful female Realtors' experiences in the real estate industry.

Structured Process of Phenomenological Studies

The qualitative phenomenological approach augments the appropriate and the best design to answer the research questions that inform Realtors' experience on sustaining profitability to contribute to serving clients and prosperity of their families. The researcher's role in the study involved conducting semi-structured interviews integrated with a sample strategy that encourages trustworthiness, reliability, and validity. The initial questions across all interviews were consistent with the rationale and the purpose of the study (Flick, 2018). The follow-up questions ensured clarity for the participants to provide an acceptable depth of description. The data analysis involved the transcribing the semi-structured interviews to analyze the themes that informed the strategies used to maintain profitability. The segment ends with the trustworthiness for the study considering the reliability, inter-rater reliability, validity, and confidentiality.

The phenomenological approach focuses on the common themes learned through the qualitative research about a specific group's life experiences. This approach's primary objective is centered on the description to identify commonalities that inform the shared phenomenon

(Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interviews conducted in the study provide the primary knowledge on the research. In this research study, the approach uses semi-structured interviews to gain first-hand information about the Realtors' experiences based on the strategies and techniques for success. The experiences that inform this shared phenomenon aid the collection of data. Creswell and Poth (2018) articulated that the context of the situations that determine the experience provides a significant insight into understanding the phenomenon's barriers. Other forms of data are identified in the study's data analysis to highlight the themes and phrases common to the research participants' group. The phenomenological approach process helps the researcher construct a universal meaning of the experiences to understand the phenomenon. In other words, the phenomenological approach in a research study helps to describe the significance of an event or phenomenon via the subjects who experienced the events.

The subjects' perspectives inform the objectives of the phenomenological approach was based on the parameters of what the participants encountered and the aspect of how the situation was experienced. The aspect of human experiences in the study's position generates a unique inquiry that supports the central theme of the study's objectives. The method of engaging in research that involves the real estate industry requires an element of human experience. This then helps develop an understanding for the root cause of success and profitability margins.

Appropriateness of the Phenomenological Approach

The phenomenological approach augments a suitable research methodology because it informs the meaning and the rationale of the study. According to Creswell (2007), phenomenology's philosophical background has several assumptions that include social constructions, inherent research bias, the interpretation of experiences, and the idea that the meanings do not have commonality for all people. Conducting a phenomenological study for the

Realtors provided insightful background to understand the challenges about WLB and leadership situations. The phenomenological approach applies to the studies that seek to evaluate the significance of the experiences and how they affect participants. Additionally, Creswell postulated that the phenomenological approach does not provide appropriate results for the studies with a generalized aspect of the outcomes. Most importantly, presenting the experience accurately for the events and the situations generate the efficacy and the validity of the phenomenological approach.

For this study, the phenomenological approach exemplifies the appropriate research design to understand female workers' experience in the real estate industry. Most of the existing literature cites the patriarchal influence on the differences between the genders in sustaining WLB. The cultural attitudes on gendered roles and the elements of work and family satisfaction affect WLB. The phenomenological approach seeks to describe the Realtor's perspectives on maintaining profitability as well as the effective ways to solve the challenges of WLB and maintaining leadership roles. The conceptual framework relates the demands and responsibilities of the real estate brokers to maintain profitability. Similarly, the challenges of the women's WLB affect their leadership opportunities.

Research Design

Qualitative research involves collecting, organizing, and analyzing the information encoded in the textual material from participant conversations and talks. The qualitative design applies in the exploration of social phenomena that the individual participants experience in the natural context (Flick, 2018). For this study, the qualitative research design explored the real estate agents' and brokers' experiences with the challenges of WLB and the leadership that informs decisions to sustain profitability in the industry. This is the most accessible means to

explore the experiences as they attempt to discover the successful techniques and strategies that work in the real estate industry. The interviews within this research study focused on the stories that the participants presented about their experience of WLB.

According to Creswell (2007), the qualitative research approach involved presenting data that encapsulate a holistic perspective and person-centered method. The research methodology helped the researcher to understand the participants' opinions about their life experience regarding the strategies and techniques for success in the real estate industry. The researcher had the opportunity to develop a consistent and rich account of the participants in the reality of their work as Realtors (Flick, 2018). Therefore, the researcher had exceptional listening skills to understand the respondents' perspectives without imposing the existing expectations on them. At the same time, the researcher should not be judgmental, and approach the participants with integrity to collect data that informed the study's objectives.

The framework provides a systematic structure that compliments the choice to utilize the phenomenological research design. The structure presents a transparent and visual description of the events in real estate brokerage to maintain the data's development and analysis. The framework analysis increases the research methodology's transferability aspect to enable other people to follow the steps. Determining the evidence base of a study requires the evaluation to follow the design, processes, and the decision that generates the research findings. The procedural guide to data analysis based on the themes available provides an insightful method to organize the shared experiences. By understanding their experiences, the study established a basis for understanding the underlying strategies and techniques that determined success for female Realtors in the real estate industry. The use of the phenomenological framework increases the ease for other researchers to follow the study. According to Creswell (2007), an effective

framework allows the researchers to conduct the coding relevant to the thematic analysis of the experiences that identify the participants' patterns. Most importantly, the framework enables the researchers to navigate the data backward and forward, which helps in understanding the perceptions of the participants. Creswell and Poth (2018) postulated that the framework provides a useful feat for several researchers and the studies that require massive data sets.

The definition of the conceptual framework for the study depends on understanding the study's purpose. The conceptual framework augments the main views for the theoretical basis from the review of the literature. For this research study, the conceptual framework links the different elements of the research to each other and its purpose. The problem statement provides a significant insight into the challenges of WLB and the strategies and techniques that ensure success with Realtors. This research focuses on the challenges women in the real estate industry face regarding WLB, that then in turn affects their opportunities for leadership positions.

Similarly, the strategies and techniques that determine the real estate industry's level of success create a foundation for the overarching conceptual framework. The experiences based on the WLB and the challenges of the outcomes on real estate leadership roles are best described through the phenomenological approach. Because much of the existing literature is heavily based on the patriarchal influence of the differences between the genders in sustaining WLB, the phenomenological approach sought to describe the women's experiences in the real estate industry from a female perspective. The approach sought to determine the effective ways to solve the challenges of WLB and to explore the leadership implications that emanate from the event.

This research study considered the challenges that woman in the real estate industry experience in their quest to establish a healthy WLB. The study was conducted to determine the

relationship between the demands and responsibilities of a female real estate broker and their work satisfaction. On the same note, the relationship between cultural attitudes on gendered roles and the WLB provides a viable conceptual framework to understand the female Realtors' experiences. The literature review discussed the elements of WLB that result in challenges for the female Realtors and brokers. The conceptual framework provides a guideline to determine success strategies that work for the female real estate brokers beyond the precepts of cultural attitudes and work satisfaction.

Analysis Unit

The unit of analysis was on one woman Realtor who had at least 5 or more years of experience in residential real estate sales working with buyers and sellers. Additionally, the woman Realtor had an active California license and is a member of the NAR.

Population

According to Creswell and Poth (2018), it is vital to identify the population for the research study. For the purpose of this study the population consists of one female Realtor with an active California license for the past 5 years and is a member of the NAR.

Sample Size

It is paramount to locate participants in a phenomenological study due to their experiences of the phenomenon being studied (Groanewald, 2004). For the specific use of this phenomenological study, women Realtors are defined as those who practice residential sales and identified themselves with NAR. The number of participants for this study should be enough to provide a reliable interpretation of the phenomenon under the study. (Sandelowski, 1995). A sample of 15 women were chosen from the women Realtors who are already working in the real estate for minimum of 5 years. For the purpose of data collection 15-25 participants would be

required for in depth interviews (Creswell, 2007). The objective for this study was to interview 15 female Realtors, although saturation could happen with six participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Data saturation is defined where the information from the interviews are being repeated and sound similar to each other during the coding and analyzing process.

Participant Selection

The efficacy of demonstrating the phenomenon of shared experiences depends on the aspects that accentuate the information's accuracy from the semi-structured interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The phenomenological research design requires small sample sizes to increase the accuracy of describing the research study experiences. The research design's primary objective is to collect data for the descriptions of the lived experiences to create a detailed understanding of the challenges of WLB for female Realtors. The phenomenon increases the likelihood of attaining the study's purpose via informed sample sizes.

Purposive Sampling

The sample's scope in the qualitative research design included female Realtors who utilized different strategies and techniques to maintain profitability. The study participants were real estate Realtors who had more than 5 years of experience in the industry. The purposeful sampling strategy determined the participants' selection based on their knowledge and experience in real estate. Sampling criteria included Realtors with 5 years of experience. The primary criterion for selecting a sampling strategy was whether it was congruent with the study's intent. Purposeful sampling was used as the overarching sampling technique (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Purposeful sampling is used to identify Realtors who have encountered maintaining profitability in real estate. The objective was to purposefully choose participants for the study who are most likely to answer the research question.

Sampling Frame

A sampling frame or master list is vital for the researcher to find the participants within the population being studied. Without the master list of participants within the real estate population, the research questions will not be answered properly (Creswell, 2007). For purposes of this study, a master list was generated from the LinkedIn (<https://www.linkedin.com>) platform as well as from the Association of Women Realtors. The researcher reached out to the director of Association of Women Realtors to ask for a list of female Realtors who were working for 5 years in residential real estate. Since the researcher was also a female Realtor and worked with a real estate company, she utilized her network to seek additional Realtors to add to the master list.

To begin with the process of utilizing a master list, LinkedIn was used to seek female Realtors. The following criteria defined the population.

Criteria for Inclusion. For purposes of this study, the criteria for inclusion were:

- women with an active California real estate agent license for at least 5 years with a membership within the NAR,
- women with 5 or more years of experience as a Realtor,
- women who are primarily engaged in the sale of residential real estate who work with both buyers and sellers, and
- are employed with a major real estate brokerage.

Criteria for Exclusion. The criteria for exclusion were for participants who did not meet the inclusion requirements were:

- those with annual sales of less than \$10 million,
- those who live outside of California, and
- must be available for an interview between April and June 2022.

Criteria for Maximum Variation. After implementing the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the criteria for maximum variation were used to ensure and increase diversity in answering the research questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The following criteria for maximum variation were:

- participants from different age groups,
- participants with different marital status, and
- participants with a geographic dispersion.

Sources of Data

Data for the research was obtained through semi-structured interviews. The researcher interviewed with each participant in one sitting to obtain information required to answer the research questions (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Semi-structured interviewing is used as an interview guide in which a pre-determined list of questions and possible follow-up questions are used. The latter enables the interviewer to explore subjects that seem important during the interview. Creswell and Poth (2018) articulated that semi-structured interviews involve follow-up question to probe the participant further. The research study utilized semi-structured interviews for data collection from 15 Realtors; each respondent was offered the option of withdrawing at any time during the study. Interviews was tape-recorded with the participants' permission. Following that, each dialogue was interpreted and transcribed. To maintain the interview's trustworthiness, transcriptions was sent to respondents for verification (member checking) that the translations accurately represent their accounts as stated during the interview (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Certain Realtors made small corrections to the translations, which added to the data's validity. To maintain the confidentiality of each subject, pseudonyms were used to identify them. Also, the data were transcribed and analyzed accordingly.

Protection of Human Subjects' Consideration

This research was conducted in a manner consistent with Title 45, Part 46 of the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). Data collection was completed at multiple real estate firms. Before starting this study, the researcher completed the Human Subject CITI certification (see Appendix A) as the research required contact with the participants. After, the researcher asked for written permission for conducting the study utilizing Realtors, as well as site permissions. All safeguards for participant privacy and confidentiality were detailed in the informed consent form that each participant signed and returned to the researcher. A detailed application was submitted to the Pepperdine University Graduate and Professional School IRB, including the IRB application Informed Consent Form and Interview Protocol designed for the study. Participation in the study was voluntary. The participants were assured confidentiality and anonymity both verbally and in writing. Privacy is a primary concern when conducting research therefore investigators safeguard their subjects' privacy and rights. Participants trust that the researcher would maintain their anonymity and value their confidence by not disclosing any details about their identities, what they shared, or experienced. Participants' rights included:

- the right to be fully educated about the study and the contribution of time and participation,
- the right to privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity,
- the right to access the researcher with questions for the investigator,
- the right to reject to participate without any negative consequences,
- the right to refuse to answer any questions and,
- the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Additionally, all electronic directories and files was encrypted and password-protected with a computer windows login. All print media and records containing personally identifying information was physically stored in a safe location. Furthermore, prior to the start of each interview, the researcher will ensure that each participant understands the informed consent process and address any concerns they had about privacy and confidentiality. Participants was encouraged to contact the investigator by phone or e-mail to clarify or make suggestions about the informed consent process.

Confidentiality Considerations

The Pepperdine University IRB protects the rights of the human subjects who were interviewed for this study. The plan for IRB approval was to submit necessary forms. Participation in the study was voluntary. The anonymity of participants and the real estate firms was retained. The confidentiality of the research obeyed the requirements of the IRB. The regulations require signed participant authorization informing the participants of the process of the interview and confidentiality of the process.

Participants had the option of continuing or withdrawing from the study at any time. To guarantee confidentiality and anonymity, the participants was given the assurance that their identity remained undisclosed. The participation in the study was optional and the research will prohibit writing of names in the questionnaires. The researcher is well aware that findings based on unethical observations will lead to harm participants as well as researcher (Boeije, 2010) Before conducting the investigation and approaching the respondents, the researcher intended to seek permission, in accordance with the IRB requirements that interviews must be voluntary and free. The researcher provided the informed consent form to the participants prior to conducting the study.

Participants' names will not be dispensed to answers, and responses will remain confidential unless permission was provided in consent forms. A risk of the study will include the burden on the participants' time. Participants will not obtain compensation for participation in the study. All recordings will also be held confidential and safely stored in a passcode-protected computer. Encrypted and password-protected USB flash drives was used (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). In addition to these recognized principles, the research methodology will employ Pepperdine University's research ethics policy. Furthermore, 45 C.F.R. 46.101, subpart A, Basic HHS Policy for Protection of Human Research subjects, section (b)(2), stated:

Unless otherwise required by department or agency heads, research activities in which the only involvement of human subjects was in one or more of the following categories are exempt from this policy. Research involving the use of educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, unless: (i) information obtained is recorded in such a manner that human subjects can be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects; and (ii) any disclosure of the human subjects' responses outside of the research could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation. (p. 3)

Data Collection Method

The researcher obtained the human subjects training certificate from CITI before collecting any data (see Appendix A). The data collection initiated when the researcher received IRB approval for the research to be conducted on April 6, 2022 (see Appendix B). The researcher then used the IRB approved recruitment script (see Appendix C) in order to contact potential participants via LinkedIn and through the Realtor association website. The recruitment script was sent out via LinkedIn messaging, known as InMail, and through emails gathered from the Realtor association website at the request of the director. Data was obtained from successful female Realtors within various real estate locations in Southern California, including Los Angeles, Riverside, Ventura, and Orange counties. The method of data collection was in the

form of semi-structured interviews with women classified as successful Realtors. The data collection was focused on individual strategies and techniques of leadership in regard to WLB.

Communications with the participants began with calls via phone or by e-mail. Once participants agreed to participate in the study, a copy of the informed consent form and the list of interview questions was sent to them. The researcher made appointments with the participants to conduct interviews via Zoom (<https://zoom.us>), a platform for video and audio conferencing, and let participants know they would be recorded via the video and audio conference software with their permission. Utilizing interviews for data collection accommodated the possibility of identifying additional follow up questions and for all concerns to be practiced in the research process based on the answers specified by the interviewees.

Interview Protocol

An interview protocol form was employed to confirm that the same methods were surveyed with each interview participant. The interview protocol form was used to take notes during each interview. A semi-structured interview and a pre-designed set of open-ended questions was applied. This method allowed the principal researcher to obtain valid data while receiving in-depth answers from interviewee participants (Saldaña, 2021).

Interview Techniques

The conducted interview was semi-structured (Gray, 2009), which is vital for utilizing the phenomenological approach. Using phenomenological inquiry can be purposeful when studying less visible aspects of social phenomena, in order to help the researcher discover something about the knowledge tacit in the context. The phenomenon measured will interact facts of past and present experiences, and future aspirations or expectations of the participants. Hypothesizing that Realtors face challenges in attaining WLB was an important goal that needed to be met in

order for any change to occur in the future and was the purpose for this research. Data was collected regarding the female Realtor's actions regarding goal-oriented movements to successfully transition into WLB in future. During the interview, the principal researcher listened attentively to the statements of each participant. The art of active listening is to stop judgment of the researcher with the goal of ascend the accuracy of hearing and interpreting the participants' verbal and attention to the participant's tone, gestures, and posture. Rephrasing the questions in a different format helped the participants answer the questions to ensure proper responses were collected. Also, active listening included paying close attention to nonverbal body language, a strategic use of silence to produce answers to the questions (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Reliability and Validity of the Study

The qualitative research methodology develops knowledge through a broad review of the data and provides meaning and ideas that result from these reports (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Qualitative research is a powerful tool which offers deep insights into an issue that is hard to investigate without it due to its complexity and many layers (Maxwell, 2013). However, to remain accurate to the data, standards for validating and evaluating the tools and instruments for reliability are defined. Creswell (2007) described the validity and reliability phase as ensuring authenticity, confirmability, credibility, trustworthiness and internal and external validation. The term *trustworthiness* refers to the systematic method by which researchers ensure that their analysis adheres to qualitative research standards. Regardless of the type of qualitative study, trustworthiness should be maintained throughout, with special emphasis on data collection, analysis, evaluation, and presentation of findings. It was critical that the study results are reliable and accurate. In other words, the entire research process, including data collection, interpretation, and presentation, must be credible. The validity of this instrument was established to ensure that

the questions on the protocol effectively addressed the constructs in the research questions. To assist this process, a four-step validation process was utilized.

While a research instrument that has been developed is better because it requires a rich explanation, the investigator seeks descriptive data and only applies qualitative research. As a result, a researcher-developed instrument was more suitable for this research project. The problem at the time was how to ensure the instrument's validity. In a phenomenological study in which the researcher asks open-ended questions, the topic of validity is linked to the researcher's abilities. The researcher's study of the phenomenon and their interviewing abilities, including: the capability to be impartial or non-judgmental and the ability to develop rich accounts of their experiences, are indicators of validity. To ensure that the researcher's interview skills were adequate as a research tool, the researcher practiced on two peer reviewers who would not be included in the actual study. Rather, the peer reviewers were to provide feedback on the interview questions and suggestions before the researcher moved forward with their data collection process.

Credibility is a central aspect of qualitative research as it guarantees that researchers' conclusions. The term credibility refers to the way a person describes and experiences an event, as well as the way the researcher chooses to depict these events. One technique for creating and reinforcing legitimacy is to require participants to examine transcripts of their narratives describing the phenomenon—this research helped in ensuring that participants' original statements were accurately represented. Saturation is a secondary method of enhancing prestige. Saturation occurs when no new patterns emerge from any of the study samples (Van Manen, 2016). This saturation is also a way for participants' perceptions to be cross-checked against

those of other participants. A recurring theme suggests that all participants share common features of the phenomenon's perception.

Qualitative research, as a scientific concept, should pursue ways to bolster its validity in order to earn scientific merit (Kvale, 1994). To bolster the legitimacy of qualitative analysis, it is necessary to provide proof of its trustworthiness. Stringent processes elevate the stature of qualitative analysis, especially in light of the generative nature of qualitative data.

One way to demonstrate reliability is to keep track of the research decisions taken along the way. Qualitative methodologies recognize that the researcher is a part of the subject being studied and can affect it and that this does not devalue but rather strengthens the research. Simply determining what questions to ask or not to ask and whom to ask them to (or not to) reflects those deliberate and known choices. From reading the study diary, another researcher should be able to deduce what was done and why. The validation process had three steps: (a) *prima facie* validity, (b) peer review validity, and (c) expert review validity. The validity of the instrument was recognized to ensure that the interview questions used, adequately addressed the constructs in the research questions.

The initial list of interview questions, including the order in which they were asked was listed as the following:

- Introduction. You are a very successful Realtor. Success generally comes at some cost or challenges.
- IQ1: Please share with me the most rewarding experience you have had in your career?
- IQ2: What made that experience so rewarding?

- IQ 3. What have been some of the more significant professional challenges you have encountered in your journey to become a successful female Realtor?
- IQ 4. What strategies did you use to overcome these professional challenges?
- IQ 5. What have been some of the more significant personal challenges, you faced on your journey to success?
 - Follow-up (FU): How about creating WLB?
 - Follow-up: How about burnout??
- IQ 6. What strategies did you use to overcome these challenges?
 - Follow-up: How about WLB?
 - Follow-up: How do you avoid professional burnout?
- IQ 7. What would you say is the most important personal characteristic that you have that has been most instrumental in your achieving personal and professional success?
- IQ 8. What does success mean to you professionally?
- IQ 9. What does success mean to you in your personal life?
- IQ 10. How do you measure success?
- IQ 11. If you start your journey over, how would you do differently?
- IQ12. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Prima Facie Validity

This first step of the validation process is based on an in-depth review of the literature. A set of research questions were appropriately connected to and answered by the interview questions. The generated interview questions for each research question enhanced credibility or validity to qualitative studies. Thus, “validation is an attempt to assess the accuracy of the findings, as best described by the researcher and the participants” (Jones, 2018, p.73). Table 1

showed the research questions and corresponding interview questions. The introductory question asked to the participants helped to create rapport in order to start the interview process.

Table 1

Prima Facie Research Questions and Corresponding Interview Questions

Research question	Corresponding Interview Question
RQ1 – What challenges and obstacles do female Realtors face in their professional lives?	IQ1: Please share with me the most rewarding experience you have had in your career? IQ2: What made that experience so rewarding? IQ3: What have been some of the more significant professional challenges you have encountered in your journey to become a successful female Realtor?
RQ2 – What strategies and best practices do female Realtors employ to overcome the challenges they face in their professional lives?	IQ4: What strategies did you use to overcome these professional challenges? IQ5: What have been some of the more significant personal challenges, you faced on your journey to success? IQ6: What strategies did you use to overcome these challenges?
RQ3 – How do female Realtors define and measure and track their success in their professional lives?	IQ7: What would you say is the most important personal characteristic that you have that has been most instrumental in your achieving personal and professional success? IQ8: What does success mean to you professionally? IQ9: What does success mean to you in your personal life? IQ10: How do you measure success?
RQ4 – What recommendations do current female Realtors make to aspiring female Realtors, to become more successful in their professional lives?	IQ11: If you start your journey over, how would you do differently? IQ12: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Peer Review Validity

During this step, the researcher asked two peer reviewers from Pepperdine University's Graduate School of Education and Psychology to examine the research questions and corresponding interview questions in order to ensure the questions were properly executed and

that it was understood by the reviewers. If there were any issues with the questions, or there was a lack of clarity in the question that would be asked of the participant, the peer reviewers would provide the changes necessary to ensure the question was clear and concise so that it would be understood by the participants. Thus, the peer review process was an important part of attaining validity. The two peer reviewers shared their responses with the researcher regarding the semi-structured interview questions.

Expert Review Validity

During this step, an outside authority, such as the dissertation chair, audits the interview questions and observe the credibility of the research study. The researcher's dissertation chair and committee members were the expert reviewers regarding the research questions and corresponding interview questions. The panel was instructed to review the summary statement to become familiarized with the purpose and goals of the study, as well as the research and interview questions. The chair and committee read each research question and the related interview questions in order to examine any unrelated interview question or write suggested modifications. These research questions and corresponding interview questions were presented to the researcher's chair and committee to evaluate the applicability of each interview question in relation to answering the study's research questions along with their feedback to make sure interview questions were addressed adequately. Table 2 showed the research questions and corresponding interview questions, and the changes to the questions that were made during the expert review process. After the questions were finalized by both the researcher and the chair and committee, the researcher was able to utilize these questions during the interview process.

Table 2*Expert Review Validity*

Research Question	Corresponding Interview Question
RQ1 – What challenges and obstacles do female Realtors face in their professional lives?	<p>IQ1: Please share with me the most rewarding experience you have had in your career?</p> <p>IQ2: What made that experience so rewarding?</p> <p>IQ3: What have been some of the more significant challenges you have encountered in obtaining WLB while in your journey to become a successful female Realtor?</p>
RQ2 – What strategies and best practices do female Realtors employ to overcome the challenges they face in their professional lives?	<p>IQ4: What strategies did you use to overcome these professional challenges?</p> <p>IQ5: What have been some of the more significant personal challenges, you faced on your journey to success?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up: How about creating WLB? • How about burnout?? <p>IQ6. What strategies did you use to overcome these challenges?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow Up: How about WLB? • Follow Up: How do you avoid professional burnout?
RQ3 – How do female Realtors define and measure and track their success in their professional lives?	<p>IQ7: What would you say is the most important personal characteristic that you have that has been most instrumental in your achieving personal and professional success?</p> <p>IQ8: What does success mean to you professionally?</p> <p>IQ9: What does success mean to you in your personal life?</p> <p>IQ10: How do you measure success?</p>
RQ4 – What recommendations do current female Realtors make to aspiring female Realtors, to become more successful in their professional lives?	<p>IQ11: If you start your journey over, how would you do differently?</p> <p>IQ12: Is there anything else you would like to add?</p>

Statement of Personal Bias

Acknowledgment of personal bias is a substantial practice for all research (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The topic in this study was chosen based on the researcher's personal experiences of being a successful female Realtor. For a successful qualitative study, it is essential to acknowledge the personal biases the researcher may have and to remove those biases during the interview and data analysis process. The topic of this study was chosen based on the researchers' personal experiences of being a successful Realtor. The researcher in this study practiced epoche. When utilizing epoche, preconceptions and prejudgments about the subject matter are set aside (Moustakas, 1994). The researcher observed the challenges related to WLB of the successful Realtors of the southern California upon overcoming these experiences. This study's personal biases were the following: (a) the researcher was a female, and (b) the researcher was a Realtor with more than 5 years of experience in the industry.

Bracketing and Epoche

A qualitative study is crucial to take a transcendental approach, which means that something is viewed from a different perspective, as if it was the first instance (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Phenomenological research is not concerned with the researcher's understanding, but rather, with describing the participants' lived experiences. Researchers can create a buffer zone around themselves by putting their personal experiences and prejudices aside. Epoche is not a one-time occurrence; it is central to this research and was used in the data collection and analysis processes in this study (Moustakas, 1994). Epoche was done by the researcher disclosing their biases early in the study. The researcher disclosed any biases by putting their own experiences aside as necessary to view the data objectively. The researcher wrote bracketed details in the data

analysis, so that the researcher would be aware of those biases when reading the results and interpretation of the data (Jones, 2018).

Epoche is a difficult concept to grasp because it allows the researcher to let a phenomenon stand on its own and consider it as posed by the participant (Moustakas, 1994). Although the researcher was able to put aside personal prejudices, for the most part, there were many instances where this proved extremely difficult. In such instances, the researcher's epoche was checked three times to ensure no personal bias was established. Epoche enabled the researcher to disclose prior experiences and biases about the phenomenon that may have affected their interpretation and attitude toward the analysis. The researcher included a written explanation of their personal bias early in the research to recognize their position and preconceptions before conducting interviews with participants.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process began with the transcription of all the participants' interviews. Next, the data was coded to categorize shared experiences, ideas, or insights. In addition, the researcher journaled the ideas, opinions, notions, or suggestions which occurred during the data analysis process (Creswell & Poth, 2018). To answer the research question through data analysis, thematic analysis and inductive and deductive coding was used along with conducting semi-structured interviews. When the researcher conducted data analysis, his or her primary objective was to look for trends in the data that could help understand and explain why the patterns occurred. The researcher discovered generalized statements concerning relations and underlying themes while examining qualitative data (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Given the volume of data generated by qualitative studies, it was important for the researcher to condense collected data into a structured framework suitable for analysis. Statements were classified into

meaningful units and clustered them according to common themes. Textual representations of the experience were developed using common themes. Through the synthesis of meanings, textures, and structures the essence of the phenomenon was discovered.

The researcher used the phenomenological method approach to analyze the data in this report. The researcher organized and analyzed participants' data using Moustakas's (1994) updated van Kaam method of study. Moustakas's updated van Kaam method analysis entails seven steps for coding, grouping, and clustering interview data. The researcher identified with the participant's lived experience after reading and listening to the transcript several times. In addition, the researcher prioritized topics according to the frequency in which they appeared in the interviews. Each interviewee referred to semi-structured questions about their experiences executing strategy to maintain profitability.

Coding

Coding allows data to be categorized and analyzed on a theme-by-theme basis (Saldaña, 2021). While coding is not interchangeable with analysis, it is an integral part of the method. The inductive method may not be the most effective, but it offers a quick and easy approach. In this study, the researcher achieved a greater understanding of the industry's views by coding and evaluating the interview transcripts. Data processing alone does not achieve its intelligent and vital data synthesis; this is the researcher's responsibility. The investigator assesses and re-evaluates the recorded interviews to discern the voices' sound and resonance (Yin, 2017). At this point, the objective was to gain an understanding of all the data collected. The documents were coded with the words, phrases, and sentences that were situated as representing the experiences, or phenomenon, under investigation or that conveyed its meaning explicitly to the participant, being extracted or highlighted (Saldaña, 2021). Occasionally, each coded bit of data was alluded

to as a meaning unit. Thus, identical meaning units were classified; for each meaning unit, the participants' own words were described.

Inter-Rater Reliability

A two-step coding process was applied to guarantee inter-rater reliability and validity of the study which was as follows:

- Step 1: The researcher coded the first the transcripts of the first three interviews that were completed. The coding results was shared with two peer reviewers. If the peer reviewers disagreed with the codes created, the researcher discussed the differences with them with the goal of achieving consensus. If agreement was not achieved, the dissertation committee resolved the differences.
- Step 2: After finalizing the first step, the researcher, utilizing the coding approach, applied and validated the first three transcripts, then continued to code the remaining transcripts. At the completion of this process, the outcomes were shared and examined by the peer reviewers until either consensus was achieved, or the dissertation committee solved any remaining disparities.

Ensuring trustworthiness for research design using qualitative coding methods requires establishing inter-rater reliability, where several researchers and a large amount of data are involved. However, the procedure for calculating inter-rater reliability manually is not always fully explained in documents or texts (McDonald et al., 2019). This is particularly true when using advanced qualitative coding tools, as these programs are often capable of automatically calculating inter-rater reliability with little clarification of the methods used.

Inter-rater reliability assessment, which involves independently coding data and comparing the coding for agreement, is a well-established procedure in quantitative analysis

(McDonald et al., 2019). Even so, its efficacy to qualitative research is unclear: should investigators be required to recognize the same codes or themes in transcription, or should they be expected to generate unique accounts. Although some qualitative researchers claim that evaluating inter-rater reliability is critical for maintaining accuracy, others claim that it is irrelevant; nevertheless, it has not been systematically tested in a qualitative empirical sample (McDonald et al., 2019).

Chapter Summary

Chapter 3 covered the empirical study where the methodology was described, followed by the research design, sampling process, reliability, validity, bracketing and epoche and inter-rater reliability. The chapter thus described the criteria of inclusion and exclusion, ways participants were to be recruited, IRB, and the process of the conducting data collection and analysis. The study's method was to examine each participant's personal experiences and describe the stories of their real estate narratives using the qualitative phenomenological method. The sample data collection procedures and interview protocol were also examined.

The interview questions were created by the principal researcher and analyzed for reliability and validity by a panel of experts and the dissertation committee. The population was defined as one successful female Realtor with 5 or more years of experience in Southern California. The protection of human subjects was also covered in the study in accordance with the IRB. Data was collected using in-depth, semi-structured interview questions that would be transcribed and coded to find themes. In conclusion, this chapter evaluated the methodology used for the research study. The findings from the interview and data analysis were discussed in Chapter 4 and conclusions and further recommendations were discussed in Chapter 5.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

WLB can be defined as balancing both the Realtor's personal and professional lives as well as how these activities influence the productivity for female Realtors. There is no definite explanation for WLB since it is subjective for each person. However, much of what is considered in WLB is integrated in all other aspects of life. As such, people are defined by the way they exhibit mastery of practice in all these aspects to attain WLB.

WLB may also be explained as a combination of timely demand for work and personal responsibilities in life. A study conducted by Jones (2018) indicated that specific changes in someone's way of life characterized by an altered behavioral pattern result from the need to balance between life and work. Therefore, when one cannot achieve this balance, they may start to see a decline in productivity and other issues that affect their well-being. The lack of WLB can place an individual at risk in losing their ability to perform at work, and could harm their personal life since they are unable to take care of themselves.

Another argument about WLB is that success varies from achievement and organization to various events to achieve a WLB (Jones, 2018). Therefore, an individual's well-being is the only value that remains important when people are engaged in priority setting and execution of the plans. This study sought to understand how successful women Realtors with 5 or more years of experience in residential real estate were able to achieve WLB. This chapter discussed the findings of the study based on the participants' answers to the semi-structured interview questions used to guide this study, and the themes that were found during the data analysis process. The findings generated provided the guidance necessary to answer the research questions in the following chapter.

The following research questions were developed along with the interview questions to obtain the goal of concluding the best practices of WLB for women Realtors:

- RQ1: What challenges and obstacles do female Realtors face in their professional lives?
- RQ2: What strategies and best practices do female Realtors employ to overcome the challenges they face in their professional lives?
- RQ3: How do female Realtors define and measure and track their success in their professional lives?
- RQ4: What recommendations do current female Realtors make to aspiring female Realtors to become more successful in their professional lives?

The four research question were addressed by asking 15 participants 12 interview questions with the focus of observing what strategies successful female Realtors utilized to maintain WLB and avoid burnout. This is essential within Realtors to become more aware and skilled to maintain the mindset of achieving WLB for aspiring female Realtors to become successful. Furthermore, the participants insights and experiences in implementing strategies and techniques to overcome the challenges were analyzed. The research participants acknowledged challenges in balancing professional and personal lives, and the commonality of data was noticed in the themes. The themes were coded and findings were described.

With the purpose of observing the research questions, the following 12 interview questions used:

- IQ1: Please share with me the most rewarding experience you have had in your career?
- IQ2: What made that experience so rewarding?

- IQ3: What have been some of the more significant professional challenges you have encountered in your journey to become a successful female Realtor?
- IQ4: What strategies did you use to overcome these professional challenges?
- IQ5: What have been some of the more significant personal challenges, you faced on your journey to success?
 - FU: How about creating WLB?
 - FU: How about burnout??
- IQ6: What strategies did you use to overcome these challenges?
 - FU: How about WLB?
 - FU: How do you avoid professional burnout?
- IQ7: What would you say is the most important personal characteristic that you have that has been most instrumental in your achieving personal and professional success?
- IQ8: What does success mean to you professionally?
- IQ9: What does success mean to you in your personal life?
- IQ10: How do you measure success?
- IQ11: If you start your journey over, how would you do differently?
- IQ12: Is there anything else you would like to add?

The participants responded to the questions by explaining their reactions and experiences which provided the researcher with data on the strategies they applied to overcome burnout and achieve WLB. The interviews were recorded with permission acquired by the participants for the purpose of data accuracy and analysis. This chapter provided a concrete examination about the participants in the research along with the data collection and data analysis process. The researcher also added the bar charts to show the visual representation of the themes that came

from the interviews. The researcher ended this chapter with the summary of the themes and presentation of the findings for each research question and corresponding interview questions.

Participants

The researcher identified 25-30 prospective female participants who fit the criteria of inclusion. From this, 15 participants were interviewed for this study. The participants were all successful female Realtors, who were exclusively working in residential real estate. For this study successful female Realtors were identified as licensed real estate agents who were members with the NAR. The participants worked with their real estate brokerage as Realtors, and their clients.

The participants were selected using the purposive sampling approach. Gray (2009) explained that purposeful sampling is a non-probability sampling technique in which participants are selected because they are considered typical of a larger population. According to Creswell (2007), the purposive sampling approach is imperative to finding participants for phenomenological research because the type of participants needed should fit the criteria of the study. The first consideration was that all the participants had experienced a similar phenomenon and have a commonality of stories that identify the study's phenomenon. The sample size was 15 female Realtors with active Realtor licenses residing in California. To find this sample size, 30 potential participants were identified as meeting the inclusion criteria. From this, only 15 participants accepted the request to participate in the interview process. Two out of the 30 potential participants declined because of time constraints, and 13 others did not reply after several attempts of communication via LinkedIn InMail messaging or direct email. The 15 participants who accepted the interview request were then asked to schedule their preferred time and day for the interview via Calendly (<https://www.calendly.com>), which is a professional

appointment scheduling software. The Zoom link was provided in an appointment confirmation email sent by Calendly.

Additionally, all participants received and signed the informed consent form (see Appendix D) prior to the interview. Also, all participants received the interview questions which gave them the opportunity to prepare complete answers. Moreover, one of the participants voluntarily expressed that she wanted her name to be published, while the rest of the participants requested to be anonymous. Due to the majority of participants wanting to remain anonymous, and for purposes of confidentiality for this study, all participants were given pseudonyms, such as Participant 1, Participant 2, etc. All information remained confidential including the participants' personal information, such as their name and email address, which were stored in the researcher's password protected computer. Additionally, the interview and the application selected for transcribing the interview were password protected, and identifiable only by the researcher. Therefore, names of the participants was not assigned to the responses according to the informed consent form.

Data Collection

After the researcher obtained IRB approval, participants were recruited through the professional networking platform, LinkedIn. Through utilizing the IRB approved recruitment script, the researcher sent the invitations to 30 potential participants, inviting them to participate in the dissertation study. The researcher received the emails from the participants expressing their consent to participate in the interview. Shortly after, the informed consent form was sent through DocuSign (<https://www.docusign.com>) to get the signatures online. Also, the participants utilized the researcher's online schedule system to pick their interview time and date of their choice.

Afterward, the researcher once again checked the master list of potential participants and sent a second follow up email to only those individuals, if there was no response from the first set of emails. With this follow up email, some more participants showed interest, scheduled and signed the informed consent form. The researcher also utilized her network connections to find more eligible participants. At this point, 15 more recruitment scripts were sent out and two more responded with their interest. From the inquiry into the researcher's network connections, five more people forwarded their information to the researcher which resulted a total of 15 interviews conducted between April 10 and June 30, 2022. A total of 60 emails were sent and 15 interviews were completed.

The female Realtors who were recruited were all in successful and were ranked high in sales volume within their brokerages. The researcher also followed up with the participants to ensure they scheduled their interviews. Table 3 showed the participants and the date on which their individual interviews were completed. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted via the Zoom platform which lasted approximately 35-60 minutes, with an average length of 45 minutes. The Zoom interviews allowed participants from all over Southern California to participate in this study. During the interview process, the researcher ensured the accuracy of the answers through repetition by asking clarifying questions. All digital audio files of the interviews were transcribed with Otter.ai (<https://otter.ai>), a transcription creation site that transcribes recordings into text, which the researcher was able to then download in Word format. The data was collected utilizing a semi-structured interview process with 12 interview questions which were asked to each participant. As a result, the audio files of the interviews were transcribed and reexamined many times by the researcher for accuracy.

Table 3*List of Participants and Corresponding Interview Dates*

Participant	Title/Role	Date Interviewed
1	Realtor	April 10, 2022
2	Realtor	April 10, 2022
3	Realtor	April 11, 2022
4	Realtor	April 12, 2022
5	Realtor	April 13, 2022
6	Realtor	April 13, 2022
7	Realtor	April 14, 2022
8	Realtor	April 15, 2022
9	Realtor	May 5, 2022
10	Realtor	June 10, 2022
11	Realtor	June 12, 2022
12	Realtor	June 20, 2022
13	Realtor	June 21, 2022
14	Realtor	June 25, 2022
15	Realtor	June 30, 2022

Note. Details and dates of participant interviews.

Data Analysis

The data analysis of this study included many interrelated phases throughout the study. According to Creswell (2007) “The process of data collection, data analysis, and data report writing are not separate steps. During the process, they are interrelated and frequently go on simultaneously in a research assignment” (p. 150). The researcher’s data analysis process included the following four steps:

1. data transcribing which manages the video recording into written transcripts,
2. reading and memo (describing, classifying, and interpreting,
3. concluding the themes by inter-rater reliability and validity, and

4. presenting the data in the visual formats.

Inter-Rater Review Process

Immediately after the coding process was finalized for the first five interviews, the researcher arranged to have a peer review with a panel of two doctoral students enrolled in the Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership program at Pepperdine University. The doctoral students were proficient and had a good understanding of qualitative phenomenological research. The panel was given the prepared Excel spreadsheet with the coded data from the five interviews and the interview questions and transcripts. Afterward, the panel evaluated the information, then added their recommendations on the thematic analysis. After reviewing the recommendations from the panel peer reviewers, the researcher used Zoom to meet with them and discuss the comments. The peer review panel agreed with the researcher's themes and the codes initially initiated by the researcher and agreement was reached.

After three more interviews were finished, transcribed, and coded, the researcher again requested the peer review panel to review the interview transcriptions, questions, and coding document one more time to provide feedback. The peer reviewers provided their recommendations to rename a few of the themes to be more aligned with the research questions. Consensus was reached once there was agreement with the coding and the themes.

Data Display

The data were structured by four research questions and displayed by each of the related 12 interview questions. As the data was analyzed continuously, similarities arose, and the common themes developed. The themes were created from thematic analysis of the data collected within each interview question and were only relevant to the specific interview

question. The following four research questions and corresponding interview questions were broken down into themes and the findings that were related to those themes.

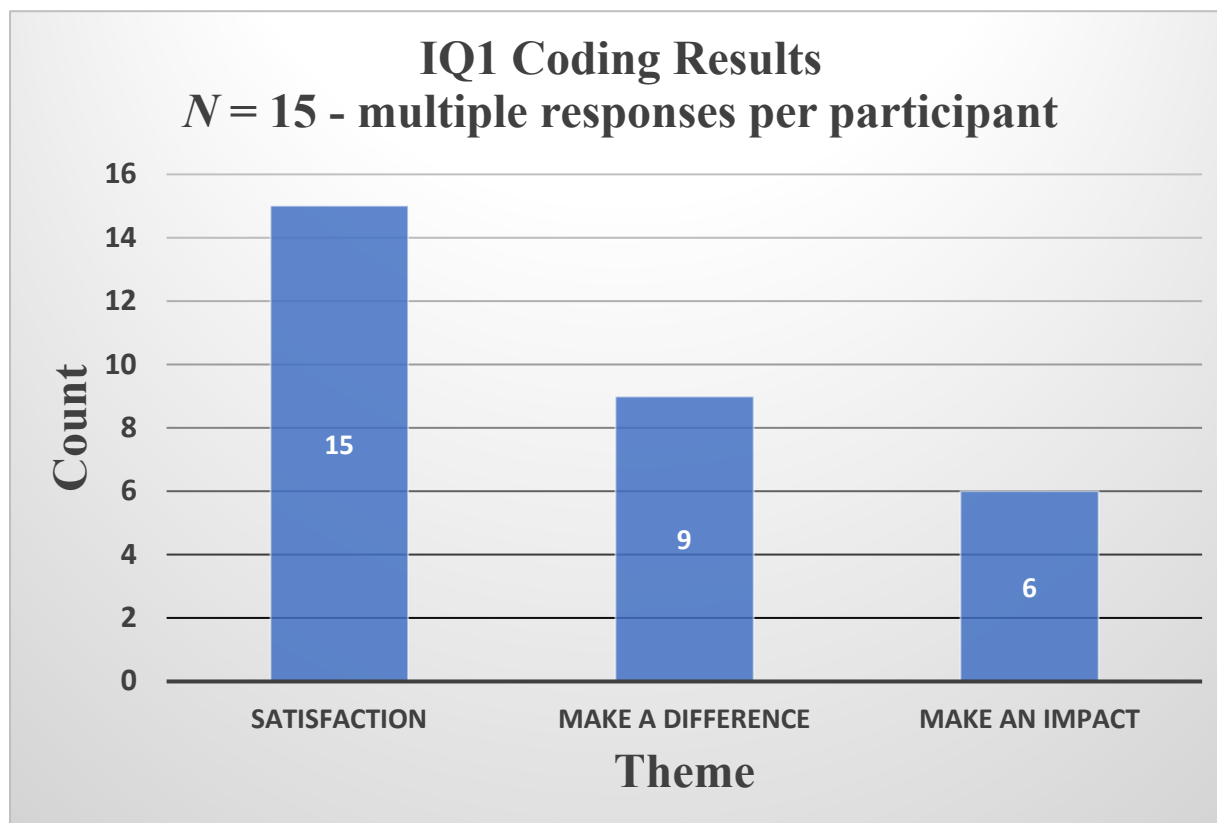
Research Question 1

The first research question (RQ1) asked, What challenges and obstacles do female Realtor's face in their professional lives? Participants were asked a total of three questions related with RQ1 as follows:

- IQ1: Please share with me the most rewarding experience you have had in your career.
- IQ2: What made that experience so rewarding?
- IQ3: What have been some of the more significant professional challenges you have encountered in your journey to become a successful female Realtor?

The responses provided by the participants were evaluated and thematically analyzed to find parallels. The answers were grouped together through thematic analysis for RQ1.

Interview Question 1. IQ1 asked, Please share with me the most rewarding experience you have had in your career? After a total of 15 responses, the following themes transpired (a) satisfaction, (b) make a difference, and (c) make an impact. The themes were examined in further detail. Figure 2 displayed the bar graph which represented the total number of the answers for each theme.

Figure 2*IQ1 Coding Results*

Satisfaction. The theme, satisfaction, was the most common premise which demonstrated the utmost rewarding experience outcome for female Realtors. All participants (100%) stated that satisfaction was their rewarding experience which resulted in this theme. Keywords were smiling, happiness, satisfaction, and fulfillment. Participant 1 stated: “The most rewarding experience for me in my career was the satisfaction of seeing people with the key in their hand to their new home, especially when they're first-time home buyers.” Participant number 5 mentioned:

You have to try to stay happy, even if there's sadness, and there's things going on, or you could just feel content. I think that you must have a good mental balance with this, too. But overall if I have a goal, and I achieve it, I love the feeling of the achievement. I think most people that are successful, probably have that same attitude and the satisfaction.

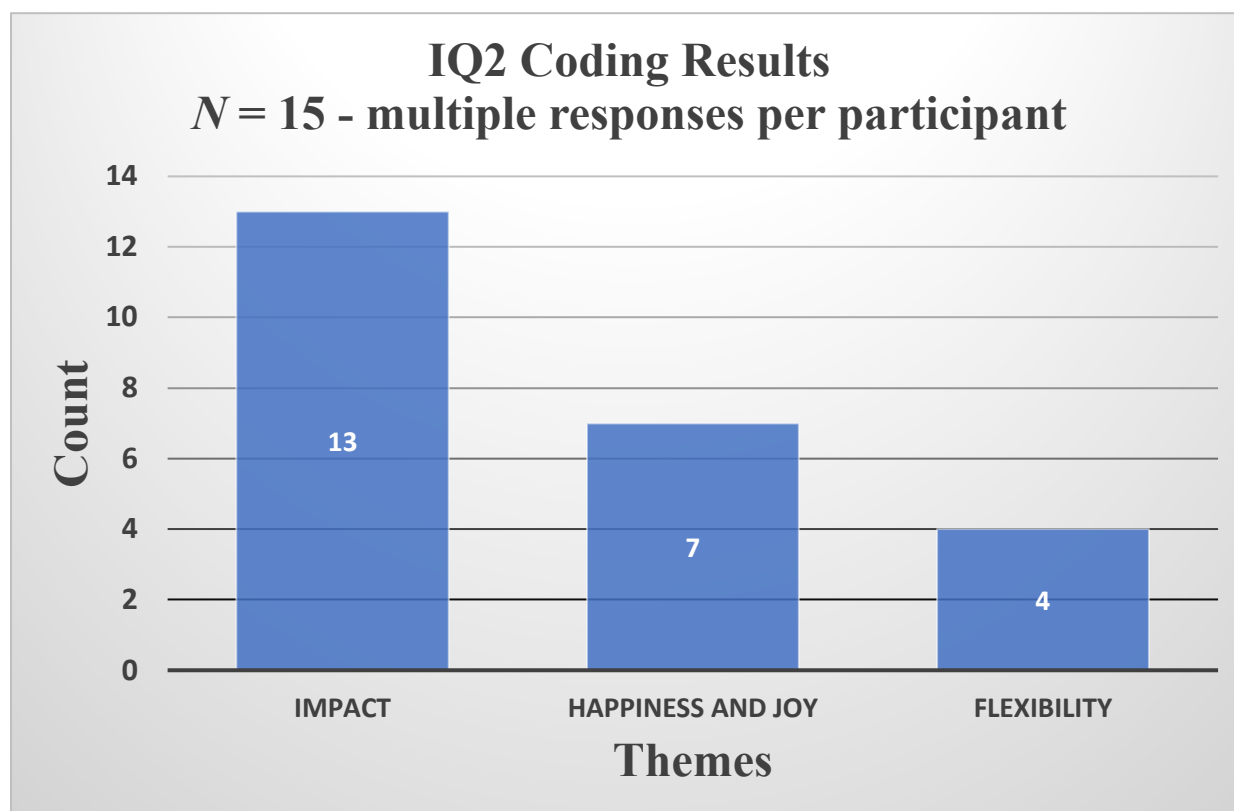
Make a Difference. Approximately nine participants (60%) answered that making a difference provided a rewarding experience for them. The keywords used were, make a difference was included as well as joy of seeing others' success, and happiness. For example, Participant 2 stated, "Every time I make a difference in somebody's life, I understand that's why I do this." Participant 7 stated,

The most rewarding experience I've had in my career is when I sold my first house, it was bittersweet. I didn't know what I was doing, but when I handed the keys to my buyer for the very first time, which was my very first transaction, it gave me a sense of hope. I'm trying to like recall, it was very rewarding for me. I also felt like I was the main person that made that happen for my clients, so it was a combination of being very rewarding for me, making someone else's dream come true at the same time. I knew when I did that the very first time, this was the job for me.

Make an Impact. The theme, make an impact was created through keywords mentioned by six out of 15 participants (40%). Those keywords were, joy, trust, connection with clients, impactful, and powerful. Hence, it was important to add this thematic analysis because it encompasses the answers provided for IQ1. For example, Participant 1 stated that, "It's really being part of being something bigger than us." Participant 2 said, "When I make an impact in anything I do in my profession, it brings me satisfaction." She also added,

Every time I solve a problem, I mean, it's just there's so many moments where I'm so grateful for my profession. When I make an impact in anything I do in my profession, it brings me satisfaction. It's just like drugs. I mean, it's addicting.

Interview Question 2. IQ2 asked, What made that experience so rewarding? Referring to the most rewarding experience in their career. The following three themes were discovered from the analysis of the data (a) impact, (b) happiness and joy, and (c) flexibility. Figure 3 shows the counts of the themes in a bar chart.

Figure 3*IQ2 Coding Results*

Impact. Of the 15 participants, 13 participants (86.7%) mentioned the amount of pride they take in making impact on their clients regarding finding their dream home or getting the top dollar for them. As such, half of the participants mentioned they received recent referral-based transactions with new clients because of their positive impact on current clients. One participant, Participant 6 mentioned that she would consistently receive referrals by their old clients and continuing prospects. Additionally, Participant 6 mentioned:

The most rewarding thing is if you're a successful Realtor, when you're representing buyers and handing those keys over to the first-time homebuyer that's actually really, like, heartwarming, because I definitely think as a Realtor, we do make people's dreams come true. We help them build wealth through real estate ownership, and we really impact their life.

Happiness and Joy. Seven out of 15 participants (46%) mentioned happiness and joy as the rewarding experience element. There were three participants who mentioned how much they enjoyed helping their clients to find their dream homes. Keywords that supported this theme were, satisfaction, joy, being helpful, achievement, and being happy. Participant number 8 mentioned:

I see the results of my actions. It's not like I sell a property, I never interact with that client, ever again. So, I think the most rewarding thing is, as I wrap up with my past clients, I see what the results of my work has been. I can't tell you how many clients told me oh my God, we think about you all the time we pray to God and think about how we met you and how you changed our lives.

Participant 3 mentioned the joy of the achievement as "if I have a goal, and I achieve it; I love the feeling and joy of the achievement." Participant 1 was excited when she mentioned the following:

There's just so much joy and then it's hoping if they get the offer accepted and all of that, but just seeing their expression and seeing how happy they are [to get] the home they've been dreaming of, for so many years. So that was the most special, most rewarding experience.

In addition, Participant 2 mentioned:

Okay, I can say that the most, yeah, experience was like helping people. That was, for me, it was really rewarding when you see like people happy to buy the new, you know, new house or, or selling the house, it's just like a hassle for them. But for me was like, seeing them happy.

Finally, according to Participant 5:

That's because I'm just trying to help people to get you know, more like easy steps for them less stressful, just less overwhelming. And then when you see them happy, it's just rewarding for me.

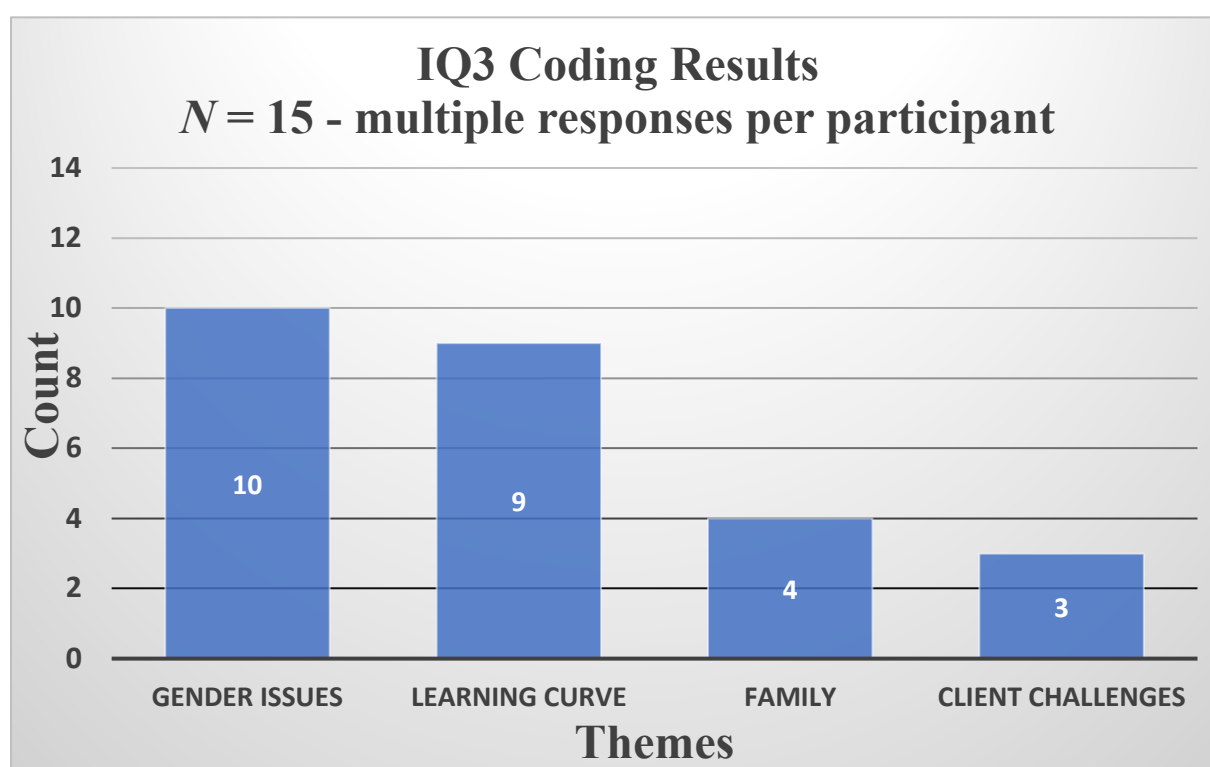
Flexibility. The thematic analysis showed that four out of 15 participants (26.7%) discussed this theme overall. Flexibility to Participants 11, 13, 14, and 15 meant, "setting my own schedules," and "seeing clients during set times I have planned, and not as a 9-5." These

participants unanimously said they found it rewarding to have a business of their own and enjoyed working as entrepreneurs.

Interview Question 3. IQ3 asked, What have been some of the more significant professional challenges you have been encountered in your journey to become a successful female Realtor? The following four themes were discovered: (a) gender issues, (b) learning curve, (c) family, and (d) client challenges. Figure 4 displayed the results in a bar graph showing the number of responses per each theme.

Figure 4

IQ3 Coding Results



Gender Issues. The thematic analysis for this theme showed that six participants (75%) answered that gender issues were the significant challenge for them. Keywords for this theme were dealing with male agents, male bosses, superiority, and experienced men. Participant 7 mentioned:

Dealing with male agents is one of the biggest problems I've encountered. Women always empower women, but men, for some reason, just feel like they have more authority in certain situations.

Another participant, Participant 3 mentioned, "Although most Realtors are female, I think mentally we think this is a man's world." Additionally, Participant 5 mentioned, "My superior is a man. And even though I try not to think that's a thing, it still is a thing." In addition, Participant 5 said,

As I reflect on the different situations I've had in my past and the challenges, it would be working through the man woman issue, right. You know, sometimes how I feel and how other people have interpreted is that when a woman comes in and they're confident, and they're strong, etc., then it's threatening to a man, which it is not like me to talk like this. [The men] do get intimidated or affected by it. And so then a lot of times...that's where I feel most of my challenges come from, even though they say oh, you know, I'm here for you, I didn't get it and it's like, oh, really...so it's working through the those barriers sometimes.

Learning Curve. Nine out of 15 participants (60%) stated that their challenges were in learning the newer technologies, such as using Zoom software, or other technological advances that some of these participants did not have knowledge of previously. Also, Participants 4, 5, 10, 11, and 15 all stated that marketing and promotion by brokerages for Realtors to attain clients, as well as finding the right brokerage to work with were all major challenges. For instance, Participant 14 said,

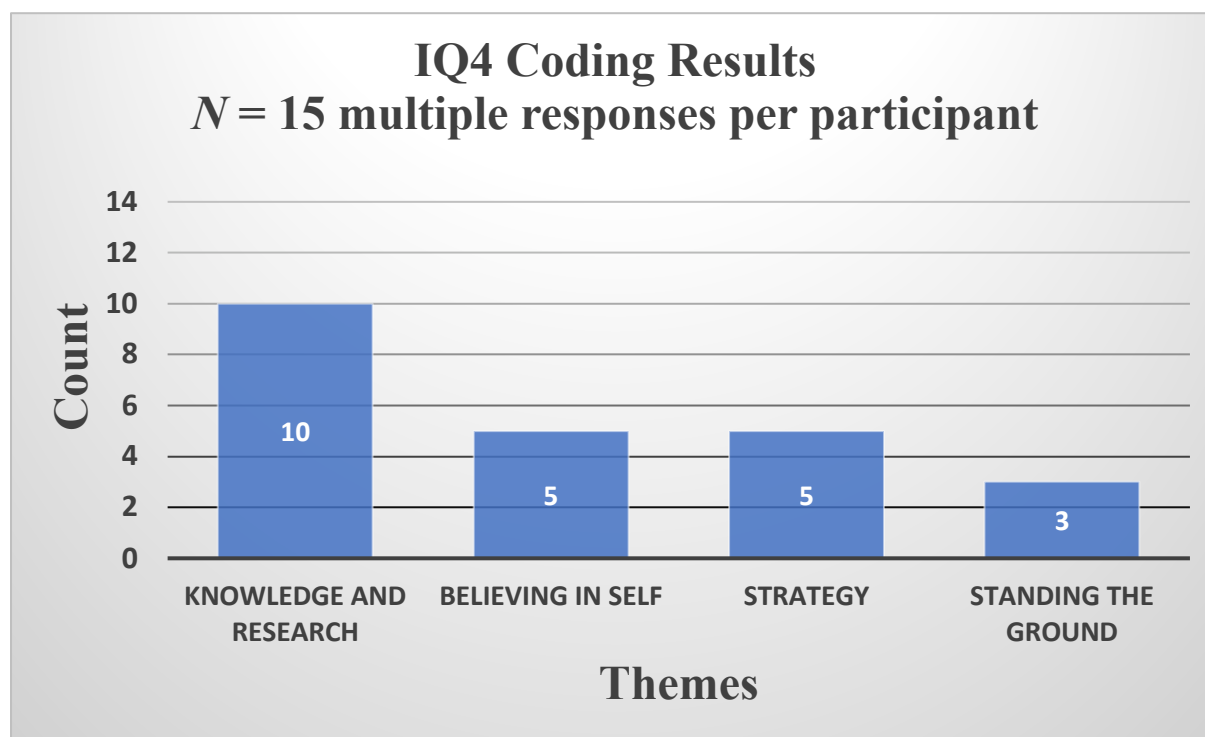
It's complicated how to do sales, and the challenges of what happens during the sale is the main professional challenge that really exists. I have encountered these challenges and I found that that being a part of a good brokerage is very important. Brokerages should tell you what bonuses are given too.

Participant 15 said, "We need to keep our presence in the social media online platforms and we have to networking with potential clients and businesses...we have to figure out all the advertising, so these are the real challenges in our profession."

Family. Four participants mentioned that spending time with their family was one of the most significant challenging they encountered in their journey. Keywords that defined this theme were, not enough time with family, balancing family issues, and family time. Participant 8 expressed that she did not have enough time to spend with her family when she first started her real estate journey. Similarly, Participant 5 and 2 expressed the same sentiment of having to divide between spending time with their children and meeting with clients, especially on weekends when their spouses, significant others and children were home. “I had a hard time taking weekends off since you know, most of the open houses occur on Saturdays and Sundays,” said Participant 5.

Client Challenges. While there were only three participants (20%) who answered this theme, the researcher still included this because it was important to note that clients can be a challenge for women Realtors. For instance, Participant 14 stated that “sometimes clients themselves can be challenging to work with” and “demanding” at times. Participant 11 said, “clients may need you at any time, so you don’t have a choice but to answer the call and be there 24/7.” Thus, client challenges can be a significant professional challenge according to the participants who answered this interview question.

Interview Question 4. IQ4 asked, What strategies did you use to overcome these professional challenges? The four themes were as follows: (a) knowledge and research, (b) believing in self, (c) strategy and, (d) standing the ground. Figure 5 displayed the bar chart with the themes and the number of participants per the theme.

Figure 5*IQ4 Coding Results*

Knowledge and Research. This theme was established through thematic analysis using keywords, such as knowledge, research and learning. Continued self-education helps Realtors to become more confident and causes less stress and challenge in the real estate transactions. Real estate knowledge is a key factor for the continuous success of the female Realtors according to the participants. Roughly 10 out of 15 participants (66.7%) mentioned reading the contracts and gaining more knowledge on the contracts and the purchase agreements provided them with knowledge which helped them with overcoming feeling inadequate in this arena of real estate. Participant 2 mentioned, “Knowing the contracts was very freeing for me especially during the first years of the real estate practice.” According to the Participant 7,

Dealing with real estate agents, such as more experienced real estate agents that are unhelpful. The fact is that sometimes they have ego trips, and they expect you to know everything even though you tell them that you’re new, and you don’t understand everything.

Believing In Self. This theme had five participants (33.3%) mention that believing in themselves helped them with overcoming professional challenges. According to Participant 1,

Overcoming intimidation and overcoming my own mindset. I'd say disability which is, you know, my own preconceived ideas that men are superior and that men you know, know more than me and all of that so I had to overcome like one word would be confidence would be my, I had over overcome my lack of confidence.

According to Participant 7, "I think if I were to change anything about me, it would be believing in myself sooner." While this theme was similar to the previous theme and did not have many responses, it was still notable to add to these particular findings.

Strategy. At least five participants (33.3%) mentioned strategy development using keywords, such as implementing strategies, being more professional and ignoring emotions. Participant 11 mentioned that her strategy was being less nice, while Participant 5 said that "prioritizing the daily routines, tasks and time blocking, and not constantly picking up the phone." She added,

My strategy at first was building and staying consistent. The challenging part is staying focused, being persistent, being able to push yourself to consistently drum up business. It's not the type of business where you set it up at one time. It's constant.

To overcome the professional challenges Participant 7 mentioned that her money management strategy was vital to her success, "I think part of part of success is the ability to manage your finances and that's that I think is lacking in most people." In addition, Participant 5 has developed her own strategy to overcome the challenges stating, "I have to have this thing called the One Touch Concept, where, if I'm working on something, I do it once because controlling procrastination."

Standing Their Ground. This theme was mentioned by three of the participants (20%) for the best strategy to overcome male pressure. Keywords used to describe this theme was,

standing up for myself, not giving up, believe in myself, no compromise, and mindset.

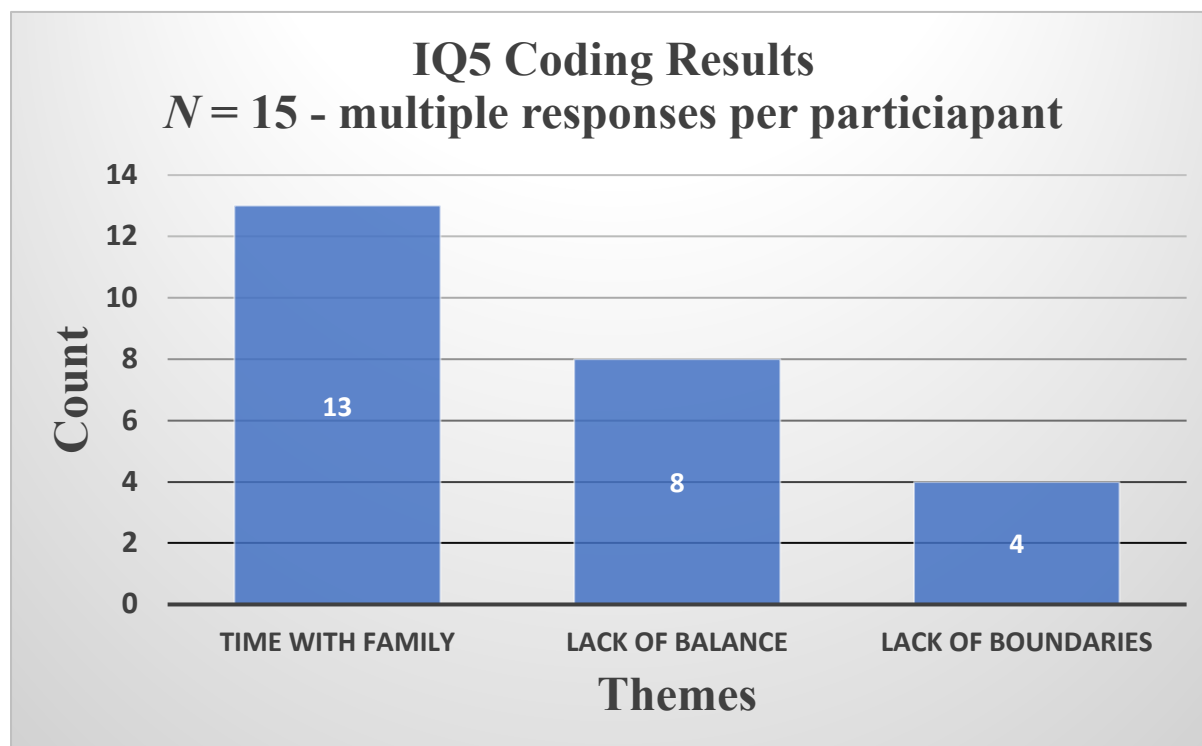
Participant 5 mentioned, “I would stand my ground and be steadfast on my values and my beliefs.” In addition, she said,

If they weren’t willing to come, you know, I mean everything in life is a compromise, right? We compromise, we work together, but we can’t compromise regardless of what our individual values are, we can’t compromise on that. Right? If we have strong beliefs and all that kind of stuff, then it’s like, okay, you know, what, then this is not a good fit.

Interview Question 5. IQ5 asked, What have been some of the more significant personal challenges, you faced on your journey to success? Based on the data analysis of the responses, three main themes were concluded. The three themes were: (a) time with family, (b) lack of balance, and (c) lack of boundaries. The bar chart in Figure 6 displayed the themes and participant count.

Figure 6

IQ5 Coding Results



Time With Family. Out of 15 participants, 13 interviewees, (86.7%) mentioned they found it difficult to spend time with family and friends due to the idea that they would lose clients and potential earnings on the table due to working reduced working hours. Keywords for this theme were, family time, mom responsibilities, and unavailability. Participant 8 revealed the challenge she had in making time for her child and her mother who lived with her. Additionally, Participant 6 said, “you only have so many hours in a day” referring to being a “perfect wife and perfect mom” and “because this field is really difficult.” Participant 7 notably stated,

I’m trying to sort of handle home life verse and work life. I also I want a career but at the same time, I’m a mom to two girls. And some of the challenges are my home life and making sure you know everything is said and done ahead of time, so I don’t come across any problems.

Lack of Balance. Eight out of 15 participants (53%) stated that they had a lack of balance which was a significant personal challenge in their journey toward success. Keywords that were used to describe this theme was burnout, unable to maintain WLB, sacrifice and responsibilities. Participant 4 mentioned, “You know, sometimes working in my 20s, and most of my 30s, I spend like I would work maybe three, four months straight without even a day off. But that’s part of the success, right?” Participant number 8 mentioned, “Unfortunately, for most of my career, I had no balance because I was always working.” According to Participant 1,

I lacked in WLB because I was always working. However, the results were there, so then it’s addicting to just keep working...and sometimes I think when I have this, I didn’t have a balance in my personal life...I would just concentrate more on my work life if that makes sense.

Additionally, Participant 7 stated,

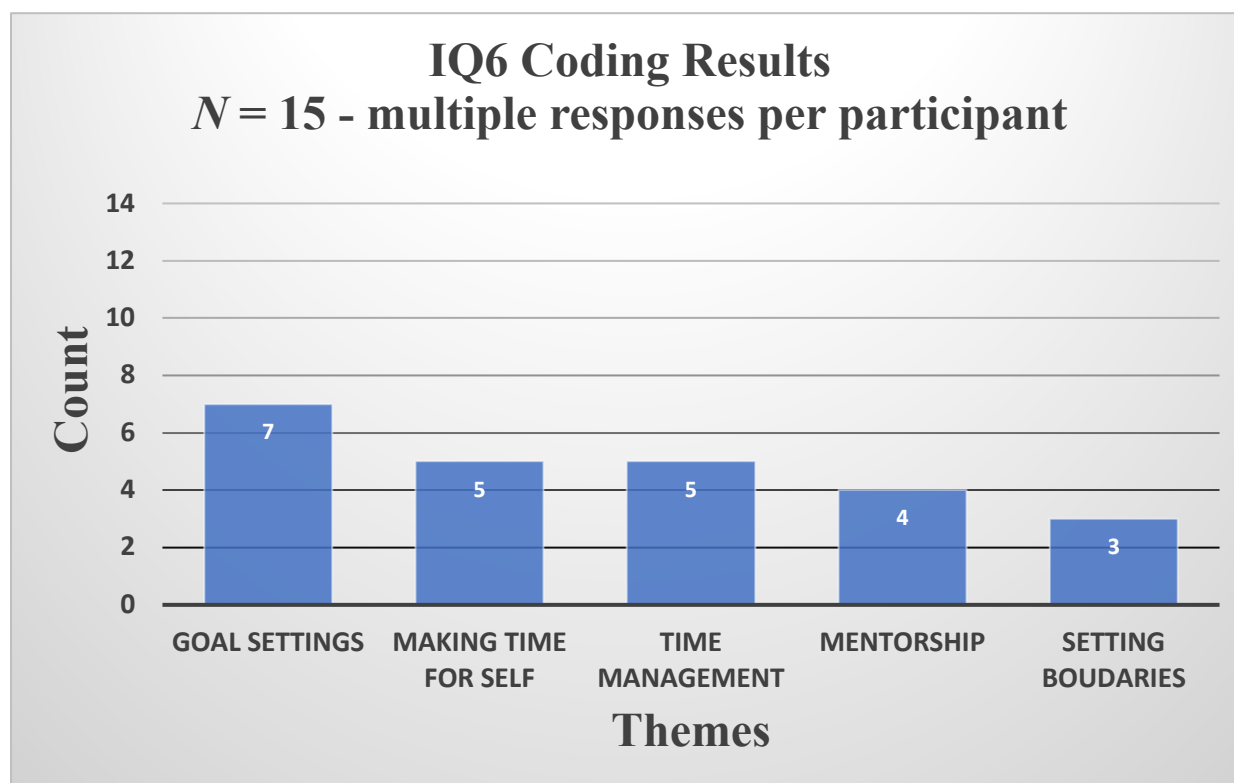
Burnout happens only when I’m stressed out and when there’s too many deals happening at the same time. I also experience burnout if I’m dealing with a very difficult client or a very difficult agent that nitpicks on every little thing and doesn’t want to negotiate on things.

Lack of Boundaries. The final theme for IQ5 revolved around boundaries.

Approximately four participants (26%) mentioned keywords, such as no boundaries and saying no. Participant 1 mentioned she had to learn how to say no and set boundaries for the clients over the years. Participant 5 stated, it was difficult learning how to say no. In her own words, she described the following,

I mean, the personal stuff is just I think learning how to say no, managing your time. And then sometimes being able to, like say, Okay, today, absolutely under no circumstance, I'm not going to work after let's say, 8:00pm, or Saturday, Sunday, or even taking a vacation. It took me years to take a vacation that was suitable; because even if I'm on vacation, I'm still answering my phone. I'm still sometimes working remotely, but I think you got to just try to do personal time. And I learned that the hard way. Because for a long time, I missed a lot of functions, because I was always working.

Interview Question 6. IQ6 asked, What strategies did you use to overcome these challenges? This included follow up questions on WLB and burnout. Based on the participants responses and the main phrases, a total of four themes were found: (a) goal settings, (b) making time for self, (c) time management, (d) mentorship and (e) setting boundaries. Figure 7 depicted the visual in a bar chart showing themes and participant count.

Figure 7*IQ6 Coding Results*

Goal settings. Seven out of 15 participants (46.7%) answered this interview question with this theme. According to Figure 7, this seemed to be the most analyzed theme in terms of the number of participants that answered IQ6. Keywords for this theme were, goals, setting goals, and have goals. Participant 3 mentioned:

You have to have goals like every year for everything that you want to achieve, whether it's buying that house or buying that investment property or even going on vacation. Whatever you want to achieve, you've got to put action into it. You got to obviously make up your mind, put it as a goal, and be persistent, don't give up. Not every goal gets accomplished every year, but at least the thought is there.

Additionally, Participant 5 said, "Being an organized planner helps." She also mentioned creating yearly goals similar to other participants. Participant 8 declared that achieving a goal meant she was being successful. Participant 13 said organization was the key to her success in

overcoming the challenges she often dealt with in her line of work within the industry. Other participants, such as Participants 10, and 15 also noted that goal setting and organization helped them with overcoming challenges as they felt more prepared each day.

Making Time For Self. Five out of 15 participants (33%) stated that it was important to make time for their personal lives. Keywords for this theme were, make time for me, personal time, and me time. Participant 5 mentioned, “They call it meditation, I call it quiet time to reflect on your goals, gratitude, and intentions and they have you write them down in this little book, where you just write down your thoughts.” Participant 5 also mentioned,

To overcome these challenges, I think, you know, I’m gonna go take time out for myself. I love to dine, I love football, and I love being with people and socializing. I also love the ocean, and my doggies of course.

In addition, Participant 1 said,

I try to overcome challenges by creating time boxes, meaning that I go through every day and I have a schedule where I prioritize my daily tasks that I need to accomplish for that day. Then I go over [the tasks] and pick which one I need to do first and ask, does this need my attention the most. And then I kind of create the story. Like I wake up, I do my cold calls and I know that I need to follow the story that I have created for my day.

Mentorship. Four out of 15 participants (26.7%) said that one of their strategies in overcoming challenges were to have mentors and role models they were able to look up to. For instance, Participant 14 said, “Mentoring is everything in real estate. Many agents find it useful to really learn the ropes. I would say the real way to overcome the challenges is through getting mentors.” Participant 12 said, “to avoid professional burnout in such a male dominated environment, the friendship and mentorship of female colleagues makes me feel like I am part of the real estate professionals.” Participant 11 said she looked up to other successful female Realtors as role models whom she could emulate to achieve her own success.

Setting Boundaries. This theme was not the most prevalent, yet the researcher added it as it was still important to note. Three out of 15 participants (20%) discussed setting boundaries as ways they overcame challenges. The main keyword was boundaries and saying no, which became the thematic analysis for this question and was imperative to add to this study.

Participant 4 stated,

I think you have to learn how to say no. Learning how to say no, it has been like I said, my parents, family, people come to me, oftentimes, even clients that are not really real estate related, they'll come to me for advice or input. I mean, I'm only you know, I'm a real estate broker. But I can't tell you how many times my clients, they will call me, they have questions on non-real estate related stuff. And it's flattering because obviously, they respect me. But same thing with the family. I mean, the personal stuff is just I think learning how to say no and managing your time

Next, Participant 5 mentioned,

Just because you have a flexible hours, many of the family responsibilities are thrown on you because they think, oh she doesn't have a boss so she could take so and so here or she could take care of this for mom and dad, and she could do this. This can make it difficult to set boundaries, but I have had to say no and start prioritizing what is most important personally and professionally.

In addition, Participant 6 mentioned,

I wish I had learned how to say no earlier but I make sure to do so now. When I was younger, I think I would have had a better balanced life if I had learned to say no, whether it was personal or professional, because I would take on other people's responsibilities and that took me away from balancing my life overall.

Time Management. While this theme was not the most prevalent with only two participants (25%) with keywords, such as managing time and balancing time. Participant 2 mentioned,

To avoid burnout. I do take time to spend with my family, and by planning the month in advance, it helps me not feel so guilty because I do see myself focusing on taking time off. I focus on making some good productive days, and schedule time for the rest of the month.

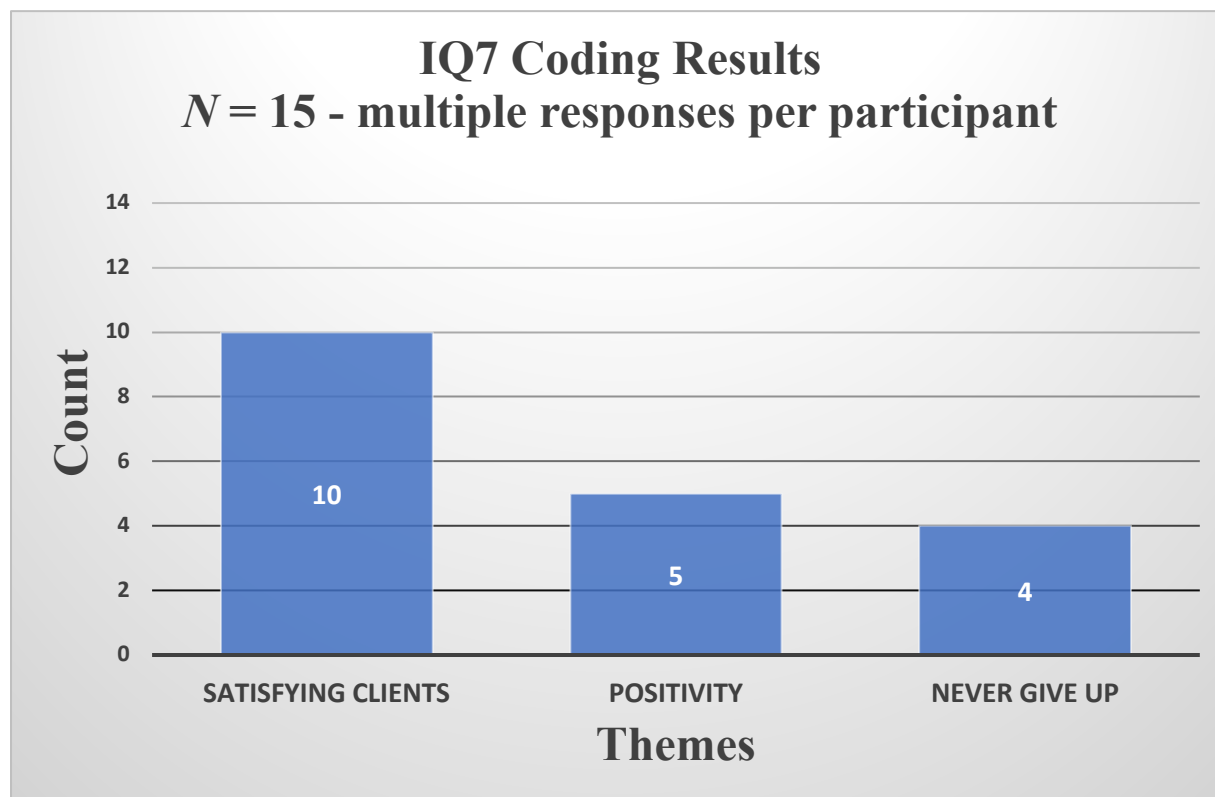
In addition, Participant 8 said,

Time management is works for me, because in my personal life, I have [things to do]. First of all, I wake up really early to just have more time to manage work and family time. From 5:30am or 6am, when I wake up, I have time for a walk, I make time for the gym, I have time to get ready for work. At work, I have my own time in between...maybe family needs me, so I have to be there. Sometimes I'm working till midnight and the weekends, Saturday and Sunday so it feels like 24 hours. I'm working on making some time for myself for my personal life. I'm still working on it. [Real estate] is your own business, so I feel like I have to answer the phones, answer the calls and answer the emails, even when it's after work hours.

Interview Question 7. IQ7 asked, What would you say is the most important personal characteristic that you have that has been most instrumental in your achieving personal and professional success? Four themes transpired for the most important personal characteristics, which were: (a) satisfying clients, (b) positivity, and (c) never give up. Figure 8 depicted the thematic analysis as a bar chart for as a visual analysis.

Figure 8

IQ7 Coding Results



Satisfying Clients. This theme came together through thematic analysis due to 10 out of 15 participants (66.7%) stating that the personal characteristics in achieving personal and professional success was ensuring clients were satisfied with their results. Keywords were, satisfy clients, relating to others, and patience with clients. Participant 3 mentioned holding clients' hands through the process of purchasing or selling their homes because of the amount of work and paperwork to go through. In addition she stated, "People like working with those they feel comfortable with and they work with who they trust and feel comfortable with." The participants who discussed satisfaction shared their excitement about fulfilling their clients' needs. In other words, the client's satisfaction was among the elements to reduce or avoid burnout because of the rewarding feeling expressed in correlation to in IQ1.

Positivity. Five out of 15 participants (33%) discussed staying positive was a characteristic which helped them achieve success personally and professionally when answering IQ7. Keywords were, glass half full, positive thoughts, inspiring others, and optimism. Participant 5 mentioned,

I always see the glass half full. Right? I'm, I think I'm pretty high on the optimistic scale. The more that I can share that, the more that it helps me, you know, so inspiring others inspires me. Listening to their stories and such inspires me so continuing to be optimistic helps me keep on moving and continue to move the needle forward.

Participant 6 said for her it was important to have positive thoughts and love for the clients. She said, "I love people and I get so high talking to people and sharing life stories especially when clients are making decisions in buying homes." Participant 2 added,

Being positive is really the key to everything. You can take on every situation. I mean, I've got a brace on. I broke my knee and I'm still taking it on. My license plate even says 'be positive' and that's why I have it on my car so that I can hopefully inspire other people who see it.

Never Give Up. Four out of 15 participants (26%) answered with the following keywords which created this thematic analysis, being persistent, being honest and upfront, and don't give up stated these as the personal and professional characteristics toward their success. Participant 4 stated,

It has to be persistence. Because once I have a goal or a target of what I want, whether it's personal or professional, I will work to achieve it. I was persistent and I don't give up. I think persistence, and working through the challenges to achieve it, and how great it feels to have it done is the positive characteristic for success in this field.

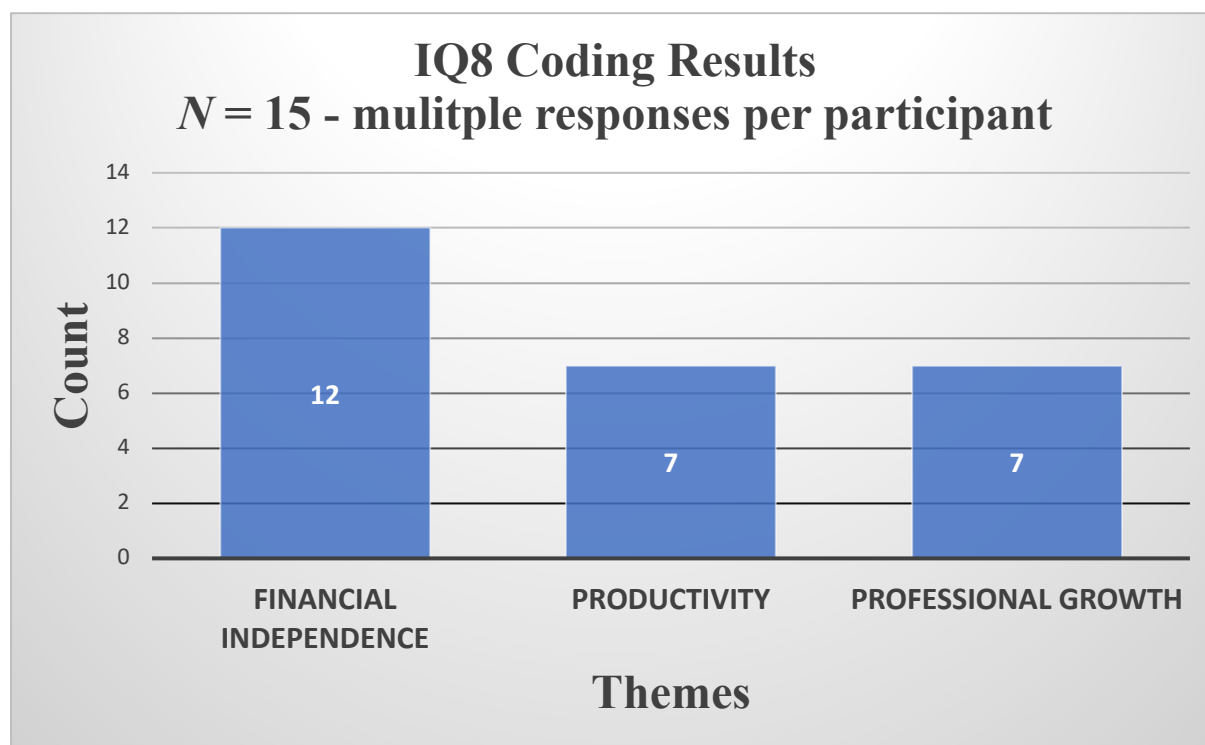
Participant 6 added, "I'm resilient. It's just about not giving up even when you feel like you're giving up so I just continue to focus and look at what's important." These answers provide the base of the theme and the answer to IQ7. Participant 7 stated,

Being honest and straightforward are personal and professional characteristics. For me, success, umm, it's about being open and honest. I don't lie, especially when I know I can get something done. I think my honesty and my sincerity are one of the characteristics that stands out, that helps me in this field to stand up and not give up.

Participant 1 mentioned stated that having a good character was important in facing hardships.

Honestly, I just do it. I mean, it's just comes in naturally to have a good character, there's no second guessing it. It just comes naturally. I've been sort of programmed that way since I was little. I've just been programmed to do what's in front of me in a way that I can and facing hardships with good character helps me to deal with it as it comes.

Interview Question 8. IQ8 asked, What does success mean to you professionally? Based on the thematic data analysis of the responses and the main keywords and expressions, a total of three themes occurred regarding success. The three themes were: (a) productivity (b) financial independence, and (c) professional growth. Figure 9 showed the thematic analysis in a bar chart for a visual representation of the count and themes.

Figure 9*Interview Question 8 Coding Results*

Financial Independence. Out of the 15 participants, 12 interviewees (80%) mentioned financial independence as success using keywords, such as staying out of debt, take care of myself financially, and financial peace. Participant 3 said,

For me, success means to me professionally, is to take being able to take care of myself financially because I am single now. And the best measure of success really is when your clients write a glowing review of your work, and it's so heartfelt.

Participants 12, 14, and 15 stated similarly that financial independence was the main way to measure success. According to Participant 8, "Financial independence is my success. But financial independence doesn't just come as being a high producer because you could be a high producer and still be broke." In addition, she also mentioned the importance of referrals as a pinnacle toward success. Also, Participant 7 said:

I mean, I'm at a point in my career that I'm not at that stage. Now I have the [financial] luxury at this age while most of my peers are still struggling. I'm basically financially independent. I mean, I'm still working, but if I didn't make a sale transaction for the next three months, it's not like I'm going to be homeless, or, you know what I'm saying? I think the motivation to work through the burnout is the rewards of this business.

Productivity. Seven out of 15 participants (46.7%) discussed productivity, which became the main theme with keywords, such as being productive, and productive hours. A couple participants mentioned different phrases indicating ways to accomplish productivity, such as waking up earlier and scheduling their tasks on their calendars. Participant 4 said,

It's good to know how you was selling in real estate and having a good year to show that because you have to think about being productive and having a successful year. This helps me take whatever successes I have, and then investing in myself, or taking other opportunities that come that come my way.

Participant 6 said, "Success means that I accomplished my goals. I'm a goal setter and that helps me, you know, stay productive. Once the goal is achieved, I know I've been successful."

Professional Growth. Seven out of 15 participants (46.7%) stated that professional growth was the meaning of success to them in the field of real estate. Keywords used were growth, learning new things, and more experience. Participant 1 mentioned, "Professionally, as you know, we are growing every day, we all learn something new every day. This is a very rewarding career. I consider this success. Nothing is repetitive. Everything is new every day."

Participant 2 stated learning how to play the guitar on the side while doing real estate as a way to grow new skills if she decided to leave the real estate market. Additionally, Participant 3 said, "I'm over half a century old and I'm still learning and growing. It's funny because I used to think that making money was success until I realized it wasn't about that." Participant 5 said learning market trends and educating herself daily was a large part of her success. "Attending real estate expos and conferences expands the knowledge of the Realtors and provides

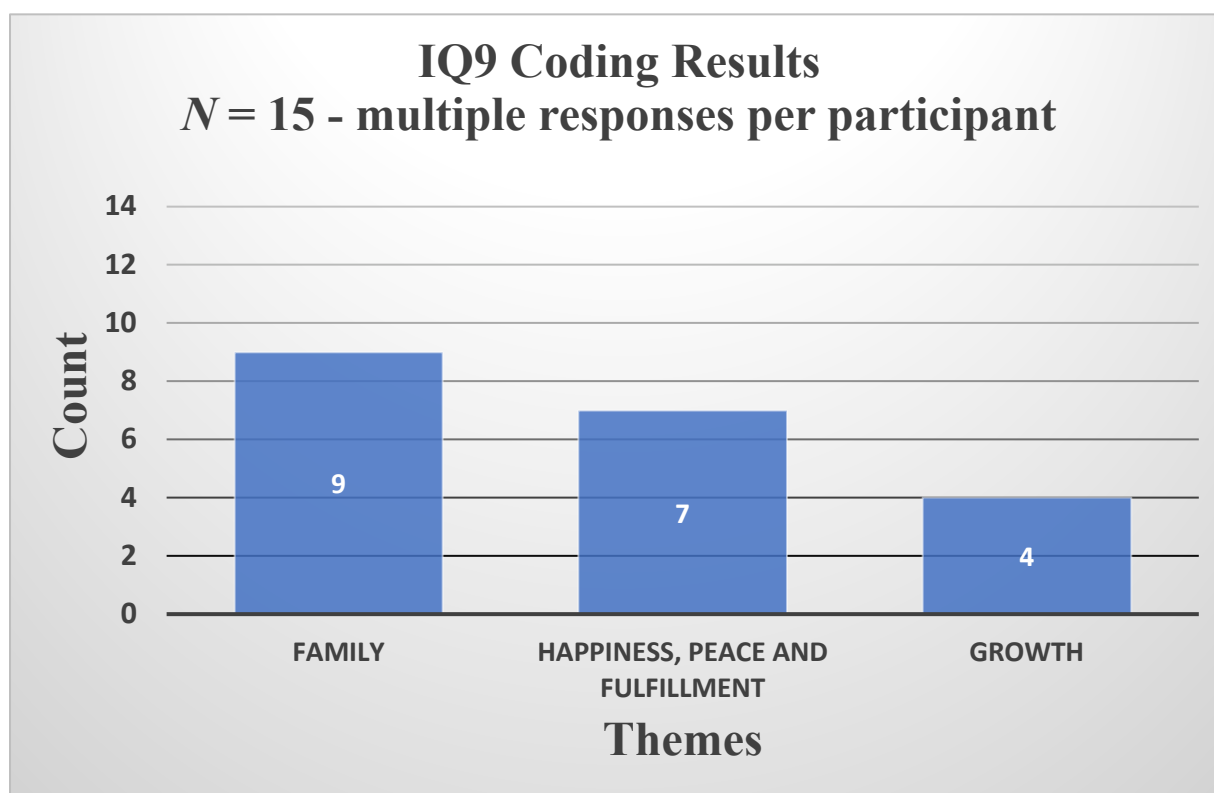
networking opportunities for us to acquire new clients which leads to maximizing our businesses.”

Interview Question 9. IQ9 asked, What does success mean to you in your personal life?

Based on the data analysis conducted on the participants’ responses and evaluating the main keywords and expressions, three themes emerged. These themes were: (a) family, (b) happiness, peace, and fulfillment, and (c) growth. Figure 10 showed the visual as a bar chart with the count and themes.

Figure 10

IQ9 Coding Results



Family. Nine out of 15 participants (60%) had answers related to the keyword, family which was what created this theme for this IQ. According to Participant 7, “To me success means being a great example for my children, that you can be a mother full time and have a

career at the same time. That's how I see it." Participant 5 said, "Success for me is having a close incredible relationship with my three children. They're everything to me, Also, for me, success is the amount of amazingly beautiful people that I have in my life." Additionally, Participant 4 said,

Success means being able to take care of my family and being able to take care of other family relatives. It means leaving a legacy behind for my heirs. It also means I have the money to take my mom on a vacation or if I want to help a family member who is struggling I can help and that's success.

Happiness, Peace and Fulfillment. Seven out of 15 participants (46.7%) stated keywords, such as happiness, satisfaction, fulfillment, and peace were the meaning of personal success in answering the IQ. For example, Participant 5 stated, "Success is happiness." Being successful in real estate was the answer one participant, Participant 7 expressed. In addition, Participant 1 said,

At the end of the day, I have the satisfaction and happiness that I've been able to help people or walk one step towards my goal, which is helping people. This is my personal success and it gives me a sense of peace.

In addition, several of the participants stated that they felt fulfilled as Realtors when they were able to help their clients find homes. This defined success for them. Participant 12 said, "It's so fulfilling honestly to help clients find homes and when they find homes that are their dream homes, I know I am successful."

Growth. Four out of 15 participants (26.7%) discussed growth as the way toward their personal success. Participant 5 said going to conferences and meeting others was one way to grow. She added,

I am continuing to grow in life and take advantage of different opportunities that helps me learn more about being successful. I have a servant leadership background and you know, I'm doing your best and try to come from my authentic self. You know there's continuous growth and opportunities and people and everything comes into your life when you take advantage of what comes your way and serve others.

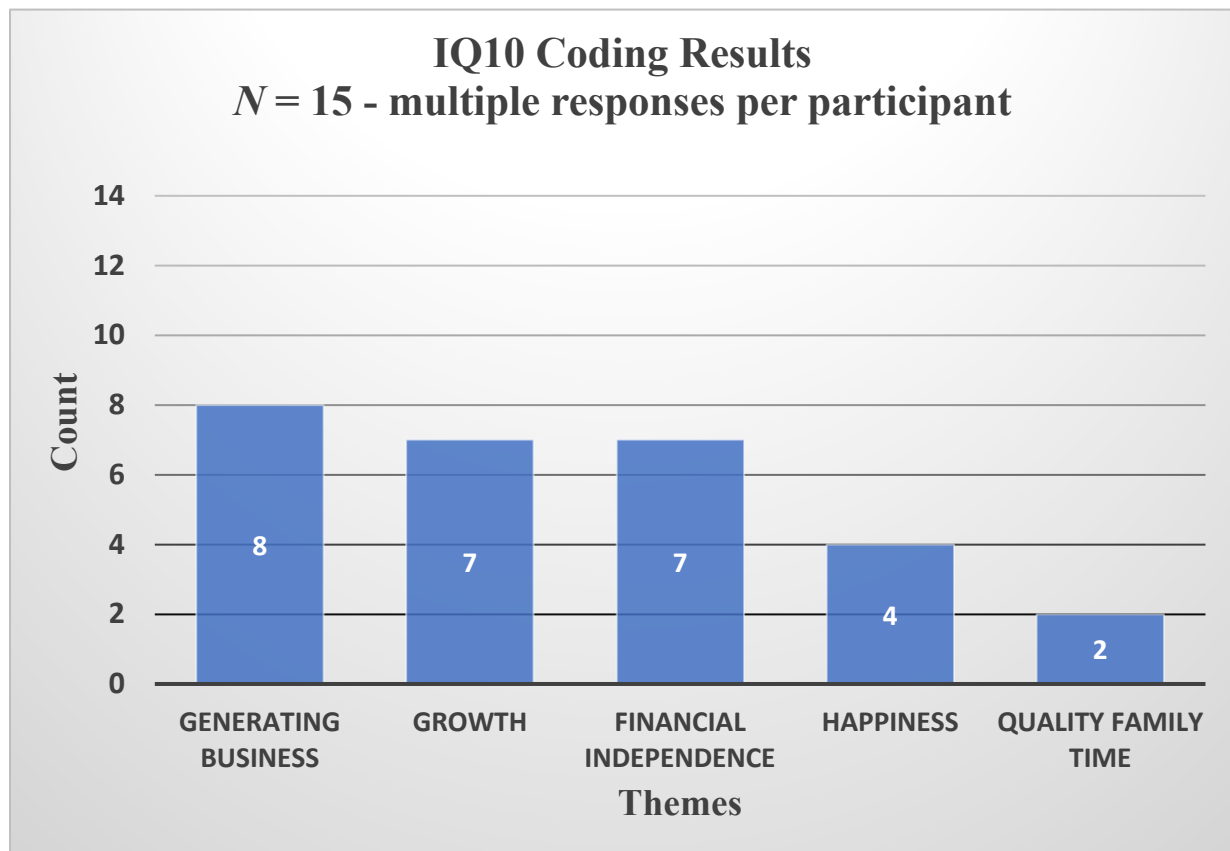
Participant 7 said learning new things helped her see successes at the personal level.

Interview Question 10. IQ10 asked, How do you measure success? Based on the data analysis of the responses, there were five themes generated. These themes were: (a) generating business, (b) growth, (c) financial independence, (d) happiness, and (e) quality family time.

Figure 11 showed the thematic analysis as a bar chart for visual representation.

Figure 11

IQ10 Coding Results



Generating Business. Eight out of 15 participants (53%) stated keywords, such as being proactive, generating leads, and prospecting was among the factors of measuring success. Thus, after analyzing the data, generating business became the main theme. According to Participant 2, “Measuring success means one has to consistently obtain new business on a regular basis and fill

the pipeline. Being proactive is pertinent strategy to stay in the business.” According to

Participant 6,

Knowing that if I’m not going to be there, let’s say if I stopped working for six months, then my clients, where are they gonna go? They’re gonna go to somewhere else. Because of the type of business I have with repeat clients, I have to be there. At the same time, because they are repeat clients, the minute they know, if something is going on with my life, they’re very understanding. You know, because I don’t have to prove myself to them 100 times. I think this kind of the business we’re in, if you establish it, right, you, you can have a lot of rewards a lot of flexibility.

Participant 2 said,

It is essential to transact negotiations and if that is successful, then I know I can measure it. If my clients are happy, if I’m able to generate leads, if I’m able to advocate for my clients, this means I am successful.”

Growth. The theme growth, was discovered yet again in thematic analysis as keywords such as education, knowledge and continuous growth were used to describe this topic. Seven out of 15 participants (46.7%) said growth was an important factor toward measuring success. Participant 5 expressed the notion of “growing in life” as the way to measure success. Participant 6 said “If I learned something new, that’s success for me.” Participant 11 and 12 stated growth helped them to measure success and overcome challenges.

Financial Independence. Again, participants defined financial independence as their measurement toward success. Seven out of 15 participants (46.7%) stated when they closed the deals, sold the homes and generated profit for the sales, they felt successful. Participant 15 said, “Once the deal is closed, the sale is done, I am successful.” Other participants, such as Participant 10 noted, “Financial independence is a means of success for me because I am able to take care of myself and my family financially without thinking about how I will get paid the next day. The large commissions mean success.”

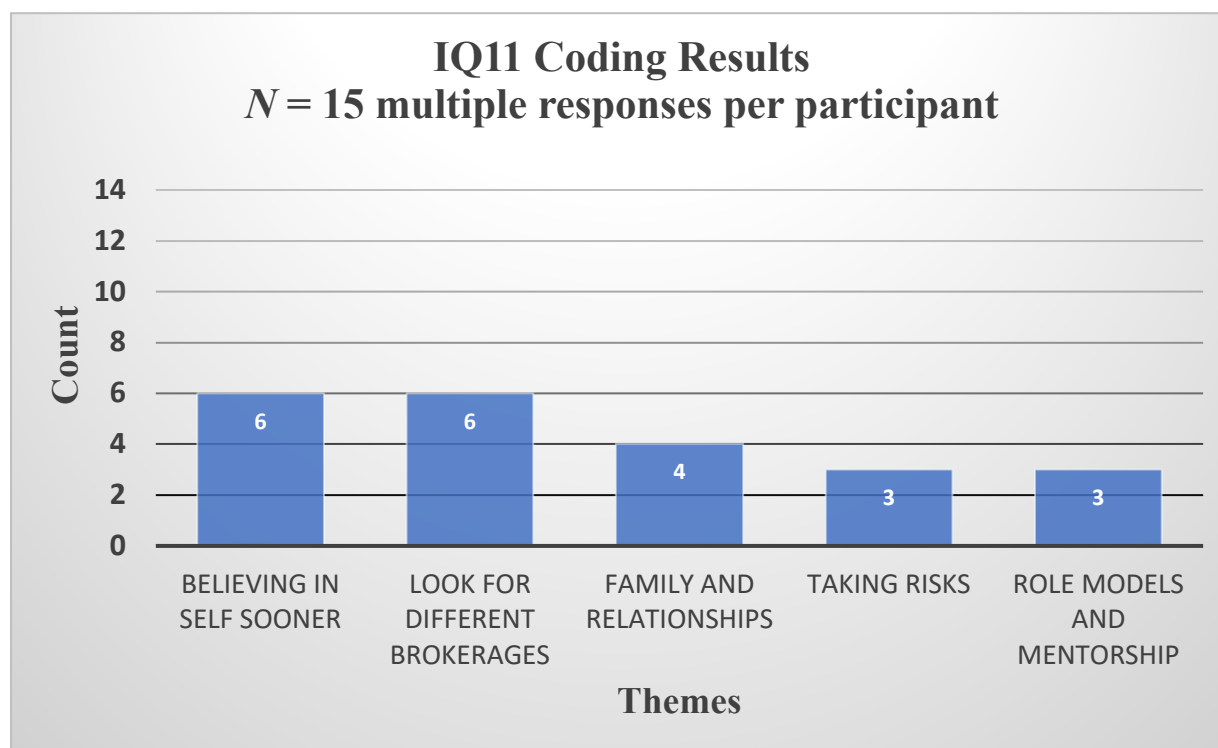
Happiness: Four out of 15 participants (26.7%) stated that happiness in their work was a measurement to success and was the keyword used along with happy, and being happy.

Participant 4 mentioned:

I measure success when I'm complimented on how well I did my job, and how well I represented clients. I mean, you can dissect it in so many ways, but knowing that I accomplished something and I closed the deal, which made my clients happy is a measurement of success, if that's the good if that's a good way of answering that question.

Quality Family Time: The theme of quality family time was answered by only two participants as their measurement toward success, yet the researcher found this theme to be important as part of the analysis. For example, Participant 3 said, "I measure my success based on the relationships I have with my family and friends. Relationships and quality family time are the successes over the material success of money." Participant 9 said, "I need to be there for my family and when I am, I achieved success."

Interview Question 11. IQ11 asked, If you start your journey over, how would you do it differently? Based on the data analysis of the responses and the main keywords and expressions, the following five themes were created (a) believing in self sooner, (b) looking for different brokerages, (c) family and relationships, (d) taking risks, and (d) role models and mentorship. Figure 12 showed a visual representation of the themes and count in the form of a bar chart.

Figure 12*IQ11 Coding Results*

Believing in Self Sooner. Six out of 15 participants (37.5%) mentioned that they wished they had believed in their own success sooner. For example, Participant 7 said, “I was lost when I was young and didn’t know what to do, mostly cause I didn’t believe in myself sooner. I went through jobs, everything but I wish I had started sooner with real estate.” Another participant, Participant 5 said she wished, “I had believed in myself sooner because I had a setback in life and retreated instead of powering through.”

Looking for Different Brokerages. Six out of 15 participants (37.5%) said if they started their journey over, they would look for different brokerages. Participant 14 said, “I would definitely recommend looking for different brokerages and shop around before settling because it makes a world of a difference when you work with the right brokerage.” Participant 12 said, “I’d work on finding a brokerage that had more women present because we need a brokerage that’s

supportive.” Other participants noted it was best to shop around and this was something they would do if they could start their journey over again. Participant 8 mentioned:

I always thinking of that and telling all my mentees that just first step is choose the best company which has like the best training because when you get your license, you don't know anything you're lost. But with the with the training, you just learn and someone like as a mentor, you learn, I didn't have that I started with really small Moms and Pops company without any training for a couple of years. So I feel like I wasted my time. But yeah, just choose the best company in company.

According to Participant 2:

I would interview other brokerages before joining them I didn't know what to look for. So I just sort of you know figured it out myself and this is the third brokerage so I like to hear and some people go some people shop or it's first important to you some people shop around with the percentages and oh, I got the best deal over here and I'll make the most money over here but to me it's not about the money. It's more about relationships. So I think that's been my my later theme in life. So I would have moved then again, maybe I wouldn't have appreciated Central 21 so much if I hadn't, you know been at the other two brokerages other agents always, almost always say they would have gotten a coach right away.

Family and Relationships. Four out of 15 participants (26.7%) felt that they would have changed the amount of time spent with family if they were to do this journey again. The keywords were family and family time. Participant 4 mentioned, “I would take more personal time off. I would spend more time with my family, I would concentrate more on my personal life. I wouldn't do a lot of the stuff I would do over again. Because I think that I took more risks when I was younger.

Taking Risks. Three out of 15 participants (20%) answered that they would take more risks in their journey. Keywords that described this theme were risk taking, and challenging myself more. Participant number 7 mentioned:

I would have done it sooner. I would have done it sooner. Because I feel like when you're just graduating high school, you're lost. You don't know what you want to do. But, you know, you go through jobs and you try everything. I wish I had gone into real estate when I was a little bit more younger. I had kids stayed home did odd jobs here and there,

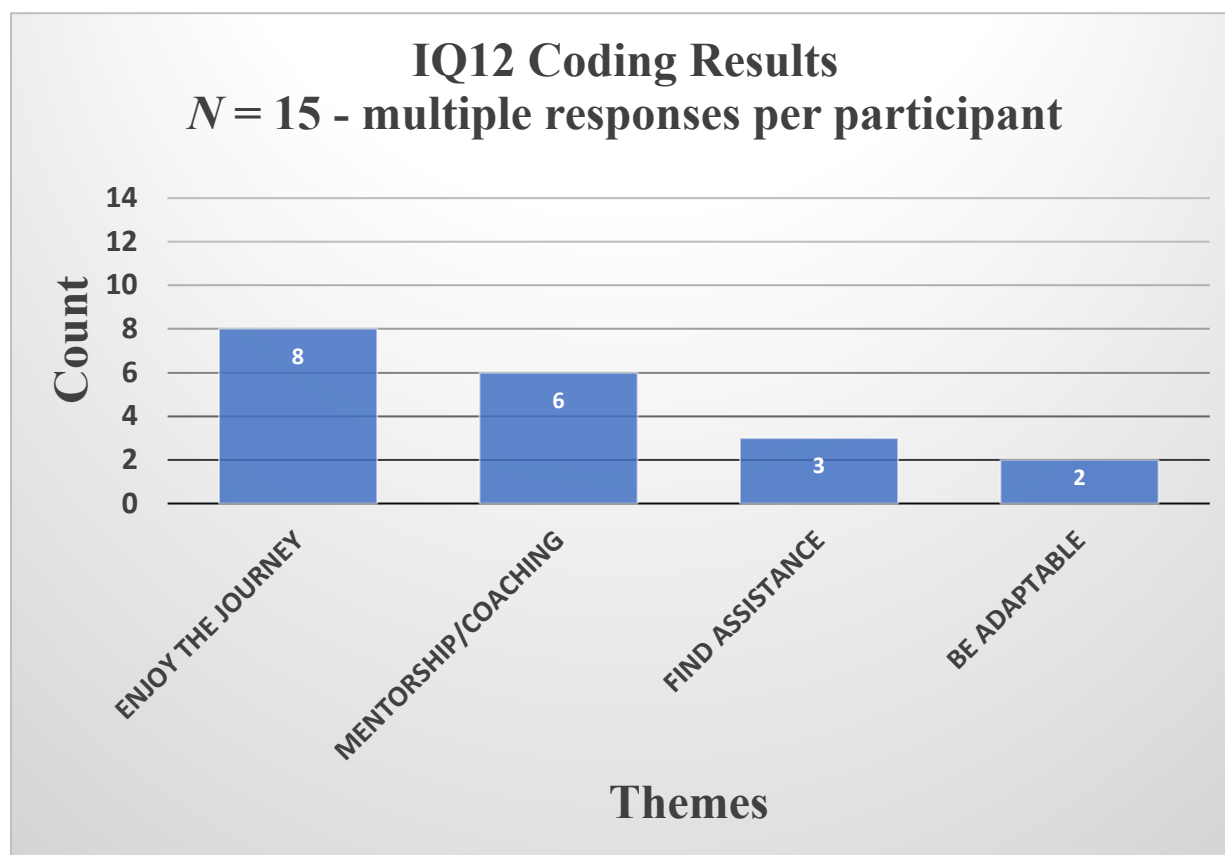
but I wish I had done it sooner. I wish I had been a real estate agent when I was much younger and not started when I was in my 30s.

Participant 2 mentioned how she would even become more of a risk taker as follows:

I am now, I mean, I took a lot more risks, meaning I bought my first house I was 19 years old. That was a that was crazy. Now, I mean, looking back, I'm like, what were you thinking? I opened my office, I was barely 27 years old, why would I even take that responsibility. So investment properties are in doing certain things. So I think that the only thing I would do over again.

Role Models and Mentorship. Three out of 15 participants (20%) stated if they would start their journey over again, they would get mentors immediately. Keywords for this theme were role models, mentorship and look up to mentors. Participant 13 said, "I would get a mentor because I didn't know what to do when I first started working as a Realtor. It took me a while to learn the ropes before I was able to get a hang of it." Participant 10 said, "Mentorship!! Get mentors and learn from them as much as possible. It's what I would have done if I had to start all over again." Participant 14 said "Follow your role models because they are the best mentors to help you be successful in real estate."

Interview Question 12. IQ12 asked, Is there anything else you would like to add? Based on the data analysis showed on the responses and the main keywords and expressions the four themes were (a) enjoy the journey (b) mentorship/coaching, (c) find assistance, and (d) be adaptable. Figure 13 showed a visual representation in the form of a bar chart with the thematic analysis.

Figure 13*IQ12 Coding Results*

Enjoy the Journey. This theme was answered by eight out of 15 participants (53%) who stated that they would enjoy the journey of becoming a real estate agent again if they had to start over. Participants also mentioned keywords, such as enjoy life, create experiences and no regrets which was the thematic analysis that created this theme.

According to Participant 5

At the end of the day, we need to enjoy life. Yeah, do we work hard? Absolutely. But we want to enjoy life right? We want to get to the end of the road of whatever that looks like with no regret, saying hey, you know what? I loved I learned I experienced I took advantage. I always say this is heaven on earth. [Many] times, people wait to experience things. They go, oh, I'll wait and experience it later. Do it now, be in the moment. Do it now because we don't know what the next moment is, and just love on life. Love on others and just be you; be okay being you. Don't be the person that you believe other people think you should be.

Mentorship/Coaching. Six out of 15 participants (40%) mentioned they would hire a mentor or a coach if they had to start over again in the journey of becoming a real estate agent.

Keywords were, coaching, mentor, and life coach. Participant number 8 mentioned:

If I had to do it over, I would have gotten a coach. I think coaches are important. I've had one when I was on a team. I had them pay for a coach for a while, and it was not a good time. My stepdad had passed a few weeks earlier, and I said, this is not a good time for me to be coached. No, it's the best time to be coached. Anyway, I don't feel like I got the best out of the coaching I did have, but I do see the value in it, were they force you to set the goals and they force you to do it by their accountability. They become more of a friend, I think because it's coaching not just in real estate, they do touch on other parts of your life, because of the parts of your life affect your real estate and affect your career.

Participants 10, 13, 14, and 15 said they would add to get mentors or at least have role models in place to help with the real estate journey, especially for new Realtors coming into the industry.

"Without them, we won't be able to know much and it will take longer to learn the ropes," said Participant 13.

Find Assistance. Three out of 15 participants (20%) said it would be easiest to find assistance from the beginning. Keywords for this theme were virtual assistant, assistant, and get help. Participant 4 suggested finding a virtual assistant, and Participant 11 and 14 said they would suggest asking for help when things become overwhelming. While this was not a prevalent theme, it was imperative because the findings show that participants who had help were able to avoid burnout or at least overcome the challenges before reaching burnout levels.

Be Adaptable. In this final theme, the researcher noted only three participants out of 15 (20%) stated adaptability as key and participants added that it was important to be adaptable.

Participant 13 said,

Our schedule can change within the day depending on the clients who call us or who we have to meet during the day, so we have to be adaptable. Although this is our business and we say we set our own schedules, adaptability is important. If your client needs you

to come see a house with them on a Sunday, you have to drop what you're doing to come to them; it's the name of the game.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological research was to identify the elements to the successful Realtors WLB. To achieve those results through this phenomenological research study, 15 successful female Realtors were located and interviewed for the purpose of this study. All 15 interviewees were asked the 12 semi-structured interview questions designed to provide evidence to the four research questions:

- RQ1: What challenges and obstacles do female Realtors face in their professional lives?
- RQ2: What strategies and best practices do female Realtors employ to overcome the challenges they face in their professional lives?
- RQ3: How do female Realtors define and measure and track their success in their professional lives?
- RQ4: What recommendations do current female Realtors make to aspiring female Realtors to become more successful in their professional lives?

Data for this study was gathered through 15 semi-structured interviews. The principal researcher analyzed and coded the data and then validated the results with two inter-raters who were doctoral students at Pepperdine university. Table 4 provided a list of the themes for the four research questions derived from the data analysis.

Table 4*Thematic Analysis of RQs and Corresponding IQs*

RQ1 Challenges	RQ2 Strategies & Practices	RQ3 Measurements of Success	RQ4 Recommendations
Satisfaction	Standing the ground	Satisfying clients	Believing in self sooner
Make a difference	Believing in self	Never give up	Taking risks
Make an impact	Knowledge and research	Positivity	Looking for different brokerages
Happiness, peace and joy	Strategy	Productivity	Family and relationships
Impact	Time with family	Financial independence	Role models and mentorship
Flexibility	Lack of balance	Professional growth	Mentorship/coaching
Gender issues	Lack of boundaries	Quality Family time	Enjoy the journey
Learning curve	Making time for self	Happiness and peace	Find assistance
Family	Setting boundaries	Growth	Mentorship/Coaching
Client challenges	Goal settings	Generating business	Be adaptable
	Time management		
	Mentorship		

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the literature review discussed in Chapter 2, female Realtors experience challenges in balancing between their work and home life as they are unable to fully establish a healthy equilibrium amid responsibilities to their clients and their personal lives. This includes childcare and family activities that women cater to. The demands and obligations for female Realtors present substantial encounters to overall life and work fulfilment. According to Chung and Van der Lippe (2018), cultural and societal norms present significant issues in WLB and family obligations for women. In addition, based on the findings, women Realtors find that burnout happens when there are unable to find happiness and job satisfaction they seek for within the industry.

As revealed in the literature review, in examining a study conducted by McDougall (2016), WLB can be expressed as quality time conflict. As such, misunderstandings may originate from various roles women in the real estate undertake. Furthermore, WLB might be unachievable when family and work life are not in balance with each other and the individual cannot enjoy both their personal and professional lives. This means, the individual's involvement in their work life and lack of participation in their personal lives with their families or with their own well-being becomes challenging. Thus, this phenomenological research's main purpose was to understand the reasons why women Realtors have been challenged with achieving WLB, what their most rewarding experiences have been working within the real estate sector, and then bring together the strategies that worked for successful women Realtors who have been able to overcome challenges and achieved WLB while reducing burnout. This research aimed to be added to the literature on women Realtors as there is not much information about WLB and women in residential real estate. This chapter summarized the four research questions with the

corresponding interview questions that were asked of the participants, and concludes the study with further recommendations of research in other areas within the real estate industry regarding WLB.

Summary of the Study

To observe the need for WLB among women Realtors, the following research questions were developed:

- RQ1: What challenges and obstacles do female Realtors face in their professional lives?
- RQ2: What strategies and best practices do female Realtors employ to overcome the challenges they face in their professional lives?
- RQ3: How do female Realtors define and measure and track their success in their professional lives?
- RQ4: What recommendations do current female Realtors make to aspiring female Realtors to become more successful in their professional lives?

This qualitative phenomenological study was conducted to measure the challenges experienced by women Realtors in the residential real estate market to understand their strategies in overcoming burnout and successfully achieve WLB. Participants in this study were women Realtors who fit the criteria of inclusion and were asked to identify their lived experiences and the how they conquered those challenges while attaining a level of balance between there life and work. The literature review guided the researcher to the four research questions and 12 interview questions, and 15 participants were interviewed. The interviews were recorded with the obtained permission before the conducted interviews. Each participant signed the informed consent form. After the interviews were completed, they were transcribed using an application

software. Data collection and analysis was done by going through the transcriptions and all notable phases and key words were marked. Thus, this chapter focused on answering the research questions based on the findings in tandem with the literature review.

This study's purpose consisted of two sections, the first section was to add to the body of literature regarding overcoming burnout feelings of female Realtors regarding facing the challenges in WLB. The second purpose was to create a model which would enable women Realtors within the real estate industry, in residential real estate as well as commercial real estate to adopt strategies that have helped other Realtors attain WLB. Hence, Chapter 1 provided the background of women in real estate, women in leadership, and the challenges female Realtors face. Chapter 2 examined the existing body of literature on the history of women in real estate, the challenges of women in real estate, the issues for overcoming burnout in WLB, gender discrimination, and other obstacles female Realtor's face. In addition, the literature facilitated the things that were analyzed during data collection, offering understanding into the causes of burnout among female Realtors.

Purposive sampling and the criteria of inclusions were utilized to select the participants of the study. The potential participants were selected through LinkedIn as well as the researchers contacts on the social media platforms. In this study the principal researcher applied a qualitative phenomenological methodology. Qualitative methodology was used to obtain information from lived experiences through various ways, such as grounded theory, narrative, and ethnography as a means of exploring information from participants through tools, such as field observations and interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2018). As such, this study researched the phenomenon of women Realtors and the best practices and strategies of having a better WLB.

Discussion of Findings

The goal of this qualitative study was to observe and examine the concept of WLB among female Realtors. Additionally, this study seeks to recommend the strategies to overcome the challenges of WLB and burnout. The 15 participants were interviewed and during the interviews the challenges of the Realtors were examined which they face in their career.

The objective of this study was to observe, assess, and identify the discrepancies in WLB of professional and personal challenges practiced by the interviewees. Every one of the observation for each interviewed Realtor is unique, although through the process of analyzation of the data common themes were extracted to incorporate the recommended changes for aspiring Realtors.

Results for RQ1

The first research question sought to examine the concept of WLB challenges female Realtors encounter throughout their career. The question asked, what challenges and obstacles do female Realtors face in their professional lives.

Discussion of RQ1. The findings of the research question were based on the three associated interview questions which asked participants what their most rewarding experience were in their career, what made that experience so rewarding and what their significant professional challenges were in their journey to become a successful female Realtor? Based on the findings, while women Realtors enjoyed their role as real estate agents and found it satisfying to fulfill their clients dreams of purchasing their homes, they also found challenges in being able to find time with their family. In addition, most of the participants discussed that they felt they did not give enough time to their families, and some added their challenges were also related to gender issues at work, such as more male dominance in higher roles within real estate

brokerages, although, according to several participants, there were more women than men in real estate. Finally, participants mentioned that real estate was a 24 hour job and by not attending to a client's call, they could lose potential business, leading to a decline in productivity and income.

A study conducted by Bjuggren et al. (2018) suggested that people who worked more hours in the workplace were likely to have difficulty achieving WLB. This is because the participation in these activities was associated with the extreme pressure to generate sales with clients who buy or sell, affecting most of the women who are also grossly engaged in family activities. Bjuggren et al. described superwoman syndrome where women in leadership undergo external pressure and self-imposed expectations. The understanding that women cater to the responsibilities of family life has contributed more to external pressure. Since women often dominate family activities, that has increased the pressure to cope in this field because real estate can be very demanding. The report also indicates the only way to succeed involved was to remain connected to their phones throughout the day. As such, the chance to have a perfect personal life outside working environments can be difficult to achieve for female Realtors.

Commercial Real Estate Women Network, founded in 1989, indicated that most of the women in the real estate industry are aged in their 60s with more experience than those who have entered real estate currently. Therefore, newer and younger women who have more commitments are likely to experience intense pressure due to overwhelming duties. The study also explained that women with over 20 years' experience stood a chance of greater job satisfaction and were happier with their work. They were also able to have a balanced work-life and with progressive development in their personal life. This was associated with the ability to master the real estate business's operations and an upgrade of job level to a less engaging task (Burke, 2016).

A study conducted by Rogers and Koh (2017) on women in real estate proposed that most women desired completeness in their lives characterized by successful incorporation of work and life and acquiring a balance between the two, not forgetting other personal activities. As compared to men, most of the female Realtors in the real estate sector were able to attain this equilibrium easily. However, it remained a problematic experience altogether. The study concluded that four criteria help determine the rate at which one achieved comprehensiveness. These criteria include:

- defining clear priorities,
- setting boundaries within a work-life,
- a reflection on spiritual nourishment that may involve participation in personal development, developing mindset growth and other breathtaking activities one may be passionate about, and
- identifying multiple roles that they can learn and multitask.

This study concluded that these four elements' realization may be a difficult task for brokers in real estate due to high job demands. However, gender analysis describes that most men do not get any close to the realization of this completeness because they get consumed with the desire to earn more and nothing else. It can be compared to women who have to balance personal responsibilities like family and work.

The strongest theme which resonated in RQ1 RQ2 and RQ3 was the gender issue. In male-dominated industries, females are at a disadvantage in ways that are either subtle or more offensive. Several brokerage firms are still hyper-masculine, and it is more challenging each day for females to make headways in such firms. Work ethics and cultures that are retrogressive still take place in many real estate firms, often going against the goals of the female gender. As a

woman strives to achieve a WLB, they find that people within that specific cultural norm criticize them for not working enough or not spending enough time with their families.

This issue of gender discrimination is persistent in the business and causes female Realtors to be undermined, and their progress hindered. Attaining WLB for a female Realtor can become extremely challenging (Jones, 2018), especially when they are trying to increase their revenue growth. This results in undermining and disrespecting of the women in real estate which makes them work much harder to achieve the same respect and dignity given to a male Realtor. Although there are many female Realtors in the industry, they continue to get discouraged and drop out as a result of frustration, declined productivity, unfair treatment and even harassment.

Often, women will have to let go of one thing to acquire the other. For female Realtors, it is making progress to have time for family or extended leave. Women show extreme success in cases where they take part in small enterprises, and for that matter, there is an increased percentage of women leaving brokerage firms to go and start their own firms. Female Realtors play an essential role in cultivating specific values in companies that let them take positions of leadership. A culture shift is needed in established real estate firms to enable change and offer more opportunities for female Realtors.

A vibrant and convincing WLB plays a vital role in lifting female Realtors into leadership roles (Soo-Cheen et al., 2020). Similarly, the women Realtors in leadership positions face unlimited responsibilities, primarily balancing their professional careers and family life. The competing interests of the family life and work-life present significant challenges for women because they interrupt the success of women's careers in real estate brokerage. The activities that dominate a female Realtor's personal life include spirituality, health, family, and leisure. According to Soo-Cheen et al. (2020), the conflict that brings about work life imbalance causes

anxiety, limiting the ability to attain full potential in leadership among women in real estate brokerage. Thus, as the women attempt to balance additional responsibilities from the leadership roles, they experience pressure and burnout. Residential real estate forms most of a person's wealth portfolio, which prompts the customers to hire Realtors to coordinate the transactions (McCormick, 2015). Thus, the real estate demands take a toll on the emotional wellbeing, happiness, and overall life quality of the industry's women. Consequently, the optimal WLB Realtors requires innovative leadership to promote, educate and empower the women to cope with the underlying pressure of work. The NAR estimates that more than 5 million deals involving residential real estate were effectuated in 2015 (McCormick, 2015). The participants in this study shared their challenges which was in alignment with the literature study.

According to Boardman (2013), most of the NAR leaders are men. While the female labor force has participated in real estate brokerage for several decades, their leadership progress has not been acknowledged in the public sphere. The quandary that Boardman (2013) presented in his argument posited that while the female workforce increased exponentially in real estate, their leadership roles remain limited in the industry. Leaders have the power to influence attitudes and behavior based on the organizational cultures. Thus, WLB influences the bases of power that help to maintain the leadership positions. Women's susceptibility to work-life imbalance compromises their leadership roles by limiting the bases of power that influence individuals in real estate brokerage. Research points out that power forms part of the influence process because it can enforce the organizational culture. Thus, the participants who pointed out the gender issues they experienced as Realtors in brokerage firms stated they did not have the opportunities to attain leadership roles as literature also suggests.

The success of female Realtors to develop teams of leaders involves the practice of ethics commonalities in leadership. The Women's Council of Realtors assists women through various events in this sector based on leadership and education about the challenges of the problems such as WLB. The leaders should influence groups of people by assisting them to learn their values, demands, and commitments while incorporating them with the common goals in the organizational culture and the values of the leaders. Research concludes that ethical leaders are responsible for treating individuals with equality and fairness because the followers make autonomous decisions to follow the leaders. On the same note, the female leaders have the responsibility to be truthful and honest. The experiences of female Realtors about leadership roles and the challenges of WLB provide significant insight into female leaders' success in real estate brokerage (Aluya, 2009). Since individual behavioral patterns influence individuals, the challenges of WLB among the women in real estate limit their chances of success as a result of decline in productivity.

According to Steffansson Pauli (2014), the main component of complete work-life satisfaction is matching the time spent at work and home. Also, longer work hours can impact health, safety, or efficiency. Gender stereotypes also affect how individuals spend their time from the perspective of work-life. The men spend most of their time on paid work while the female labor force focus most of their time on family responsibilities (Glasgow & Sang, 2016). Because of outside influences, many women are reluctant to work as much as men.

Married women face restrictions because they are expected to attend to household duties on time. Ensuring that children's needs are fulfilled is a big concern for mothers (Glasgow & Sang, 2016). Because of this limitation, where there is work pressure or an immediate time limit under which women frequently struggle to reach or pull their weight on the team from their male

counterparts. The apparent lack of commitment of women to work in a job under pressure causes frustration and a desire to sideline women in terms of work distribution. There are substantial gender variations in how people perceive equilibrium. Both men and women are trying to press for policy reform due to the various factors they have. Women in the workforce experience conflict-laden work lives but assign the conflict to their individual decisions. Fathers are more comfortable with their work-family arrangement when accompanied by a conventional gendered division of labor at home. New policies aimed at supporting WLB for men and women can only have the desired impact if they target gendered family arrangements (Glasgow & Sang 2016; Steffansson Pauli, 2014). WLB requires a feeling of accomplishment in all aspects of a person's life while also requiring a personal sense of strength and commitment. Balancing work and life is a test for everyone in the workplace, and especially for parents. This dilemma can contribute to both personal and social issues. WLB is a term that is appropriate in how individuals prioritize business and personal affairs. WLB is a common problem across societies, and different techniques have been created to alleviate it.

Work has long been a critical priority of human lives. Gender is one of the fundamental attributes used to differentiate sex. An assumed social norm prescribes the roles that men and women are to play. It reflects on the physical, social, and physiological contexts related explicitly to men and women (Chung & Van der Lippe, 2018). The roles of women and men are different depending on the culture. Over the past few decades, there has been an increased interest in investigating the factors that affect workers' satisfaction, and gender disparities have been a subject of the study (Ajala, 2017). Regardless of society, women have been regarded as caretakers, mothers, and wives whose primary roles are child-raising and household duties.

Males are burdened with various duties like political, fiscal, and military successes that require great bravery.

Women's household and childcare roles demand versatility, which helps them, balance work and family duties more comfortably than men (Glasgow & Sang, 2016). Women tend to be attracted to occupations where they are most likely to enjoy being hired. Although neoclassical economic theory suggests that occupations may evolve into female occupations due to sex stereotyping, human capital contributed to incorporating women into flexible employment (Ajala, 2017). Therefore while household tasks raise women's desires for versatility in employment, the stereotyping of specific jobs can also affect the kind of jobs open to them. A global shift is developing in that individuals are becoming less likely to be caregivers and more likely to be career oriented, focusing on their professions.

Summary of RQ1

The first research question, RQ1, is concentrated on examining and observing work-life challenges women Realtors face when employing strategies and practices that have directed them to their success. Women Realtors experience gender issues at their career. In the current society, a woman Realtor has to present assertive virtues and show independence to have an equal ground in the real estate competitive market (Jones, 2018). When such matters build-up, stress becomes elevated on the females' side (Chung & Van der Lippe, 2018).

Women Realtors struggle to let go of one thing to acquire the other. Often, for female Realtors, it is preceding progress to have time for family over the career with some exceptions. The primary restraint in female labor participation originates from achieving a balance between home and work duties (Burg-Brown, 2013). The challenge of balancing the family and work-life depends on reconciling the extended working hours via a time management scheme. According

to Feeney and Stritch (2019), men have the flexibility to choose the extent of the participation in home errands compared to women. Unlike men, women have limited choice in the context of performing the household chores and child responsibilities. Poirier (2009) posits that work environment and support system play a significant role in influencing WLB. According to Burg-Brown (2013), women in the labor workforce have several competing interests and responsibilities: household tasks, volunteering activities, marriage, caring for the children and the elderly, and societal expectations. The popularity of the WLB as a discourse has continued to increase as more women continue to venture into the real estate labor market amidst the impact on family domains.

Results for RQ2

The second research question answers, What strategies and best practices do female Realtors employ to overcome the challenges they face in their professional lives?

Discussion of RQ2. The findings of the research question were based on the three associated interview questions that asked, what strategies they used to overcome these professional challenges, what were the more significant personal challenges, they faced toward their journey to success which included follow up questions on creating WLB and burnout, and what strategies they used to overcome these challenges.

According to the participants' responses, keeping their goals and plans and being tenacious helped them overcome their personal and professional challenges. Having an attitude of not giving up helped them to embrace growth. The participants were more willing to endure during the challenges, including burnout for a greater comeback.

Schaufeli et al. (2009) articulate that burnout represents one of the primary elements of work-life imbalance. The phenomenon increases the risk of career damage for real estate

professionals. Realtors have the constant pressure to work hard and increase their commitment to their responsibilities and duties. According to Xavier (2019), burnout refers to the exhaustion of an individual's mental capabilities from stress in the work environment. In addition, Xavier adds that stress at work augments an indicative environment for psychological health. The demands of the real estate brokerage and transactions result in stress accumulation that extends to family life. Runsbeck et al. (2016) explained that women Realtors have a pleasurable experience when they start their duties and responsibilities in the industry. The real estate business instigates innovative learning incentives, flexibility in the work schedules, and the urge to develop professionally, which causes the women to ignore the long working hours, the intrinsic stress, and the problematic clients they encounter during the real estate transactions.

Love et al. (2011) and Rawlins (2008) stated that burnout affects the interaction between Realtors and consumers. The subject of coping with burnout in the real estate industry gets little consideration for the Realtors. The propensity associated with real estate broker burnout among the female workers can be minimized by introducing orientation coping strategies. Stress in the work environment epitomizes a primary determinant that influences female Realtors' psychological health, performance, and organizational productivity depending on the characteristics of the agency responsibilities (Jones et al., 2006; Love et al., 2011). The continuous interactions of the agents with the customers represent one of the causative factors of stress among women in real estate brokerage (Rawlins, 2008). In this case, the dynamics of housing market escalates the demand and supply phenomenon supply phenomenon to increase the responsibilities and work pressure for the agents because of the fact that agents are always on the call sometimes buyers and sellers contact their agents way out of business hours regarding their feelings associated with the ongoing daily changes happening during close of the escrows.

Love et al. (2011) recommended that the stakeholders in the real estate industry should identify the factors that contribute to female real estate broker burnouts. The overwhelming consequence of burnout among the women Realtors in the work environment presents a critical challenge based on the WLB associated with productivity and health promotion factors. The women's psychological and physical wellness in the real estate sector affects both their life satisfaction and job satisfaction. Love et al. conducted a study on burnout among Realtors by identifying the factors associated with the work environment that creates the problem. The study found out that the hours at work per week determined the challenge of emotional exhaustion. An increase in the working hours had a corresponding susceptibility to burnout. Similarly, the number of clients the real estate broker visited determined the likelihood of emotional exhaustion and burnout. The number of clients visited determines the compensation matrix for the Realtor; thus, the Realtors strive to visit more clients to increase their commission and earnings. The drive to achieve reward contributes to burnout that causes adverse effects on the WLB.

Nevertheless, when the new real estate responsibilities' intriguing nature diminishes, the women Realtors adopt a pattern of repetitiveness and boredom from the demands of Realtors. The repetition of the long working hours represents a roadmap for burnout. Runsbech et al. (2016) acknowledged that real estate harbors more burnout experiences than other sectors. Similarly, the women Realtors lack the awareness to identify the patterns of work schedules and the long working hours as a risk to their WLB. More studies should focus on the burnout issues in different sectors to accentuate awareness and promote education. The initiative has the potential to layout solutions for reducing Realtor burnout. Burnout in the real estate industry entails several elements that contribute to the problem. The extensive working hours, workloads, hostility, and the exhaustion of the mind to cope with the transaction describe the extent of

burnout among female Realtors. Biron and Burke (2014) pointed out that the feelings of irritation and impatience towards clients represent burnout symptoms among female Realtors.

Galaty et al. (2002) articulated that Realtors' success depends on the interactions that focus on the clients. As the clients increase their knowledge, the real estate based on information access and technological advances, the expectations of good services change to exert more pressure on the female Realtors to improve the services. The real estate agencies generate a form of legal relationship that highlights the liabilities and duties that guide the practice of real estate agencies. According to Galaty et al. (2002), the interaction between the real estate agents with the consumers and other parties forms a complicated relationship based on the legal responsibilities assigned to the broker towards the buyers and seller of property. Real estate burnout largely refers to a real estate employee dropping one's power in the job. The significant wants in the real estate can have a negative effect on the broker's bodily and internal health and thereby endanger their careers. During the early first days in the business, everything runs smoothly, and the female estate brokers become dedicated to their work. This would make women overlook the inconveniences that come with the business, such as long working hours. However, with time, their hard work becomes unappreciated, and therefore female Realtors get into a norm that leads into a rut of reoccurrence and hardships that become a road burnout. Some signs of burnout are becoming ironic and cynical at work and lacking the power to always be productive (Steffansson Pauli, 2016).

A study done by Budhwar et al. (2006) depicts that the largest problem encountered by female Realtors in the current society is managing their WLB or their dual responsibilities of company managers and homemakers. Women deal with vast amounts of stress induced by the pressure and load of work to reprove their abilities. For example, in India, the Indian male

population would not serve under a woman as the head. This induces stress in the female workers because of dissatisfaction (Beatty, 1996). One of the biggest challenges that female Realtors in high offices face is understated treatment at the workplaces that praises the centrality and dominance of male workers and puts down women as inferior and less important (Repetti & Wood, 1997). Because of this skeptic and stereotype belief system, female Realtors are given less challenging work and do not participate in important organization meetings on many occasions.

Summary of RQ2

The second research question, RQ2, observed the strategies and practices female Realtors employ to overcome the professional challenges in life. According to Beatty (1996), women have many challenges to overcome as leaders in the workplace. To overcome professional challenges at the demanding real estate career participants reported that being tenacious and having strategic planning helped them to overcome professional challenges. Due to the fluctuating nature of real estate business most respondents believe they focus on the results during hardship which drives them to be patient during setbacks. Participants reported they are concentrated to deliver results to their clients therefore client satisfaction is their number one priority and joy. Since Realtors have varied schedules each day, participants also mentioned that they practice self-discipline and leadership techniques which help them to stay on track with their family priorities as well. Another aspect which participants mentioned was to stay true and authentic to self and not ignore their body language and finding time for self-care were among the strategies to overcome professional challenges. Thus, as Repetti and Wood (1997) stated, it is important that women are able to feel praise, and be authentic to their work as leaders.

Results for RQ3

The third research question concentrated on how female Realtors define and measure success in their professional lives.

Discussion of RQ3. The findings of the research question were based on the four associated IQs with this RQ. These IQ asked what was the most important personal characteristic that has been most instrumental in achieving personal and professional success, what success meant to them professionally, and what success meant to them in their personal life. Finally, they were asked how success was measured. Half of the participants identified success as the client's satisfaction and rating. Surprisingly success was not measured merely by their sales ranks or their saving accounts. Their definition of success was professional growth, client satisfaction, happiness, high production, self-care, relationships, and mostly concentrated around family.

Three of the participants emphasized on the importance of the client feedback ratings and opinions of the clients with whom some have done deals in the past. This is imperative point that makes sure that the clients are well supported. These clients are highly likely to refer a supportive Realtor to their friends and families. According to one participant her pipeline is only based on referrals. A large volume of revenue and profit also rises from repeat clients who trust a specific effective Realtor (Bailey, 2015). The number of calls made is also relevant because they show how active a Realtor is in following up on leads. High production was mentioned by one of the participants, which requires a high level of dedications. Another revealed point from two of the participants was achieving the WLB by scheduling time away from work for self-care. Therefore, each Realtor's well-being is the only value that remains critical when people are involved in prioritizing and accomplishing their plans.

When Realtors realize how having a low work balance influences the better parts of their lives. Two of the participants mentioned how it's vital to preserve their energy and avoid helping clients which are not motivated to commit yet. Additionally, they mentioned that they must reserve their energy to continue lead generation and growing their business. One of the most harmful consequences of work-life imbalance is the variety of health issues an individual faces. According to one participant balance is the key to all the achievements. She mentioned how important is to keep you mind on the job in hand and avoid worrying for tomorrow. According to Jones (2018), the intensified pressure has a greater chance of weakening an individual's immune system and aggravating medical conditions symptoms. Upon dealing with a work-life imbalance situation, it is essential to uphold mental and physical health. Individuals ought to boost their immune systems by eating healthy, having enough sleep after a long day of work, and regularly exercising. In line with that, most physicians recommend communicating with a support system, for instance, families and friends, if the pressure is overwhelming (Direnzo et al., 2015). According to another participant the challenges and problems that stress out the women Realtors could be endless but it's their choice to not let it take over their life.

Work-life imbalance can generate worry in an individual's relationship. When women Realtors are always working or heavily stressed, they may not be capable of offering their family, friends, or children the moment they need. An individual might be able to participate or focus on family activities during his or her time. The impact of WLB on real estate relationships is also crucial to consider. Realtors who are engaged and well-rested are moere likely to deal effectively with high-pressure conditions in their work environments. Agents in real estate are already stressed from a work-life imbalance. However, to handle the pressure of work-life imbalance, Hilbrecht and Lero (2014) articulate that the Realtors should volunteer with

organizations and echoed that volunteering can take away the feeling of burnout while enhancing emotional well-being. Individuals should be sure to manage their time prudently, though, to not add to their hectic day hence carefully choosing the organizations they want to work with and come up with restrictions for time they can give out. WLB can be a conflict and a methodology of inter-role struggle. The pressures from family and work environments are similarly incompatible; hence obsession in work is becoming more problematic under participation in the family. According to one participant real estate business is so stressful since Realtors must work long hours, including weekends and accommodating the demanding clients to beat out the competitors in the market.

According to one participant, real estate business is very stressful and there are many reasons for this, such as handling paperwork, creating lead generation and the thought that every morning Realtors wake up unemployed. With a few approaches, Realtors can elevate their career from stressful career to satisfactory career. To put away their phone at dinner time was one of the participants suggestion. When real estate agents are at home, Jones (2018) suggests making the effort to unplug from their computer or phone so that they can dwell on their personal life. This is a remarkable strategy to time block for self-care. According to one participant she never put things off, never. According to the participant she is rarely stressed out since her days starts the night before by reviewing her plans and to do list of tomorrow. In avoiding the damaging consequences of a work-life imbalance amongst Realtors she emphasized to keep a firm schedule and daily routine. All they need to do is to review their tasks upfront.

Summary of RQ3

The third research question, RQ3, concentrated on how women Realtors measure their success. Five participants identified success as their client's satisfaction and additionally four

participants as well the measure they generate business was their success level. Several participants responded their level of success to the level of their relationship with family. All the participants mentioned that the more they communicate with their clients, the better they consider themselves successful as success was not found by their bank accounts or stock profiles. Jones (2018) stated that being able to be a part of something bigger than one's self helps to find ways for women to release stress, and make time for themselves.

Results for RQ4

The fourth research question concentrated on the recommendations would women Realtors make for aspiring Realtors to become more successful.

Discussion of RQ4. The findings of the research question were based on two interview questions which asked Realtors if they started their journey over, how would they do this differently and if there was anything else the participants wanted to add?

From the perspective of organizational culture, WLB refers to the equally deliberated time employees allocate to meet their expectation based on work commitment, family responsibilities, and pursuit of personal life. By extension, the significance of WLB evolves for the Realtors considering health, hobbies, spirituality, and psychological wellbeing. The real estate organizations have a decent obligation to support their staff in attaining WLB via skills training and personal development trainings. The initiatives revolutionize the harmful effects of an imbalanced WLB such as depression, stress, and relationship struggle in the family.

According to one of the participants of the study, she had to change her employer because of lack of training opportunities within that organization. The poor WLB affects both the companies and the workers considering limited staff commitment and reduced productivity. Organizational culture in the context of WLB challenges represents a group of people struggling to understand

and cope with problems in the real estate brokerage (Aluya, 2009). For the female Realtor participants, there is an agreement that organizational culture develops from emotional, psychological, and behavioral aspects of WLB. Beliefs, cultural attitudes, and values influence behavior for Realtors (both men and women). For female Realtors, the belief and cultural attitudes about gender roles and domestic responsibilities present a tendency to encumber access to the leadership position. One participant of the study although employed in leadership position within the organization, mentioned about her superior being a man who was declaring not so nourishing.

The increase of the women labor force initiated a paradigm shift in the social realm because the gendered roles and the cultural attitudes presented expectations for family responsibilities and child caring (Steffansson Pauli, 2014). The setting created working mothers who were expected to advance the careers and professions and provide fundamental care for the children.

A social factor emerged that made the family a stakeholder in the organization based on WLB challenges (Fernández, 2013). The work-life and family life dynamics initiated an organizational culture of interactive planning to minimize the conflict. The conflict in WLB emanated from the female labor force based on the demands of the family responsibilities (Goldin, 2009). The phenomenon prompted organizations' response to alter their inflexible strategies and practices to minimize the challenges of work-life imbalance. The transition instigated an organizational culture that values the collective psychological inculcation considering the influential work-life culture and suitable workplace environment. Family life's intrinsic nature continues to evolve to require an adaptive model of organizational change to accommodate work-life initiatives. Leadership plays an essential role in integrating the WLB

model that includes families as stakeholders in organizations with the traditional model of work in real estate brokerage and agencies. The lack of WLB for Realtors as well as brokers in real estate hinders the transition of the traditional mode's work-life initiatives because of the limited female leadership roles.

Modern-day, many women are drawn mainly to the real estate industry. This is mainly due to the favorable conditions that seem to encourage more women to join this industry. However, this was not always the case. The real estate industry has come a long way and has undergone a revolution. According to the NAR (n.d.), 65% of Realtors are women. That means that majority of the Realtors registered in the USA are women. This is a testament that the real estate industry is not what it used to be, as it is now more welcoming to the female gender.

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Summary of RQ4

The fourth research question, RQ4, asked the participants if they could start their journey over, how would they do this differently, and this question was used to study this research question. Based on the participants' answers, this suggested that it is important for female Realtors to introduce more communication skills to attain their success by attracting new clients. Additionally, women Realtors should take their business to the next level, and Realtors should utilize strategies to set them apart from the competitors (Goldin, 2009), such as better marketing and promotion, but also, to take care of themselves (Chung & Van der Lippe, 2018).

In addition, it is important to educate female Realtors to understand both foreseen and unforeseen circumstances and avoid the most common mistakes (Beatty, 1996). Learning and acknowledging that it's easy to slip through the cracks and to lean on the side of preparedness to avoid stress and tarnish their reputation is imperative (Fernandez, 2013). Also, being mindful of the challenges ahead of time by using goal setting and planning strategies to attain objectives and utilizing the strategies to overcome the challenges is something that participants noted.

In order to avoid or eliminate burnout, some participants stated that it is imperative to invest in mentorship and coaching regularly as well as investing in continued training. This will help female Realtors to master sales negotiations, prospecting and other aspects of real estate that can cause stress (Steffannson Pauli, 2016). Personality traits are the secret component of the effective female Realtors (Goldin, 2009). The definition of success varies from the participants, but majority of 95% defines success begins in the mindset and to have growing and abundance mindset. Also, female Realtors can avoid burnout by setting a schedule time away from work and engaging with family members more often (Jones, 2018). Finally, the quality of life for female Realtors is important because it provides a sense of peace and happiness and is a way for

Realtors to achieve success. Financial independence is also important as the ability to make money to provide for themselves and their families give a sense of meaning (Aluya, 2009).

Implications of the Study

This research aimed to collect and measure the experiences, achievements and recommendations regarding WLB of 15 successful female Realtors. The purpose of the study was to determine what challenges women in real estate face within their profession.

The study's objective was to determine the impact of the female Realtors WLB, while educating, equipping, and enabling ambitious female Realtors to attain a higher level of success. Based on the information collected through semi-structured interviews, the data revealed that stress and burnout were identified as (a) the challenge of lead generation and career advancement, (b) gender discrimination, (c) lack of mentorship, and (d) exhaustion. Thus, the study sought to find whether women Realtors can achieve WLB through best practices and strategies experienced Realtors have practiced throughout their career.

Study Conclusion

A female Realtor's career involves working independently in selling residential real estate, and as such, female Realtors depend on their own ability to create their fortune based on their livelihood. It is one of the most significant careers where one can work independently as a self-employed individual, being able to work on her own work schedule and to fulfill the strong desire to help others. While working in real estate, female Realtors deal with WLB as they handle both their families and careers. Thus, making some changes to achieve better WLB can help female Realtors in eliminating stress levels so they can achieve more success in both their professional and personal lives.

To begin with, the recruitment is supposed to be based on talent and skills to avoid gender discrimination. Women should not be discriminated against in the workforce no matter which industry they are in. They should be treated like any other individual within the organization as this will eliminate the stress level of the female Realtor within the workplace. Thus, eliminating discrimination in the workplace motivates female Realtors to advance their skills and get the top most positions in the workplace, earning a desired income that will boost their standard of living.

Female Realtors lack mentorship and finding mentors can be difficult. Thus, having mentors can guide Realtors in being successful with their real estate business. Female Realtors should therefore have mentors to assist them in getting the knowledge and skills that will help them make sales, earn money and attain a better WLB. In addition, the personal safety of female Realtors should be ensured. Physical safety is a factual concern for female Realtors, especially during the process of conducting open houses to sell property. To achieve better WLB, it is imperative that female Realtors are provided with safety and security necessary to ensure they can meet and interact with customers in properties they are contracted to sell.

Moreover, a female should be given equal leadership roles. The research in this study showed that female Realtors were working with brokerages that were male dominated. By giving female Realtors the ability to have higher leadership roles, this eliminates the stress level of female Realtors, whereby they will advance their leadership skills to lead in their assigned area. This also will enable them to have a make better decisions on how to lead their teams since there are no limits for the leader.

Finally, female Realtors should invest in continued training. Female Realtors must be eager to be trained in achieving their skills with their real estate transactions, such as conducting

sales calls, making visits to open houses, speaking to customers, and more. The training empowers women and enables them to build their skills based on their profession. The female Realtors' training will also enable them to get the experience of improving their WLB since they will be working on their business success.

Recommendation For Research

Although there is a good amount of literature regarding WLB for individuals in different careers, as well as for real estate brokers, there is no literature on the WLB of female Realtors. The brokers' responsibilities are completely different because brokers operate from the leadership position, and their wealth and income generations are based on the Realtors, who are also their employees. Additionally, the amount of stress female Realtors face differs from those of brokers. According to Participant 5, Realtors wake up every morning knowing that they are technically unemployed until they are able to find and commit to a sale. Thus, the nature of the research for Realtors must shift slightly, if not majorly, from the literature surrounding brokers, to especially female Realtors. For female Realtors, the gap in the area of research would be the mindset. The outside world is a reflection of what takes place in the individual's inside world. When the person uses their mind to imagine and articulate what they want to achieve, female Realtors will become much more effective at improving productivity and WLB. Women are naturally leaders and creators, why not to recreate their own thoughts. Realtors should shift their paradigms to think in an abundance frequency versus the scarcity mindset.

In addition, this research study is meant to enlighten future researchers to study the mindset and the limitations that female Realtors may place on themselves. Female Realtors have the ability to create ideas, originate dreams, and discover solutions. Being a female Realtor myself, I learned from the participants through asking the important questions which made them

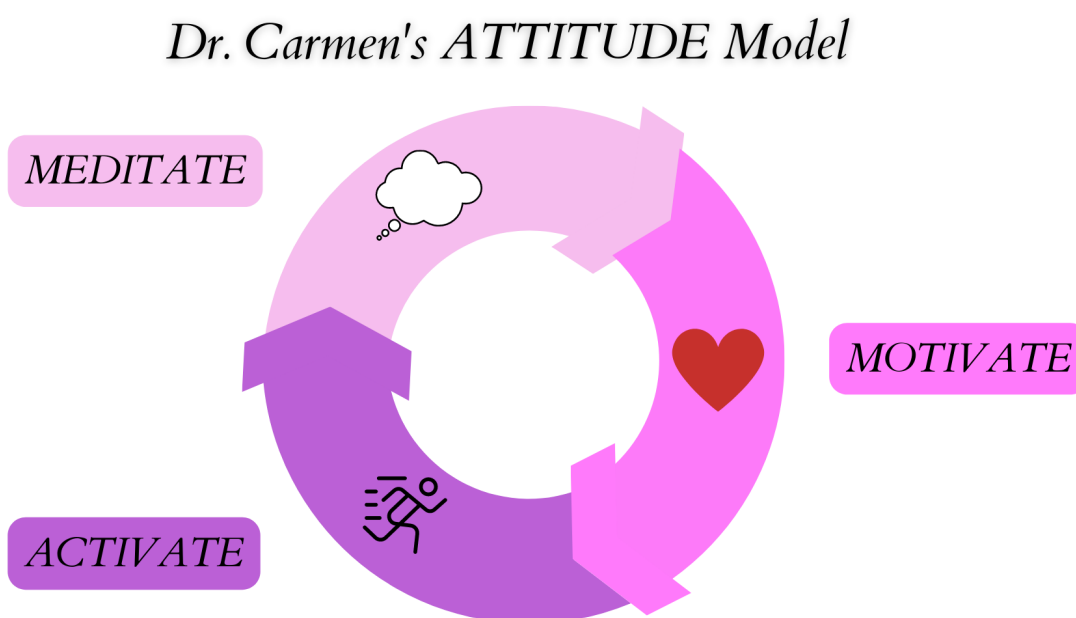
think, and made me think better as well. Logic keeps us wired where we are, whereas self-questioning of our thoughts is a good way of shifting our paradigms, especially in overcoming the fear factor; we must stop looking forward in fear.

The Attitude Model

The model that I created is called The ATTITUDE Model which is a three way model that reflects the following areas: meditate, motivate, and activate (MMA). This model is represented in Figure 14.

Figure 14

Dr. Carmen's ATTITUDE Model



We all know the importance of attitude in sales. The mindset must change in order to change our way of thinking and eventually, how we live our lives. I would like to present an attitude model for real estate. The model is represented with three arrows that show a cyclical repetition that female Realtors can utilize in order to prevent burnout and have a better WLB as a

result of an abundance mindset. The first one is Meditate. Female Realtors should engage themselves more in meditation while creating a mind map about their future by consciously meditating on positive virtues of thoughts that we choose (Jones, 2018). Self-imagining sets the boundaries of individual accomplishments.

This leads to the second arrow, which is to Motivate. Female Realtors need to engage themselves with their feelings and their beliefs more often and motivate themselves (Agarwal et al., 2015; Goldin, 2009). Paying attention to what they say and how to counteract the way their mind believes in things can be powerful if done to help change the mindset toward being more positive (Agarwal et al., 2015). Finally, Activate is the last part of this model. This is where female Realtors commit themselves to the actions that motivated them in first place and now, they are manifesting those actions into reality. After all, we either build or disintegrate. As a female Realtor myself and a mother, I understand the concept of burnout and having an effective WLB. Thus, based on the answers of my participants and the literature, I created this model, based on our attitudes and feelings, are what will manifest WLB in a more fruitful way so that female Realtors can successfully navigate their career in the real estate industry.

My intention is to use this model to create a training program for other female Realtors, brokers and leaders. As a female Realtor, I can relate to women who go through burnout and might not have the best WLB. The training program is a day weekend course, offered both in person and as a hybrid for those who may live far and cannot travel. The program will teach women how to work on their beliefs through meditation. I will include mind mapping, as well as creating a dream journal which will help them with those beliefs. In turn, they will work on their mindset through motivation, where they are can think about ways they can overcome burnout and shift their mentality to having a better WLB. Finally, the course will teach them the action

plan; ideally, how to manifest thoughts into action plans they can achieve within their real estate business. It is my vision that this training will elevate the quality of thoughts individually to offer in different real estate brokerages and the California and National Association of the Relators®.

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APPENDIX A

CITI HSR Certificate

		Completion Date 16-Oct-2020 Expiration Date 15-Oct-2025 Record ID 30396484
This is to certify that:		
Carmen Sarkis		
Has completed the following CITI Program course:		Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.
GSEP Education Division (Curriculum Group)		
GSEP Education Division - Social-Behavioral-Educational (SBE) (Course Learner Group)		
1 - Basic Course (Stage)		
Under requirements set by:		
Pepperdine University		
		
Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w99e4b1a2-3809-4c95-addc-f5ab50a0da16-30396484		

APPENDIX B

IRB Approval Letter

Pepperdine University
24255 Pacific Coast Highway
Malibu, CA 90263
TEL: 310-506-4000

NOTICE OF APPROVAL FOR HUMAN RESEARCH

Date: April 06, 2022

Protocol Investigator Name: Carmen Sarkis

Protocol #: 21-10-1680

Project Title: WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR FEMALE REALTORS

School: Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Dear Carmen Sarkis:

Thank you for submitting your application for exempt review to Pepperdine University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). We appreciate the work you have done on your proposal. The IRB has reviewed your submitted IRB application and all ancillary materials. Upon review, the IRB has determined that the above entitled project meets the requirements for exemption under the federal regulations 45 CFR 46.101 that govern the protections of human subjects.

Your research must be conducted according to the proposal that was submitted to the IRB. If changes to the approved protocol occur, a revised protocol must be reviewed and approved by the IRB before implementation. For any proposed changes in your research protocol, please submit an amendment to the IRB. Since your study falls under exemption, there is no requirement for continuing IRB review of your project. Please be aware that changes to your protocol may prevent the research from qualifying for exemption from 45 CFR 46.101 and require submission of a new IRB application or other materials to the IRB.

A goal of the IRB is to prevent negative occurrences during any research study. However, despite the best intent, unforeseen circumstances or events may arise during the research. If an unexpected situation or adverse event happens during your investigation, please notify the IRB as soon as possible. We will ask for a complete written explanation of the event and your written response. Other actions also may be required depending on the nature of the event. Details regarding the timeframe in which adverse events must be reported to the IRB and documenting the adverse event can be found in the *Pepperdine University Protection of Human Participants in Research: Policies and Procedures Manual* at community.pepperdine.edu/irb.

Please refer to the protocol number denoted above in all communication or correspondence related to your application and this approval. Should you have additional questions or require clarification of the contents of this letter, please contact the IRB Office. On behalf of the IRB, I wish you success in this scholarly pursuit.

Sincerely,

Judy Ho, Ph.D., IRB Chair

cc: Mrs. Katy Carr, Assistant Provost for Research

APPENDIX C

Recruitment Script

Dear [Name],

My name is Carmen Sarkis, and I am a doctoral candidate in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University. I am conducting a research study examining the challenges women Realtors experience in achieving WLB and the best practices and strategies they utilize in avoiding burnout and would like for you to participate in the study. If you agree, you are invited to participate in the interview process. The interview is anticipated to take no more than 60 minutes and was conducted via Zoom (password protected). The interview was recorded and kept confidential with access to myself only.

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity as a participant will remain confidential during and after the study. Confidentiality was maintained using a password protected laptop to store all data collected including informed consent, the recorded interview, and the transcribed data. All data will also be deidentified using a pseudonym which was assigned to each individual recording. If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact me as soon as possible.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Carmen Sarkis

Pepperdine University

Graduate School of Education and Psychology

Doctoral Candidate

APPENDIX D

IRB Informed Consent Form

IRB #: 21-10-1680

Formal Study Title: WLB for Female Realtors

Authorized Study Personnel:

Principal Investigator: Carmen Sarkis

Key Information:

If you agree to participate in this study, the project will involve:

- ☒ (Females) between the ages of (18-80)
- ☒ Procedures will include (Contacting participants using the recruitment script, informed consent, data collection via structured interview, transcription of data, analysis of data, documentation of findings)
- ☒ One virtual visit is required
- ☒ This visit will take 60 minutes total
- ☒ There is minimal risk associated with this study
- ☒ You will not be paid any amount of money for your participation
- ☒ You will be provided a copy of this consent form

Invitation

You are invited to take part in this research study. The information in this form is meant to help you decide whether or not you would like to participate. If you have any questions, please email the researcher.

Why are you being asked to be in this research study?

You are being asked to be in this study because you are working in the real estate industry. You must be over 18 to participate in this study.

What is the reason for doing this research study?

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to understand better the perceived lived experiences of women Realtors who have faced the feeling of burnout at any point in their career in real estate, as well as best practices and strategies on achieving WLB to overcome burnout. The purpose of this research is also to contribute to the studies on burnout and WLB with best practices and tools used to understand the reasoning behind why women Realtors face these issues. The stories and lived experiences of women Realtors who used tools to overcome the feeling of burnout and gain WLB will guide the methodology. The data collection will focus on the experience and perceived benefits and challenges women face when they sense the inability to balance their personal and professional lives while working in the real estate industry.

What was done during this research study?

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you were asked to complete a 60-minute semi-structured virtual interview with approximately 12 questions virtually via Zoom video conferencing at a determined date and time agreed by both parties. The researcher will ask you a

series of questions aimed at figuring out what strategies are used by women Realtors in overcoming burnout and achieving WLB. The interview was recorded for purposes of data collection and coding and was kept confidential. You may choose to opt out of the study at any time without any consequences. The responses gathered during the interview will assist the researcher in exploring the experience of women Realtors who have faced burnout and as a result, used various tools to overcome burnout and achieve WLB. The interview instrument was created by the researcher and reviewed by expert reviewers.

How will my data be used?

Your interview responses will be transcribed, analyzed, and aggregated to determine the findings to the established research questions.

What are the possible risks of being in this research study?

This research presents minimal risk of loss of confidentiality, emotional and/or psychological distress because the interview involves questions about best practices regarding burnout and WLB. There are also no anticipated financial, personal, social, or legal risks to the participants.

What are the possible benefits to you?

While there are no direct benefits for the study participants, there are several anticipated benefits to women Realtors, including a greater body of literature regarding the challenges and barriers women Realtors face as they work through overcoming burnout and attain WLB.

What are the possible benefits to other people?

The benefits to society may include better understanding of strategies used within your industry to achieve WLB. Other emerging leaders might also benefit from any additional recommendations that are shared through this process.

What are the alternatives to being in this research study?

Participation in this study is voluntary. There are no alternatives to participating, other than deciding to not participate. As such, participants can opt out at any time.

What will participating in this research study cost you?

There is no cost to you to be in this research study.

Will you be compensated for being in this research study?

There was no compensation for participating in this study.

What should you do if you have a problem during this research study?

Your welfare is the major concern of every member of the research team. If you have a problem as a direct result of being in this study, you should immediately contact the researcher.

How will information about you be protected?

Reasonable steps were taken to protect your privacy and the confidentiality of your study data. The data was deidentified and stored electronically through a secure server and will only be seen by the research team during the study and until the study is complete.

The only persons who will have access to your research records are the study personnel, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), and any other person, agency, or sponsor as required by law. The information from this study may be published in academic journals or presented at conferences or meetings, but the data was reported as group or as summarized data and your identity was kept strictly confidential.

What are your rights as a research subject?

You may ask any questions concerning this research and have those questions answered before agreeing to participate in or during the study.

For study related questions, please contact the investigator(s) listed at the beginning of this form.

For questions concerning your rights or complaints about the research contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB):

Phone: 1(310)568-2305

Email: gpsirb@pepperdine.edu

What will happen if you decide not to be in this research study or decide to stop participating once you start?

You can decide not to be in this research study, or you can stop being in this research study by withdrawing at any time before, during, or after the research begins for any reason. Deciding not to be in this research study or deciding to withdraw will not affect your relationship with the investigator or with Pepperdine University. You will not lose any benefits to which you are entitled.

Documentation of informed consent

You are voluntarily deciding whether or not to be in this research study. Signing this form means that (a) you have read and understood this consent form, (b) you have had the consent form explained to you, (c) you have had your questions answered and (d) you have decided to be in the research study. You was given a copy of this consent form to keep.

Participant

Name:

(First, Last: Please Print)

Participant

Signature:

Signature

Date

Interview Protocol

Introduction. You are a very successful Realtor. Success generally comes at some cost or challenges.

IQ1: Please share with me the most rewarding experience you have had in your career?

IQ2: What made that experience so rewarding?

IQ 3. What have been some of the more significant professional challenges you have encountered in your journey to become a successful female Realtor?

IQ 4. What strategies did you use to overcome these professional challenges?

IQ 5. What have been some of the more significant personal challenges, you faced on your journey to success?

- Follow-up: How about creating WLB?
- Follow-up: How about burnout??

IQ 6. What strategies did you use to overcome these challenges?

- Follow-up: How about WLB?
- Follow-up: How do you avoid professional burnout?

IQ 7. What would you say is the most important personal characteristic that you have that has been most instrumental in your achieving personal and professional success?

IQ 8. What does success mean to you professionally?

IQ 9. What does success mean to you in your personal life?

IQ 10. How do you measure success?

IQ 11. If you start your journey over, how would you do differently?

IQ12. Is there anything else you would like to add?