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Work Life Balance – a question of income and gender?

A qualitative study about Work Life Balance and affecting factors in the Philippines

Arbetsvetenskap
C-uppsats

Foreword

Through those tough months of creating our thesis we have always been working as a team. Which means that the preparations, work, data collection, analysis and the whole thesis is made by both of us together.

We want to thank SIDA for providing us with their scholarship and making it possible for us to fly around the globe to do this study. We could not be happier when we found out we were a few of all the lucky ones.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to see and understand how the Filipinos experience and handle their Work Life Balance (WLB). How do gender and income have an impact of the WLB? In this thesis different factors such as gender roles, culture and income will get integrated into the concept of WLB. Most of the previous researches are seen from a Western point of view and we found the Asian studies rather limited. Therefore, we hope that this study will contribute with a Filipino perspective. Through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency's (SIDA) scholarship and engagement this study got the opportunity to get an insight in the actual experiences and thoughts from the inhabitant population of a developing country. A qualitative method was used and ten different persons (five men and five women) got interviewed. To facilitate the sample and access to interview persons we had a contact person in the Philippines who worked as our gatekeeper.

The Philippines is a developing country with over 103 million inhabitants. Many people live in poverty and there is no working welfare system. The culture is very family-oriented, and the gender roles are still very traditional which affects both genders in different ways. A returning pattern is that women in general feel a bigger responsibility for their children and the household and the men are expected to work and provide.

The attitudes towards being available for work outside the work hours differ between low income earners and high-income earners. Many of the participants experience the constant availability as a stress factor and something that worsen their WLB. However, flexibility can be seen as something that facilitates a good WLB for the ones who have it. Which is usually high-income earners or people within Western companies. For people with lower income the opportunity of having temporal flexibility through flexible work hours, seem very limited. Other concept we discovered to have impact in context to WLB is work life boundaries, job satisfaction, awareness of WLB, culture and gender roles. Thus, together with which income and what gender the participant had, how they perceived their WLB and how they handled it variated.

Table of contents

Introduction

Finding balance in life can be a hard task. This popular subject or discussion is well known in the Western world. Many newspapers, magazines and even companies are telling people how to achieve better balance in life. It seems like a common thing to have written tip, in for example five steps, on how to attain a better balance in life (Palm 2017). A Swedish news site was writing about the importance of well-being and balance. It is said that this is today's new proof of high status (Dagens Nyheter 2014). This study is about Work Life Balance and to understand the complexity of Work Life Balance, two key influences have been found: income and gender. Work Life Balance includes managing different parts of life, such as work and non-work. In other words, the concepts are about the employee's balance between work and non-work (Noon & Blyton 2007). Income can have a big impact of people's Work Life Balance. Low-income earners may not afford help within the household or paying the fees for childcare. This makes it hard to keep a paid job while still taking care of children and household chores successfully (Teo 2016). In this study the Work Life Balance of both women and men will be studied. Gender is an interesting angle of incidence since the traditional gender roles still exist. The stereotypes and expectations surely affect people's Work Life Balance, since women are expected to take care of the children and the household while men should work and provide for the family (Coltrane 2004).

Six minor concepts have also been used in this thesis. Those are availability, flexibility, Work Life Boundaries, Job satisfaction, culture and social structure. Availability refers to constant accessibility of the working life. Thus shows also in the developments of technology, that affect the employees' availability for working even outside the workplace (Woolgar 2009). This has made it easier for the employees to be accessible for both spheres at the same time since they can answer emails or take calls from one sphere while being in the other (Woolgar 2009). Flexibility is a multifaceted concept and have different meanings depend on whose perspective it is seen from, the employer or the employee. Temporal flexibility may facilitate the Work Life Balance struggles if the employee gets for example flexible work hours (Irak & Mantler 2017). What comes with temporal flexibility may also be overtime, which is called numerical flexibility and may not help the Work Life Balance of the employee (Kelliher & Anderson 2010). From an employer's point of view, it is more focused on the profit. And the numerical flexibility may lay in the opportunity to fire and hire people easier (Bettio et al. 1996). Work Life Boundaries can be perceived as a strategy, due to higher availability and difficulties separating work and non-work. The main point is to limit the different spheres and state clear restrictions when and where to work or not work (Qin & Fan 2015). Job satisfaction means if the employee is happy or not happy with his/her job. There is no "right" Job satisfaction since it differs from person to person and is based on personal preferences. What do help the employee to reach a higher satisfaction are career opportunities, job security, helpful colleagues and mentally challenging work (Saks, M, A. Et al 2013). Being able to combine your work life and family life in a gratifying way, may results in a higher level of Job satisfaction. In other words, a good Work Life Balance can affect the Job satisfaction in a good way (Meheilic 2017). The Filipino culture is very family-oriented and to support and help a big part of the family seems like a norm (Alipio 2013). It is also very traditional when it comes to the roles in the

family (Christiansen & Palkovitz 2001). People seem to have different responsibilities depending on the sex, where the man of the family is the main provider and the woman of the family is the caregiver (Coltrane 2004).

All the different concepts above can possibly be connected to Work Life Balance, and that is what is done in this thesis. As said before, Work Life Balance (WLB) is a known concept and it has previously been studied with different perspectives such as health, education, gender and quality of life. Many of the previous studies have a Western focus and most of the Work Life Balance studies with a Filipino perspective focus on the great number of Filipino parents, going abroad to find a better employment and provide their family from a distance (Lan 2003). Aside from that, the number of studies is limited and different studies about the WLB in The Philippines were hard to find. Therefore, will this study contribute to the inadequate studies of WLB in the Philippines. By reading this thesis, the reader will see and understand how Filipinos experience and handle their WLB and see the connections and the impact of all the different concepts previously discussed. Due to those goals or aims the study was constructed with a qualitative method, since it is a suitable strategy to collect data about people's experiences and life conditions (Trost 2014). The qualitative data collecting was done through interviews. In fact, ten different persons were interviewed, five men and five women in Manila, Philippines. Questions about the respondents work life, family life and attitudes toward gender roles and culture were asked.

Purpose
The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding in the Work Life Balance among Filipino men and women. We want to understand how the Filipinos experience and handle their Work Life Balance. Another purpose is to contribute to the field of research. Seeing that there are not many studies about Work Life Balance in the Philippines we hope this thesis can be used as a foundation for future research.

Question of choice
To meet the aim of the study the main questions will be:
- How do Filipino men and women in Metro Manila experience and handle their Work Life Balance?
- How do gender and income have an impact on the Work Life Balance?

Background
The Philippines is one of the most populous countries in the South East Asia, with a population of more than 103 million people (Landguiden 2018). In this thesis we have chosen to take a deeper look into the Filipino view of the Western concept Work Life Balance. Before reading this study from the Philippines some facts about the Filipino society will be presented as an introduction to the readers.

Statistics shows that Filipino women in general earn considerably less than men (Utrikespolitiska Institutet 2016). In a long-time perspective this can contribute to that Filipino

women are leaving the workforce or must take part-time employment when the family are having children. Without a welfare system as security, someone in the family have to look after the children, this have historically been the task of the mother (Soidre 2002). The domestic work has been the women's job, while the man has been providing for the family. This pattern is deep rooted in the structures of several societies, and are in many cultures still highly present, including in the Philippines (Soidre 2002). Women's position in the society have improved though, mostly in aspects such as education and access to health care. The gap between men's and women's rights are still big though, an example of this is the legislation against abortion which makes it illegal for women to have an abortion and the legislation that makes it illegal to have a divorce. The legislation is also very restricted against birth control (Amnesty International 2012). This results in hundredths of thousands illegal abortions every year, statistics prove over 10 000 women have to seek medical care after these kinds of procedures. According to WHO's statistics 120 Filipino women dies in 100 000 pregnancies (Utrikespolitiska institutet 2016).

The Catholic Church has a strong influence on the state and the population. For example, the government have suggested a legislated proposal about allowance of birth control, this suggestion faced a lot of resistance from the church. The Christian church has an important role in the Philippines community, and have had a close connection to the government which is not as strong anymore, but it still has influence. The influence is mostly over the Filipino people, today it has radicals, conservatives and more liberal factions. Some factions of the church are opponents to birth control, abortions, homosexuality and marriage of people with different faith (Utrikespolitiska Institutet 2016). These are some facts worth knowing when reading this thesis, since the Philippines society differ to the Swedish in many ways. By reading this the reader can conclude that some human rights that are perceived to be obvious from a Swedish perspective, are not as obvious in other societies such as the Philippines.

To gain a better understanding of how the Filipino society works, we believe it is important to introduce structures of the country. Therefore, we wish to put the Philippines in context of Esping-Andersens (1990) welfare models to evaluate if some similarities can be found. The responsibilities in a welfare system are divided between family, state and the market. Organs such as health care, schools, pensions, child care, elder care are included in some welfare models and excluded in others. A setting that could be partly recognized in the Philippines is the conservative model of welfare (Esping-Andersen 1990). In this, work is the major source for welfare, for example to access the public health insurance PhiliHealth a presumption is to have a job. The conservative model itself is defined by high reliance on the family, where the family take the role as caring for children and eldering. It is also characterized for the low belief on market solutions and governmental involvement. There has been some effort for further investments in the social welfare from the Filipino government's perspective, for example Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipno Program (4Ps). This is an initiative of the Philippines' government to support the poorest in the population with providing social assistance and social development (Philippine Government 2015). This support is covering the absolute basic needs for the poorest individuals, in form of health grant or education grant. Even though some similarities of the conservative model can be seen in the Philippines, it does not equalize of being an example of

country with a conservative welfare model. Nevertheless, we believe it is important to keep key factors such as family as a major support in mind as well as the few supports that can be offered in the Philippines. To gain a clear picture of what conditions there are for viewing the WLB in the Philippines.

Outline of the structure

In the next chapter, the Literature Review, the reader will be introduced to the concepts that are being used in this thesis to understand and discuss WLB. Previous studies within the field will also be presented here to get an outlook of similar studies of WLB. The headlines are Introduction of Work Life Balance, Work Life Balance in Asia, Availability, Work Life Boundaries, Flexibility, Work Life Balance and Job satisfaction, income and social class, traditional gender roles norms, attitudes and culture in the Philippines, social structure and welfare in the Philippines.

Further on, the section called Method will describe how the study is done and details about the chosen method and participants. The headlines are choice of method, participant, ethics, the interviews and coding of data.

The last part consists of Results and analysis: income and work conditions, flexibility for employees, flexibility for employers, availability, awareness of the concept WLB, summary, culture and traditional gender roles, culture, traditional gender roles, cultural attitudes and gender roles are changing, summary, final summary and reflection.

Literature Review

In this chapter we will present concepts and theories that have been used to understand, explain and describe our material. Starting with an introduction to Work Life Balance. Following concepts are; Availability, Work Life Boundaries, Flexibility, Work Life Balance and Job satisfaction, Work Life Balance in Asia, Income and social class, Traditional Gender Role Norms, Attitudes and culture in the Philippines and finally, a conclusion.

Introduction to Work Life Balance

Work Life Balance refers to a person's balance between work and non-work. Non-work is the life outside work and can for instant mean the family life (Noon & Blyton 2007). As the spheres affect each other, the balance should be experienced as pleasant and one sphere should put as less pressure and negative impact on the other sphere as possible. It has drawn attention to the line between work and non-work. As there are times when work related matter squeezes its way to the non-work sphere (Noon & Blyton 2007). To facilitate the concept Work Life Balance, we will use the abbreviation WLB throughout this study. Erdamar & Demirel (2014) also consider the two elements, home life and working life as two element which affect each other. However, the roles in the different elements can cause conflicts. The conflicts are most likely to emerge in lack of harmony within the family life or dissatisfaction and exhaustion in the work life. Here they differentiate work-family conflicts and family-work conflicts (Erdamar & Demirel 2014). In work-family conflicts, work interrupt time with the family and in family-work, family intrudes on work time (Young & Schieman 2018). Work-family conflicts can for instant develop when a mental and physical fatigue at work makes it hard to complete the responsibilities at home. Having an ill child and other unexpected situations at home affects the work life and is an example for a family-work conflict (Erdamar & Demirel 2014). WLB can also be a dual problem. People with low income without savings may need to take a second job or work long hours. At the same time there is a difficulty in enjoying the non-work life due to short financial resources (Warren 2004 cited in Noon & Blyton 2007). Even though WLB is commonly seen as an issue of time, there are some other things that affect the imbalance. There are many parents trying to combine the raising of a child with paid work and managers and other people with long work days trying to work through the workload. However, the good balance is very individual and there is no one size fits all. It is founded in the person's preferences and circumstances (Noon & Blyton 2007). WLB also differ and depend on the different culture, country and the level of economic development. Women are usually the ones who are most affected by the problems of WLB. In some societies the work family spillover is high for women (Chandra 2012). Chandra (2012) is not discussing the cause of this and there might be different possible reasons. In this thesis factors as gender roles, cultural perspectives and attitudes will be discussed to approach the problematic WLB of women.

The concept Work Life Balance (WLB) is a well-known phenomenon in the western world, it developed through the industrial revolution's need of more human labour (Lewis et al 2017). The flourishing economy resulted in a major demand of a bigger work force, which eventuated in women's inclusion on the labour market. This developed the majority of the households from single-earner families to dual-earner families, which defines how most households are build up

today in the Western World. Gradually the concept WLB took place, it represents a combining of the individual's paid work with other parts of life, especially family-time and domestic work (Lewis et al 2007). A potential issue of all those changes is that the quality of the home life is getting progressively worse (Guest 2002). As said before, nowadays there is a big number of Western women having paid employment and, in some countries, there is a lack of local resources such as childcare and care for the elderly. On account of higher demands from the workplace results in longer work hours, shifts during the weekends and evenings and exhaustion. All those aspects give less time for "quality" time with the family and creates an imbalance where people spend more time with work related matter than non-work matter (Guest 2002).

Today this construct has become well a researched subject from a Western context, which have resulted in different theories and methods of measuring the WLB. In this study we will refer to non-work or private life, as we will like to call it, as household chores, childcare, time with the family or time for hobbies or interests. And the work sphere or work life as a paid job. Now when the major concept Work Life Balance (WLB) is defined we will move on to another concept that affects the WLB, namely availability.

Availability

Practicing Work Life Balance can be described as actions and structural arrangements to balance the experienced demands from one's work and private life. Being available can be equalized as being accessible in terms of space and time and impressionable to the need of either the work or family spheres. Availability consists of arrangements and a capacity both stresses action and structural circumstances. Because of this there is a benefit of connecting structure and agency without combining them as one or prioritize one over the other (Bhaskar 1978; Sayer 2000 cited in Bergman & Gardiner 2007). By using the concept of availability in context to WLB this stresses the human potential and capacity to prioritize and be accessible between needs in the spheres. Which defines many individuals in their working life and private life. Employment can be perceived as a purchase for a share of an individual's availability, this can later be used in different conditions and different ways. For example, to fulfil work duties outside of work hours when it is needed (Bergman & Gardiner 2007).

Employees availability in the infinite working life can be related to the information's technological revolution that have been taking place within computer and telecommunication (Castells 1998). The technology has taken place everywhere in the society, in the workplace, in the private life, as a resource in schools and have also had a great impact on the availability. In other words, you can ask yourself where do you not use technology instead of where it is used? This have grown into a constant availability for individuals since you have access to all the spheres at once. They can easily affect each other, because through the technology such as the internet, the phone and emails individuals can always stay accessible (Woolgar 2009). The availability of the employee's work can therefore be associated with the daily amount of email and other communication that is taking place. Thomas et al (2006) found that the information-redundancy that email can create is believed to depend on the simplicity to distribute them. Which indicated that to separate and organize emails can lead to ease of individuals

information- redundancy. Another finding was also that employees feel obligated to give an imitate answer. This obligation is based on the constant connection and multitasking that is taking place in our everyday-life, both in the work and private spheres of life (Thomas et al 2006). A majority also have their email connected through a mail-application which notifies the employee when a new email is received, this creates a constant availability (Jackson et al 2003).

Waller and Ragsdell's (2012) study of emailing outside of office-hours indicates that this phenomenon has negative side-effects on an individual's WBL, it is experiences that the employees perceive to "lose time in their private life". This feeling tends to be distinguished in different groups between the employees. Some people have been working in the company for a longer time and reached further in the cycle of life and have different priorities. For example, those who have family tend to prioritize differently. This separates younger employees from those having a family, where the younger generation experience a satisfaction from answering emails out of office hours. This may be a perception correlated to that the younger generation have been growing up with the technology. While in the older generation with family this is related with a feeling of losing personal time. Waller and Ragsdell (2012) are raising the willingness to respond to emails outside of office hours as a behaviour of mail addiction. This addiction can be expressed in a constant strong awareness to control your email to avoid anxiety. The concept of mail addiction is more common in the younger generation, that have been growing up in an environment where email and messages are sent constantly. This behaviour has a negative impact of the balance between the spheres (Waller & Ragsdell 2012).

A study made about the new cell phone's innovation effects and the impact on the individuals perspectives of time shows that is does not contribute to a feeling of time pressure. The work hours have, due to the new innovation, shifted into longer work days. However, this is not associated with pressure. The constant availability the cell phones is proving is not something that is experienced to be a stressor (Bittman et al 2009). Furthermore, Bittman is describing that the constant availability can be stress reducing for individuals since it provides them with more flexibility of how, where and when employees are doing their jobs. Through the cell phones' new innovation, it is now possible to work from places that is not tied to the actual work place, which can be experienced a more freedom and control for the individual (Bittman et al 2009). However, this study indicates that availability may not be perceived as a stressful factor, what it also assures us is that it is something that is affecting individuals WLB. Several studies have on the other hand had a more critical benchmark indicating that extended availability is perceived to have a negative affect with effects, such as reduced sleep, anxiety, health problems, emotional exhaustion, absence rates and work-to-family conflicts (Arlinghaus 2013 cited in Dettmers 2017). Again, this concept is something very subjective, every individual is contemplating WLB differently (Naam 2013). Another aspect of how cell phone usage and new technology can be perceived differently is a more negative way. Where Kaufman-Scarborough (2006) believes that the new technology can contribute for what time can be experienced more fragmented for employees so that the boundary between private life and work life is being erased (Kaufman-Scarborough 2006). Seeing how availability has an impact of people's WLB,

we will further discuss how people tend to use some strategies such as Work Life Boundaries to manage their WLB.

Work Life Boundaries

Setting up Work Life Boundaries could be a way to increase an individual's ability to manage one's private life and work life. This is referring to setting up limitations for when and where it is working time and when and where it is private time. By creating clear boundaries these can work as a help to maintain the focus in one of the spheres at the time (Qin & Fan 2015). Setting up boundaries is requiring that you as an employee have the ability to manage and plan your working time and private time. The more freedom you have to influence your workplace, your work time and working tasks the easier it is to set work life boundaries (Qin & Fan 2015). The freedom to decide or influence the work or the workplace is an issue that relates to one's income and will be discussed further ahead. Again, the spheres can be more or less integrated depending on how the employee is handling their private and work life. As mentioned above since the availability have created higher demands on the employees to stay accessible even outside of the workplace, the importance to create a sustainable WLB have increased. A solution and resource that could improve the balance could be using Work Life boundaries. What is important to have in mind due to this aspect is that the limitations within an organization can affect the individual's ability to manage their boundaries. In such means as business culture, work hours and flexible work hours can have an impact (Golden & Geisler 2007). For example, in a workplace with no flexible work hours and no ability to manage your own time, it can naturally become harder to create boundaries. Since you are in no control of managing, only to adapt and proceed from the working conditions you already have (Golder & Geisler 2007). The ability for the individual to setup work life boundaries can also be depending on the business culture, if it is encouraged to create your own limitations or not. For example, Nippert- Eng (1999) argues that the more we create segment and one-purposed spaces the more dedicated we become to that single purpose. Also, the more we integrate the spheres the less focus and territorial borders are needed, the outcome be a more multitasking environment. Even though it may be argued to be less effective to integrate the spheres, it reflects most individual's everyday life (Nippert-Eng 1999).

This approach is assuming the two spears to affect each other. Nowadays all the information and ability to work is available through our phones and computers. This have given us constant access to our private life during work time and during our private time we take time to do work. In other words, it has given us the opportunity to integrate the spheres. This can contribute to a higher productivity and more accessible information which can free people to work where they wish, as Bittman et al (2009) is referring to. When you can access all information from your job at home it also raises another aspect, can you really separate your work from your private life? A study made in 2011 with a company introducing Blackberry's into the company as communication within the company found the introduction to associated with higher work demands. The employees experienced that they were more obligated and expected to stay connected after work hours. From the employees' point of view those were the expectations of the management for making this investment of Blackberry devices for all employees. In this case the management of this workplace had a big impact of the individuals' possibilities to

create their boundaries between work and private life (Besseyre des Horts et al., 2011). In other words, this study indicates that not all experience the accessibility to work to be a freedom and leads to higher productivity as Bittman et al (2009) is referring to. What it also shows is that organizations and demands of the workplace can hinder or restrict the individual's ability to create their Work Life Boundaries. Using Work Life Boundaries as means to create a sustainable WLB can be a successful strategy for individuals.

Flexibility

Many organisations have applied temporal flexibility with the aim to create a better WLB among the employees (Kelliher & Anderson 2010). According to Stavrou (2005), flexibility is mostly about different aspects and conditions within the employment. This could be flexible work hours which allow the employee to work whenever and wherever it suits him/her the best. To have a possibility to make decisions about one's own work, for example to choose one's own schedule, leads to a higher job satisfaction and well-being (Irak & Mantler 2017). However, there may be another side of it too since flexibility can also open up the possibility for the employees to be more flexible in terms of working overtime and bring their jobs home (Kelliher & Anderson 2010). This type of flexibility is called numerical flexibility and may not lead to a better WLB for the employees, which was the aim in the first place. The flexibility in working overtime may work the opposite and higher the workload. There is also a problem with existing policies and ideas since the outcome may not be the same as is was intended to be (Kelliher & Anderson 2010). In other words, there are different perspectives of the issue and flexibility can have a various meaning depending on which type it is or which perspective it is seen from. It will be rather different for employers and employees (Karlsson 2006). Yet, in most research it is seen from the employer's perspective. From the employer's perspective it is generally seen as something good, but this do not make the picture fair since the individual perspective is not present (Karlsson 2006). Bettio et al. (1996) divide the concept into two: "employer-friendly flexibility" and "employee-friendly flexibility". The employee-friendly flexibility gives the employee a bigger freedom in controlling the own work to benefit his/her Work Life Balance, while the employer-friendly flexibility focus on the profitability. By changing employment conditions and opening hours it makes it possible to increase the profit (Bettio et al. 1996). Again, this may complicate the employee's aim for a better WLB (Kelliher & Anderson 2010).

Allvin's (2006) like Bettio et al. (1996), arguments about how organisations can make use of the numerical flexibility. He also divides the concept into two similar branches: flexibility by being able to replace the employees and flexibility by trust. The first one about interchangeability argues that the organisation is independent and able to replace the employee with another person or for instant, with a machine that will improve the efficiency. The replacement could also be made by temporary employments and by hiring people for short projects from staffing agencies (Allvin 2006). This could be compared to Bettio et al. (1996) discussion about employer-friendly flexibility, where the flexibility is first and foremost for fulfilling the company's needs. Furthermore, this may affect the working hours if the employees need to work shift or overtime along the company's needs. This is in line with Kelliher & Anderson (2010) arguments about the negative side of flexibility. The second branch focuses

on flexibility from the individual's point of view (Allvin 2006) or also called employee-friendly flexibility (Bettio et al. 1996). Flexibility by trust argues that the individual should be able to decide for him/herself about the workplace, working hours and how they want to work (Allvin 2006).

In a Filipino study they have a rather different approach to the concept (Sale 2014). Mostly it is argued from an employer's point of view, but it also includes the impact on the labour market. First, some definitions of some concept used in the study. Numerical flexibility is defined as "flexible employment", which means that people have a temporary contract. This can be useful for reducing costs in the company. Many studies are only bringing up the benefits and leaving us with an incomplete picture of the relation. It is important to understand that is does not only opens for opportunities but also risks for the employees and the company. Flexible employment can worsen the work conditions such as give less training which will also affect the economic matters for the organisation (Voudouris 2007). In the Filipino study flexibility for an employer can be both external and internal numerical flexibility. External numerical flexibility involves the freedom to both hire and fire an employee. However, the internal numerical flexibility deal with flexible work hours, overtime and part time work (Sale 2014). In the Western context there seem to be a good balance to make the flexibility profitable for both parts, employers and employees. In comparison, the Filipino study seem rather one sided since the study gives an impression of that flexibility is mostly for the organisations benefit. This might be compared to what Voudouris (2007) says, that the picture easily gets unfair if it is only being seen from a positive perspective from the employer's side. Moreover, there is a third and last viewpoint, the functional flexibility. In a Western context the functional flexibility is described as the different practises that will improve the employees' skills and give them a bigger responsibility at decision-making (Voudouris 2007). This will help the organisation's innovation. It is a system where teamwork, participation and involvement in decision making are encouraged. However, it is also focused on training to upgrade the employee's skills so they will be able to rotate between different works. All this is believed to increase the commitment to the organisation (Voudouris 2007). In the Filipino study, the last approach is as said more connected to the labour market and consists of the flexibility to change the tasks as well as the wage (Sale 2014). In other words, this gives the employer the ability to increase or reduce the wages. Nevertheless, there are some regulations in the Philippine Labour Code which forbid reduction below minimum wage (Sale 2014). The increment of numerical flexibility has resulted in extension of informal employment and small enterprises (Sale 2014), which seem to be the same thing as Voudouris (2007) argues about the flexible employment. This shows the Filipino point of view and also some interesting structures and attitudes, both within organisations and on the labour market. The employer seems to have a large power over the employees' work conditions and this makes it easy to affect their WLB. The Filipino perspective does not seem to consider the employees' perspective or the temporal flexibility, which is a problem Voudouris (2007) has seen in other countries too. Seeing that temporal flexibility can improve the emloyees' satisfaction (Irak & Mantler 2017), will lead us to further define Job satisfaction and relate this to WLB.

Work life Balance and Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction can be described and perceived very differently depending on who you are asking. To summarize it is a perception whether an individual is satisfied with his/her job or not. Some key contributors to Job satisfaction is; mentally challenging work, friendly or helpful colleagues, career opportunities, flexibility, adequate compensation and job security (Saks et al 2013). What also can have an impact is context, for example the organization's financial stability. The concept of Job satisfaction is perceived subjectively, therefore there is no right or wrong (Saks et al 2013). Job satisfaction and WLB is argued to be positively correlated to one another. Employees tend to perceive that having high Job satisfaction a key contributor to good WLB (Kumari 2012).

It has been conducted that individuals have different needs and objectives to identify their personal Job satisfaction, same refers to how individuals' WLB is perceived. Factors such as work hours, work responsibilities, stage in life, your co-workers, your availability and flexibility can have a great impact. Throughout a study, (Kumari 2012) Job satisfaction and WLB can be correlated, in means such as if an employee is experiencing a high Job satisfaction they also tend to be satisfied with their WLB. From this it can also be concluded that the employees are experiencing an increased Job satisfaction if the organizations are applying WLB policies. It can be perceived as a freedom and positive factor that contributes to a better working environment and higher satisfaction (Haar & Russo 2014).

Having the ability to coordinate your private life with your work life in a sustainable way, in other words a good WLB, can be argued to have a positive effect on Job Satisfaction. Mihelic & Aleksic (2017) are referring to the importance to value WLB in the workplace have grown as younger generations is entering the labour market. A higher prioritization of WLB in a workplace have been found to be positively correlated to increased Job Satisfaction (Haar & Russo 2014 cited in Mihelic & Aleksic 2017). Hence, it is essential to once again stress WLB as dependent on perception and employees' ability to make practical solutions in their lives, for them to handle two domains without one affecting the other. But also, as discussed according Work Life Boundaries, organizations can give their employees more or less freedom to be able to manage their WLB (Besseyre des Horts et al., 2011). Naturally this may also relate to what kind of job an induvial is having and his/her social class since what conditions you have is all depending on what you are working with (Austen & Ong 2014). This is further argued in the section "Income and social class", where it shows how these factors can have an impact on an individual's WLB.

Work Life Balance in Asia

We have now introduced how the concept WLB have grown, how it can be experienced today and are now going to review research based in Asia of WLB. There have been some previous studies of WLB in Asian countries, most of them have taken place in China and India (Chandra 2012). In some of the Asian countries the views of the aspects work and family different from how it is perceived in the Western world. Where we often find the phenomena WLB to be a struggle which can be compared to a puzzle of the life's different spheres. The majority in the

Western world's households are dual earners, nevertheless it is experienced to be hard to combine work life and private life. This is something many organisations are actively working with to ease for their employees (Crompton & Lyonette 2006). In China it has been conducted that the country and Chinese organisations are focused on economic growth and to become a global competitor of the world economy rather than a sustainable workplace focusing on the employees and WLB. This have resulted in long work hours, work intensification and a society that primarily focus on the paid work (Chandra 2012).

Xiao argue that China, in recent years, has raised the issues of WLB and the human impacts of paid work. This has become more emphasized, and the subject has been raised in the country and within organisations (Xiao 2012). Chandra (2012) is referring to organizations in China as aware of WLB and the struggle that comes with it, but the organizations do not feel a need to address it. The companies see the employees' WLB as the individuals' own problem and responsibility. In Chandra's article (2012) it is also discussed China's economic situation is in fact in progress for developing from a developing country towards a world economy. Meaning that the labour market itself is still quite conservative and is keeping the former values such as hard-working employees for assurance the family's financial stability. The ability of providing for the family is naturally the most essential priority. Since the Philippines also is appeared to be a developing country, people may have other priorities such as reassurance of providing for the family when they are having a job. We intend to keep this in mind during the interviews. Even if Chandra and Xiao have two different views, we can be certain of that WLB is a concept that is known in both China and India (Chandra 2012). Throughout this we will also keep in mind that even though organizations can be fully aware of WLB, it might not be in line with what they see as the organization's responsibility. Knowing this, we are going to raise the concept in the Philippines. In this we will approach different influences such as income and gender which will be discussed in the coming sections. Throughout this benchmark we are going to contribute to this research gap by addressing WLB in the Philippines.

So far, we have discussed how WLB have taken place in the Western World, ascertained that there have been some previous studies in Asia. As we mentioned earlier these have mostly been focused in China and India. The conclusion we can make now is that former studies shows that WLB is given less awareness than it has in the Western World. Since concept WLB itself tends to be perceived the same but due to cultural traditions, family structures and societal institutions this is not as prioritized in many workplaces in China and India (Chandra 2012). We have found very limited research addressing WLB in the Philippines, but there have been some scratches of the surface concerning this concept. Even if the research concerning WLB is fairly inadequate and the phenomenon is relatively new, it does exist in the Philippines. National media such as; Manila Times, Good News Philippines and Inquirer have all discussed problems regarding how to manage the balance between work and family life and addressed it as WLB (Locsin et al. 2016). These published articles are very new, they all argue for organization to increase the focus on WLB. Therefore, we believe a few people are aware of the problems regarding balancing the spheres of work and private life. Regardless if they have encountered this terminology before or not, we are going to analyse how our respondents are managing their time and how they experience aspects of the work life and the private life.

Income and social class

As suggested before, the work conditions may vary depending on the income of the employee. Since the Philippines is a developing country, the work conditions and welfare may work differently than in the Western world. Therefore, income and WLB will be seen from an Asian perspective. In a study from Singapore it is explained how a single mother is having big problems with balancing a paid job with all the responsibilities at home (Teo 2016). There is a difficulty for the low-income women to have a full-time job or a stable employment and keep it due to managing all the domestic tasks and care responsibilities. The article shows that income and gender have a big impact on the WLB (Teo 2016). Lewis et al. (2007) argues that mothers in countries with traditional gender roles are being more concerned for their Work Life Balance. However, this will get more discussed later in the chapter about traditional gender roles.

The domestic work is referred to as "invisible labour" which women tends to feel responsible for (Teo 2016). A helping solution in this study is to pay a migrant domestic worker to outsource the tasks to. Paid caregivers who take care of the children within the house is common in the middle and high-income households but rarely existing in the low-income families. Help from grandparents is also most common in the middle-to-high income households while the mother care for the children in the high and low-income households (Teo 2016). Maybe this is the reason why low-income earners, especially women get heavily affected by pressure from work and family (Austen & Ong 2014). Childcare centres do exist in Singapore and can be a help for some families, with exception of the low-income shift workers who have odd working hours (Teo 2016). The odd hours will keep the shift workers without a chance to use the childcare when it is most needed. Further, this will be another struggle in terms of WLB, while juggling childcare and paid job. Warren (2015) criticizes the bias that the biggest problems of WLB is because of long working hours. She states that people in the higher class also work many hours. The problem with WLB for the lower-class might be a result of irregular and odd working hours as we can see in the study about the women having difficulties using childcare services (Teo 2016). Childcare as well elderly care often happen within the home (Teo 2016). Grandparents take care of the children and when they are too old to do so, they will get care in return. In other words, there is a mutual relation within the middle class where the unpaid care will be reversed (Teo 2016). The low-income women usually got poor quality jobs since their education was limited. Such jobs were cleaners, janitors, supermarket cashiers and jobs in food service. The common factor for those jobs is that they do not allow the women to plan their own working hours. If working overtime is declined, there is a risk to get fired (Teo 2016). This could be connected to the concept flexibility that was previously discussed. We find this as a clear example of Allvin's (2006) arguments about the interchangeability and Sale's (2014) arguments about external numerical flexibility. Here the low-income women are very much replaceable, and the organisation has a freedom where they can fire them easily. While the women have no power to decide their own working hours the unsafe employment may possibly affect their WLB in a negative matter.

Night shifts are also more common in the low-income household compared to the high income (Teo 2016). This can get compared to a study about middle-class families in The United

17

Kingdom. Where it is said that the middle-class workers usually work traditionally from Monday to Friday. Due to this the weekends tend to be more and more focused on the children in the family, where the parents spend meaningful time together with their children (Wheeler 2014). Taking time off for family emergencies may be taken for granted in the high-income households, but in regard to the fact that the low-income workers lack power over the working hours it may result in a layoff (Teo 2016). As said in the findings of this study in Singapore, we also believe that there could be a big difference between the classes regarding WLB. The two Asian countries may have some similarities and the findings from Singapore might be applicable in our study. Therefore, we will include this factor about income into our analysis about our Filipino respondents.

Traditional Gender Role Norms

According to traditional gender role norms the man is seen as a breadwinner or financial provider and the woman is a caregiver who still has the biggest responsibility for the domestic domain (Christiansen & Palkovitz 2001). Those gendered expectations form individual decisions and professional opportunities. It can influence an individual on how to arrange the employment hours and whether he/she wants to marry and have children or not. Nowadays in the Western world both females and males share the breadwinner role, since the women have a part in the labour market. However, the old gender stereotypes and family ideal live on. The woman of the family is still seen as the caregiver who is responsible for family concerns (Coltrane 2004). From this, people make predictions that women would be more likely to reduce work hours and job demands and look for flexible work options for the sake of the family. In the same way, the traditional gender roles say that men should be less likely to adapt and compromise the family time (Coltrane 2004). Women face hard decisions and even though both partners are having a paid job, women still do twice as much domestic work and childcare. Consequently, women are having a difficult time achieving work-family balance (Coltrane 2004). Ridgeway (2011) suggests that the gender inequality depends on people's attitudes and stereotypes towards gender roles and their relations to one another. Since we have seen in researches that the gender aspect is a big influencing factor, we have chosen to consider this into our study. We also find gender related matter interesting and important and would like to apply this way of thinking upon the Filipino respondents.

Attitudes and culture in the Philippines

Now when the reader is introduced to the traditional gender roles there is a need to understand the situation and attitudes in the Filipino society. In a study about young Filipino male seafarer it is stated that the young men are seen as successful when they are able to provide for their families and give them social support and emotional care. Money, different goods and food can be a proof of love and caring for their parents and family (Alipio 2013). This is very much a traditional gender perspective (Christiansen & Palkovitz 2001) as discussed in the previous chapter about traditional gender roles. Seeing that the young Filipino men are seen as providers or breadwinners (Ridgeway 2011). Kaut (1961) argues that a typical Filipino value is "the debt of gratitude". This reveals a system of mutual expected behaviour and obligations. The value regulates and restrict socially meaningful relations. By not behaving in line with the norms and

acting ungrateful towards the ones who invested in their future, people will look down on them and tell them they are "without a debt of gratitude" or "without shame" (Alipio 2013). While growing up and entering the adulthood young Filipinos feel like they are in debt to their parents, siblings, relatives and godparents. The family ties are both close and wide since they include a broad group of blood relatives. This enables a bigger share of responsibility of emotional and financial support. The family values and ties sometimes pressure the young adults and many of them migrate to work and earn money, if the conditions at home are poor. If young Filipinos fail to contribute to the family's and relative's economy, they betray the family (Alipio 2013). Even though a large number of Filipinas are in the productive labour market, the father of the family is still seen as the provider or income producer. Further, the expectation on the feminine gender is to provide maternal love and emotional care (Parreñas 2001). Parreñas' (2001) statement is in line with Coltrane's (2004) point and the study from Singapore (Teo 2016), that women are still the one in charge of the family responsibilities. We will keep the existing attitudes in mind while doing our analysis. As we think a deeper understanding and insight in the attitudes will help us to understand the structure and reasons behind some actions.

Conclusion

WLB is the balance between one's work life and private life. Availability can make the both spheres accessible at the same time and this might complicate to stay focus once being in one of the spheres. A strategy to manage the balance could be using Work Life Boundaries, where the employee set clear boundaries to not be available in both spheres at the same time. Not every employee has the opportunity to make use of temporal flexibility such as flexible work hours. This might depend on the person's income and work conditions. High income-earners seem to have more flexible work hours and control over their schedule. Flexible work hours can have a great impact on how you experience your work, and this factor can lead to a better Job satisfaction. The WLB does not appear to be prioritized in Asian companies and the perspective is sometimes rather different than the Western. Both gender and income have an impact on the WLB. Low income-earners are having a hard time combining child care and wage. Women have an expectation to take care of the children and the household while the men are responsible to provide for the family. The family-oriented culture adds to the traditional gender roles and those surely affect the experience of the WLB. The high reliance for the family is characterizing the entire culture. This leads back to the fact that many young Filipinos feel pressured to provide and take care of their family. With all these concepts and theories in mind, we will move on to explain how the study was done.

Method

This is a qualitative study where we have been studying Filipino men and women, with different incomes in The Philippines. The aim of the study is to understand how Filipino men and women experience and handle their WLB. This methodological chapter gives the reader an opportunity to understand our choice of method, who our respondents are, how we collected and analysed the material and how we performed the interviews in Manila.

Choice of method

The aim of a study is always crucial for the choice of the method. If you aim for numbers, frequency and percent a quantitative study fits perfectly. This study tends to answer questions such as: How often? How many? How common? If you on the other hand want to get a deeper understanding in people's thoughts and actions or distinguish varied action patterns, a qualitative study should be your choice of method. In this study the point is to ask rather simple questions and get complex and detailed answers (Corbin & Strauss 2008). Trost (2014) explains the differences between the two types of methods with a metaphor. If the researcher wants to know how many different types of flowers that exist on the field, he/she should go out to the field and count them. This would be a quantitative study. If the researcher instead wants to know what types of flower there are and what kind of life conditions they have, he/she should not count but search for variation and try to understand their situation (Trost 2014). This can be connected to our study since we were searching for different types of persons and tried to understand their life situation.

The aim of the study is to understand the WLB of the Filipinos. With the interviews we wanted to get a deep and detailed insight in the participants' thoughts and experiences. This would never be possible through a quantitative survey or a qualitative observation. In a survey (quantitative study) we could still get some personal information about the respondents' experiences and thoughts but mostly likely not as detailed as for example collecting data by using an interview. We think that writing a detailed story in a survey requires a lot more effort from the participants than speaking freely in an interview. Another disadvantage by using a quantitative study would be that we would not have any chance to ask any further questions since it would not be as natural to ask supplementary questions when the survey is already submitted. A quantitative study could have been useful for us if we for example wanted to know how many Filipinos who were happy/unhappy with their WLB. In that case we would not need the understanding behind the answers since we only wanted to know the numbers. Therefore, we eliminated the quantitative method. Trost (2014) is very clear while arguing that qualitative studies should not be used for statistics or having a random selection to represent the population.

Qualitative studies apply to fewer people but with a more detailed understanding for those few people, while a quantitative study applies to a broader aspect of something, but not as deep understanding. In a qualitative study you discover variables instead of testing them, define how values are formed in cultures and get the inner experience of the respondents (Corbin & Strauss 2008). However, if we would have done another qualitative study such as observation we may not have gained a deeper understanding of the individuals. We think that by using observation,

many interesting things or phenomena can be seen. It would be possible to see a working versus dysfunctional WLB, but the limitation would be to see and understand the inner experiences and thoughts.

In this study we used a qualitative method in form of interviews, which took place in different cáfees in Manila. Since our formulation of question is concerning both men and women and is depending on their personal experiences we have understood that a qualitative study is going to fulfil our purpose the best way. We believe that interviews are the best way for us to get data of high quality and as good understanding as possible. Interviews will give us a chance to get a personal connection to our participants and increase our comprehension for them and as well as the Filipino culture. A semi-structured interview is flexible since it "balances" the structure and therefore gives data of good quality. By balancing it means that the interviews all have a common structure and the respondents will get asked the same questions. However, the structure or order of the questions should not be strictly followed, but rather formed for the current respondent. It is important to lead the interview person through the different areas of subheadings, if it was not already covered (Gillman 2008). All interview persons were recommended from a gatekeeper, which will be further discussed.

Our main focus was on two different parts: the work life and the private life. With work life we are referring to a paid job. With the private life we chose to focus on the domestic labour in the household, how much time they spend with their family, friends and hobbies. With these two perspectives we hoped to get a clear picture of how the Filipinos manage different parts in life. Every interview person should be offered enough time, so they feel like they had time to say everything they wanted to say in the interviews (Gillman 2008). The less structured part of the interviews are the open questions and additional questions which are being used to get more information about any significant topic (Gillman 2008). In our interview we let the interview persons speak and take their time and all the interviews ended up within the time span of 40-90 minutes, depending on the respondents' level of developed answers. We also tried to keep some questions open and asked things as: Tell us about…. How do you describe…? How does that make you feel? How do you think…? We also let the interview person speak freely and led them through the interview to cover all the different areas we were interested in. Due to the analysis it is important to cover similar areas in all the interviews since it will open up for a comparative analysis (Gillman 2008). One of the advantages for the semi-structured interview is that it opens up for new discoveries but at the same time makes it possible to analyze similarities (Gillman 2008). This was fairly evident in our study since we both discovered new interesting areas and had lots of similar situations between the respondents. This will be more discussed in our analysis. Furthermore, we noticed some limitations for the semi-structured interviews due to the open questions. The open questions made it possible for the respondents to have a free interpretation. This could be a disadvantage sometimes when the respondents "misunderstood" the questions and were talking freely about something else. In those situations, it was really hard for us to interrupt the person. But when we got the chance, we tried to gently push him/her back to the area of concern without to seem rude.

Participants

As a criterion for our application for SIDA's scholarship we had to present a contact person in the Philippines. Our contact person was a very helpful Swedish man who runs a company in Metro Manila. In consideration of anonymity, we will call him David. Later on, in the process David also became our gatekeeper, which we will discuss more a bit further down. Thanks to him and his big network he was able to provide us with a several interesting respondents. Since we wanted to have differences among our respondents in both sex and income we made up a few requirements. We wanted the levels of income to be spread and David was able to get people from all levels: low, middle and high income. We also wanted half of our respondents to be females and the other half to be males. The last variable was that all the respondents should have at least one child. With this variable we thought the problems of maintaining a good WLB would be even clearer. We got all our requirements satisfied and this landed in ten very interesting and different respondents. Our contact person gave our details to the respondents and we were able to set a time and place for some of the interviews before we arrived in the Philippines.

Trost (2014) writes about strategic selection and that is all starts with the researcher to pick out a few variables. When the variables or different categories are set, it is time to look for interview persons that fit into the requirements. With this process it is easier to find the desirable respondents for the study. The strategic selection is a help to hopefully get variation among the respondents, and to prevent the misfortune in getting a too little variation in the material. However, there can be a few problems in the selection of the desirable respondents. In some cases, there must be a gatekeeper to give you the access to those specific persons. With this come some risks and one can be that the gatekeeper tries to control the selection too much. Another risk is that the gatekeeper makes promises in the beginning of the process and later finds out that all the hard and time-consuming work in finding the right persons is too hard. In other words, some gatekeeper promises you the world but, in the end, you do not get any help at all (Trost 2014).

In our study David was our gatekeeper since he was in control of opening the door to our respondents. He assisted us in fulfilling all our requirements and provided us with respondents fast. Therefore, we had no problem with the strategic selection, and it only saved us time and work. Convenience sample is a very common and practical method to use for a strategic selection. It means that you make the selection rather convenient for yourself and kind of "take what you get". You can find people on the streets, through ads in the newspapers or from a list of the population. The advantage of a convenience sample is that they find suitable ones in a fairly easy way. However, there may be disadvantages of self-selection, which means that you get distinctive or special respondents who you do not need in the study (Trost 2014).

In our case it turned out that two of our respondents were not available after all, therefore we decided to look for other participants. Once again, we used another friend as a gatekeeper and he helped us to set one of the last interviews. The second one was a typical example of the snowball sample. The planned respondent had forgotten about the interview and had no possibility to participate since he was out of the country. Therefore, he suggested another man

he knows at his work. The definition of the snowball sample has been named after a metaphor which implicates asking the interview person if he/she knows someone who would be interesting and relevant for the study. The disadvantage in our cases was that the man from the snowball sample did not fulfil all our requirements for the study. He did not have any children for example and for the interview he brought his wife with him. This interview was surely different, and we got an interesting discussion and different inputs. One disadvantage was that the present of his wife may affected his answers since it seemed in some cases that he was looking for approval and agreement from his wife. We decided to still count him in the study. Although he did not have any children, he had a wife, difficulties with WLB and other similarities to the other respondents.

Reliability and validity

Studies or researches should show a high reliability and validity. The first mentioned is an index of the consistency. This mean that the study should be able to be re-done but still get similar results. Possible influences on the study, such as external factors may change the answer or decrease the consistency (Saks & Johns 2013). External factors may be someone listening, disturbing or interrupting. At some occasions we experienced distractions at some cafés when it had many customers and the sound volume was high. It is hard to tell in which extension this affected our respondents. However, in general it did not seem like the respondents had any problem with this since they usually just kept talking. On the other side, this might have been a problem if the respondents knew someone at the café, but during our interviews at the cafés we were all just "someone in the crowd". There are of course many possible alternatives where to perform the interviews, that might had been a solution to the problem. We were determined that we wanted to seem professional and therefore we excluded the option to invite the respondents to our apartment, since it felt too private. Many respondents suggested their office or their workplace as a place for the interviews. Moreover, we also negated this alternative for the reason to attain a higher level of reliability. We wanted to look out for affecting factors and thought that managers and colleagues would definitely be able to affect the interview persons. Since speaking about one's work situation or family situation can be rather private. Especially, if the person is not happy with the work situation, it might be hard to say this in front of co-workers or bosses.

Another thing we kept in mind due to increase the reliability was that we made sure to guarantee the respondents confidentiality. We told all of them that the two of us were the only ones to listen to their recorded interview and to delete the material once the thesis was complete. Furthermore, they also got informed that no one will know which answers derived from them and that they would be anonymous to the reader in the final use of data. It was also important for us to tell them that our gatekeeper David was not involved in the study or in the processing of the material. Other things that may have an impact on the reliability can be the researcher or the person doing the study. During the analysing of data the interviewer always see connections, experience or interpret in his/her own way. Therefore, the analysis will always be on a subjective level, since the interview is about a person interacting with other people. This makes it very hard to stay objective and it is nothing wrong with being subjective. It just needs to be taken into account and what impact is may have on the study (Gillman 2008).

In our case, we were two persons analysing and discussion openly with each other. This made it easier to stay open to other perspectives and not got stuck in one mindset. As we tried to analyse and include different renderings. Validity is also an index but of a different kind. This index is supposed to make sure that the study measures what it intended to measure. This requires that the interviewer asks the "right" questions which are related to the question of choice (Saks & Johns 2013). To obtain a high level of validity it is also important how to represent the collected material from the interviews. The study needs to reflect what actually happened and was said in the interviews (Gillman 2008). We tried to keep all the quotes as they were said by the interview persons. Besides a few grammar changes and clarifications to make it more understandable. The reason because of this was that the interview persons way of expressing themselves says a lot, more than the researcher's academic reconstruction (Gillman 2008). Therefore, we did not see any value in rewriting the material.

Ethics

Before doing a qualitative study, it is important to think about potential consequences for the respondents. It is essential to not put the participants through anything unpleasant or risky. The ethical principle to "do good" should be followed (Kvale & Briknmann 2014). The ethical requirements for a researcher is to gain as high scientific quality as possible for the published knowledge. It means that the published results from the study should be as correct and representative for the field of research as possible (Kvale & Briknmann 2014). We are not researchers but were still striving for this in our study. The results and methods should be explained in the study to make it possible for other people to control or redo it, but for a qualitative study the results cannot be assumed to be replicable.

Anonymity usually does not occur in qualitative interviews, nor in this study, as the interviewer most likely knows the name and other recognition factors of the interview person (Trost 2010). Nevertheless, the study will remain confidential. This means that it will not be possible to know which of the respondents who said what and private data which could define who they are will not be shared (Kvale & Brinkmann 2014). Therefore, we will make up other names for each participant, so they will not be recognized. By this, the participants will be anonymous to the readers and no unauthorized persons can find out their personal information. Before and during the interviews, a clear agreement was given when all interviewees agreed to be interviewed and answered all questions voluntarily. The respondents were also told that they could call of the interview or not answer some specific questions if they did not want to. In view of the information requirements and as a small introduction to the interview, the purpose of the study was read for the interviewees (Trost 2010).

The interviews

The interview guide was constructed with help from all our knowledge and previous experiences of interviews. The challenge was to construct the questions rather open, no leading questions nor yes or no questions. We also kept in mind to try to ask questions that will make the person cover everything we wanted to cover such as the theories in our literature review.

We started off with a quite long interview guide and had to shorten and regulate the redundant questions. The final guide contained six different areas: background information as a warm up, family life, work life balance, flexibility, availability and attitudes and culture.

Before our trip to the Philippines we bought two speech dictation devices to facilitate the processing and transcribing of data. Thereafter, we recorded every interview and made sure to have two copies of each one just in case. The first three weeks were spent on performing the interviews. We spend approximately two weeks for transcribing while finishing the last interviews. As said before, we interviewed ten different persons, five women and five men. All ten interviews took place in Metro Manila. We wanted to be flexible and to not require too much time from the respondents. Therefore, we had them pick a café close to their home or work to have the interview at. The disadvantage with this was the noise. The level of the noise at some cafés were sometimes high and this made it hard to communicate and specially to transcribe while listening to the recorded interviews. Another drawback was the traffic in Manila. Most of our interviews took place in the business area Makati, 22 kilometres from our apartment. Every time we took a taxi it took us 2 hours to get there and 2 hours to get back home. The reason was traffic jam, and this was very tiring and time consuming for us.

To gain the respondents trust and getting them answer openly and honestly, we made sure to inform them about the confidentiality and that the recorded material will not be shared to anyone else and will get deleted as soon as the thesis is done.

Coding of Data

As said before, every interview was recorded on two different devices. Those recordings were used while doing the transcribing of very interview. Every file got listened to once while transferring it to a complete written text document. When all the recorded interviews were translated to written documents, we started to discuss general ideas and thoughts we had while going through the interviews. We tried to sum up general patterns and see connections between the interviews but also between interviews and the literature review. Later on, we decided to create two main categories or themes that summed up the observed patterns of the material. Gender roles and culture and social classes and work conditions. Within those themes we tried to sort out what material and information from the interviews fit in each theme and how they all connect to each other. Sometimes this felt like a complex thing to do without getting a messy structure. Then we tried to weave together both the new material with the existing theories and studies from the literature review, with help from quotes and references.

Our believes about the Asian WLB were that it is not as known and mentioned as in Europe and Scandinavia for example. We thought this would affect the people's attitudes and way of life since they are not aware of how it could be. Another preconception was that the employers do not care about their employees and that the employees do not really have any power to request different conditions at the workplace. Since we had heard about the traditional gender roles, we also thought that the women do everything in the household and that most of them are housewives. Our last speculation was about the different social classes. For us it would make sense that the low-income earners would have a defective WLB since they might have less

responsibility and control within their role at work. Since we read that WLB is not a common topic in the Philippines, we were worried that the respondents would not be aware or consider WLB as a problem or even an interesting topic. Another fear was that we might thought that they would not want to share or would not understand why we wanted to know how they live and handle their life. We did not want them to think that we were people from the Western world who would judge or rate their way of living. This shows the bias and background of us, the persons doing the research. As said before, the researcher needs to be aware of this and in a qualitative study it is impossible to be objective (Gillman 2008). In the end it all turned out fine and the interview persons shared a lot of interesting and sometimes very personal information. Of course, it depended on the person and some people shared more than others. As we thought, many people did not seem to know about the term WLB itself but still understood the meaning or issues that might come with it since they all experienced the WLB struggle in their daily lives. The reader will get the chance to read more about the findings in the coming analysis chapter.

Results and analysis

The aim of this study was to see and understand how the Filipinos experience and handle their Work Life Balance. Moreover, we also wanted to see how gender and income affect the Work Life Balance. This part of the thesis is constructed to focus on two appearing major themes which emerged from the collected material. The first theme is social classes and work conditions, while the second theme is gender roles and culture. Those will get analysed from help of the theories and existing studies from the literature review but also discussed one by one and get supported by some selected quotes from the interviews. The section will end in answering the main questions of this study: *"How do Filipino men and women in Metro Manila experience and handle their Work Life Balance?"* and *"How do gender and income have an impact of the Work Life Balance?"*.

Income and work conditions

An important aspect we believed to have an impact when doing this study, especially since the Philippines is a developing country, is social class. Depending on the social class and the money you are earning, the quality of life can vary a lot. In our study we therefore included income, one of the questions from the interview guide was to describe a typical Filipino family which gave a varied answer. This is one of them:

> Generally, here in the Philippines we have three level of classes. The high class, middle and low class. I could say that we are in the middle class since me and my husband are working. We cannot buy whatever we want, but at least we eat more than three times a day that is very important. In the high class that is the ones who live in the villages and have more than three exclusive cars or something like that. And for the low class, those are the ones you see on the street, living on the street or you know what I mean, who lives in urban areas. (Fiona, sales representative, low income, 33.)

This briefly describe how the individuals' conditions can vary depending on social class and work. This reference reflects a picture from the reality of social hierarchy in the Philippines. In our study we have chosen to focus on the differences in income rather than social class. Of our participants half of them have had high income and half have had middle income. From these we could distinguish different experiences and attitudes towards some of the concepts we have raised such as availability, flexibility and ability to control your WLB.

Flexibility for employees

In this thesis we have raised the concept flexibility, both from individuals and organisations perspective. An approach of flexibility is perceived to contribute to a better WLB and work environment (Karlsson 2006). From our empiric data we could recognize two types of flexibility both flexibility with freedom to control work time, work place and how you do your work. But also, when it comes to flexibility for the organization, in the way that would provide them the freedom to replace employees. These two approaches are rather different, they vary in terms of the individual's freedom and the organizations freedom. Flexibility in such way that it gives the employees freedom to make their own decisions about their jobs is intended to increase the well-being and ability to give employees ability to create one's WLB (Kelliher & Anderson 2010). The idea itself is therefore with good intention in the first place, though this

pattern of flexibility was mostly recognized for individuals with high income. Throughout our empirical data we could distinguish that flexibility for the employees such as flexible work hours, ability to manage where to work and when was a phenomenon present in high earners working life. Since all the participants with high income indicated that they had high flexibility and a well working WLB. Which indicated that having flexibility and ability of managing your own time, by flexible work hours and working from home is more common for individuals with higher income. The people we have interviewed with higher income have either their own businesses or is working for a Western company. Thus, can conclude that the income has a tendency to have an impact. In such way as employees with higher status jobs in our study, have an advantage in terms of WLB because either they manage their own time since they have their own business, or they work in an organization where the employee's life outside of the workplace is prioritize.

From our findings we could distinguish that some people with lower income had this kind of flexibility, in terms of flexible work hours and ability to manage where they worked. What they had in common was that they all work for Western companies. This conclusion we derive from that three of the five participants with low income experience to have flexible work hours while the two others did not. What differs these three individuals from the other two is simply that the three are working for Western organisations. We believe this is a result of that Western countries are adapting for the employees to make it easier to maintain their WLB. As Chandra (2012) is referring to, even though organizations in China and India do know about the struggle to maintain a sustainable WLB in general they do not see it as their responsibility to obtain. Even though local newspapers have been raising WLB and ways to increase it the discussion is mostly maintaining opinions from workers and their own strategies and suggestions to keep their WBL sustainable. In other words, there have not been much focus on the organizations and how they can act to improve the employee's work conditions (Locsin et al. 2016). Therefore, the situation occurring WLB in the Philippines could be similar to how it is perceived in China and India. In other words, the Filipino organizations may not see WLB as their responsibility. Therefore, the ability to ease and improve an individual's WLB can be a question of which organization they are employed at but also a matter of income.

Awareness of the concept WLB
In the theoretical chapter of this thesis it is repetitively stated that WLB is a known Western concept. This got confirmed once again in our collected material. Not many respondents were familiar with the concept rather than understanding the literal meaning of the word balance and that something should be in balance. The few interview persons who knew about the term were mostly highly educated with a high income or had been in touch with international friends or companies. John is telling us about his first time hearing about WLB from a Swedish company.

> The manager she mentioned in the first interview that they are maintaining WLB in the company, and I had no idea what it was. So I asked. And she said that is means you are going to have a life after work. So we will not require you to work extra hours, it depends on you if you really want to work then of course you can, but we do not encourage it. That's when I started making my tasks more manageable having schedules on everything that I do every day. That is when I started having

a life after work and more time with my family. It really affected me. (John, Chief IT Architect, high income, 39)

This states once again that income and within what organization you work tends to matter when it comes to maintaining one's WLB. As John is describing the organization is encouraging him to take time to be with his family and have a life outside of his job. A general pattern we could distinguish throughout our data, is indicating what John is describing, WLB is not often encouraged by organizations in the Philippines. Those organisations who is raising awareness to WLB have all been Western organisations in this study.

Being unaware the concept WLB may not make a difference in how you choose to organize your life. But it can have an effect in terms of how much the individual reflect on it. As John is describing, firstly when he got aware of WBL, is when he started to reflect about it. For example, further on in this interview he is describing this same company is where he first was introduced to having flexible work hours. Also, after being employed there he would make sure that he had the same benefits, such as flexible work hours and being able to sometimes work from home in his future jobs.

> Yes, one of the thing being a part of that company is that you really need to have spare time for yourself and a scheduled break for yourself. So when I got a new job and joined this company I made sure that those benefits would be a part of the contract, I have flexible time and time off so I don't need to rush in here from the traffic. So it is a part of the contract here. So it became very important for me. (John, Chief IT Architect, high income, 39)

This indicates how organizations and social class do have an impact on the employees' WLB. Since the organizations are the ones managing the work conditions and benefits that they are offering such as the flexible work hours, work place and work conditions. As discussed regarding Work Life Boundaries, the ability to manage your own conditions and create the boundaries is much depending of both business culture, work hours and flexible work hours (Golden & Geiser 2007). If this is not encouraged in an organization this could become harder to establish for employees. The fact that John has high income and is working in a Western company matters. Since it is mostly employees within Western companies and with higher positions that have the ability to which have an impact on their WLB. With benefits such as flexible work hours and ability to work from home. Some handles their WLB by setting up Work Life Boundaries.

Flexibility for employers
Flexibility can also be viewed differently, from the employer's perspective. This shows when the flexibility works for fulfilling the company's needs, in such way as it may affect the employee's work hours, employment and staffing (Allvin 2006; Bettio et al. 1996). Surprisingly, we found that flexible employment was something highly present in the Philippines' labour market. The flexible employments on the labour market mean that people have temporary contracts. For many participants this was a major stress in their everyday life. Nearly all of them, both individuals with high and low income experienced to be highly replaceable in their position at their workplace. Others were referring to that they had a major

responsibility to provide for their families and where in need of a job. In other words, an employer-friendly flexibility is a phenomenon that is highly existing in the Philippines labour market. Even though the flexible employments are seen as something good for companies since it reduces the costs (Allvin 2006), it made many employees worried.

> In the Philippines most of the workers are skilled, that is why we are the biggest outsourcing industry. They can easily find someone who can replace you and do your job, so for me I need to work hard for me to earn this kind of position that I have right now. There was this time when I got promoted, and when you get promoted there are even more responsibilities that you need to take care of. It made me feel like I needed to do better and if I didn't achieve what I needed, in the end of the day that made me really frustrated. On the meeting they gonna talk about you and what you have done, so those times I am afraid I will lose my job. (Maria, call centre agent, low income, 32).

All of our 10 participants are experiencing or have experienced more or less stress of losing their jobs. The reasons for this is both for financial reason and fear of being replaced. Like Maria is saying, there are many skilled workers in the Philippines and the competition is very tough. This creates a major stress for always performing and to constantly stay available for their job. Since the Filipino society does not have a supporting welfare system that can support individuals if they would lose their job, the cost of losing a job can be a result of falling into poverty (Utrikespolitiska Institutet 2016). This may also be a question of social class, our study indicated that people with lower income tend to stress more about the fear of being replaced and fall into poverty. While people with higher income are more worried about not having enough money to provide for the family in a long-term perspective. In such way as the parents might not afford to pay for their children's college in the future. These two options may seem very similar, what differ them apart is the perspective. Having a higher income also gives you a more financial stabile ground and makes it less likely to end up without a home. Which could be the case for some individuals with a low income. The outcomes from losing a job can in other word have devastating consequences, and is an issue affecting both high and low earners.

Availability

The participants fear of getting fired or losing their job may affect the availability. Maybe the employees feel that they need to always be available and work hard even at home to decrease the risks of getting replaced. A general pattern we could see in all of our interview was that the individual's employment does require an availability to do work after work hours. In most cases the obligation to answer was referring to emails, taking calls and messages from other employees or supervisors. Many felt stressed and irritated which is in line with what Waller & Ragsdell (2012) said about availability leading to increased stress and other negative side-effects.

> It makes me irritated because I feel like I need to sleep. And they can ask me later when I get to work. The best thing I do is to close internet or shut off my phone, because then they can't reach me. And I say that my Wi-Fi is terrible back home so I didn't get their message. (Rita, waitress and student, low income, 28).

Most of the reflections from our participants were experiencing the availability as something negative and thought it was very disturbing. The quote above is also referring to setting up Work Life boundaries. Rita is choosing to resist the constant availability and staying inaccessible until she gets to the workplace. What characterize Rita's work situation in particular, is that she has no ability to have an impact on her work hours or the location of the workplace, as many other low earners. All of the respondents experienced it to be an expectation on them as employees to reply and stay accessible, even though they experienced it to be an intervention in their private time. Since the availability require much time from the private life this affects the individuals WLB negatively. However, the answers did differ a bit and two participants agreed with Bittman et al. (2009) that availability could have a stress-relieving effect since you have the ability to multitask and get more done when you are in the two spheres at the same time

The two exceptions found in our study, agreed that they need to have a constant availability. But what separated them was that they did not think the obligation of staying accessible had a negative impact in their life.

> No more like the opposite. I think the problem about work life balance it that people do not enjoy what they are doing. But in my case, I feel like I am passionate with what I am doing. I feel like I cannot separate work from family, because they are also family to me. My work is like my second home. When there is a holiday I get to spend time with my family, which makes me happy. But there is also something in me that is looking for work. Even when I am at home. For example, my last pregnancy it was kind of sensitive, and then I was recommended to have bed rest for two weeks. I was so bored and were looking for work all the time. (Sofia, HR-manager, high income 32).

What separates these two participants is that they are the ones with highest income and have the ability to have a larger impact of their work conditions. With benefits such as flexible work hours and being able to work from home when it is needed, these conditions were unique to just these two respondents. They both also evaluated their work situation as having very high Job satisfaction, which the quotation above also is referring to. The fact that their work condition and Job satisfaction are considerably higher that most in this study indicated that this combination does have an impact. What can be suggested is that since they were satisfied and liked their jobs this contributed to a better WLB for them. In other words, that they needed to work from home was not something that had a negative impact since they enjoy what they do. The conditions for the individuals to control work hours and from what location you work is also a freedom for the employee that can contribute to more choices and options. Another factor that also segregated these two from the rest of the respondents was in the question about the reason for why they work. They both answered that the reason for why they worked was for self-actualization and development while all other respondents reason for working was to provide for their families. Throughout this benchmark we believe the main reason for this prioritization is because these two do not have to worry as much for their economy. Even though they mentioned that they do not take their high income for granted, but since they have gotten to a point in their earning that they do not stress over not having enough money. Therefore, they can focus on their own development.

Summary
How do men and women experience and handle their WLB? This section of the thesis has been focusing on the income and work condition and how this affects the WLB. In next section the gender implication will be further developed and discussed and how this related and affects WLB.

 A few people have flexibility and those are mainly the high-income earners and the ones within Western companies. Flexibility helps the individuals to maintain a better WLB since they can have the possibility to plan their own work and time. This facilitates to combine the different spheres and make them collaborate. All participant experienced the obligation to be available for work at nearly all times. A majority found this stressful and it worsen their WLB since work took time from the private life. Income seem to have a major impact of how one can maintain the WLB, in terms of more freedom as an employee. This shows in flexible work hours and ability to control where to work.

Our study denotes that all our high-income participants experience their WLB to be relatively good compared to those participants with lower income. The participants with lower income experienced their WLB to be harder to maintain, this could be a result of that many are without benefits such as the flexibility. Some handle their WLB by setting up their own Work life Boundaries to segregate their work life from the family life. While those who have the option, use the benefits the organisation is providing in term of flexibility to facilitate their WLB. Either way, depending on what you are earning and what conditions you have on your workplace these two factors can matter when it comes to measuring an individual's WLB.

Culture and traditional gender roles
The second theme from the material is about how the Filipino culture and traditional gender roles affect the WLB of the participants in this study.

Culture
It seemed like many choices regarding WLB was made because of the existing culture. The family was very important to all of our respondents and this is in line with what Alipio (2013) mentioned that Filipinos value their family and the family ties are very close.

> A typical family is very big, if someone in the family graduates the whole clan will be there. It is very family oriented, we always want to meet each other. Even though the relatives live far away and they don't have money to visit them, they will borrow money from their neighbour just to make it to the family reunion. They will die for their family. (Alicia, Office manager, high income, 39)

This quote shows the established culture where the family is in the heart of it. The reason why the majority of the respondents choose to work were because of financial reasons and their family.

> It is kind of difficult to both work and have family time. But as I said, I will always choose my family, because they are the reason why I do my work. I don't say that if I am single I don't have to work, what I mean is that I have to work hard because of them. If I am just single, if I lost a job it

would be fine because I would not have anyone to think of. I have to work hard and everything I get in the end of the month, is for them. For my kids and for my family to grow stronger. (Fiona, sales representative, low income, 33.)

This indicates the strong connections for one's family who all the respondents seem to have in common. An interesting and rather unexpected finding was that it is safe to say that none of the parents in our study had a hobby just for them. All their spare time was spent sleeping, eating or being with the family. For us this is rather different, since our experiences of WLB in Sweden do contain a lot more than just work and family. People go to the gym, after works, do volunteering, travel, go to parties, have coffee with friends and so on. Of course, the Filipinos would go to parties, sing karaoke or have dinners with friends and families, but always with the whole family. There were no such times as the father would go golfing alone or the mother would go to the gym by herself. It seemed to not be prioritized. The Filipinos are indeed family-oriented and would do anything for their family. We understood that this is very deep in the culture and can be experienced to be stressful for the respondents. Since it is also in the culture to provide or look after parents, siblings and one's partner's family. "The debt of gratitude" as both Alipio (2013) and Kaul (1961) discussed, was showing in the interviews. At first, the respondents did not bring it up but after a few questions, nearly everyone said that they of course need to help their families and even their partner's family financially. It was like this was generally known and deep within the culture.

Even when I am not there I am sending my support to them. That is a Filipino tradition. It is just not the parents, it is the whole family you are going to support. So let's say if you got lucky, you have three families to support, your own family, your wife's family and your old family. The family bonds in the Philippines are very strong. There is a good affect and a bad effect, the good effect is that you are strengthening you family ties. The bad effect is that the rest of the family can become less responsible of their life. Since I am the one providing the most I am allowing my siblings to do less. (John, Chief IT Architect, high income, 39)

In the way John said that he has to provide for three families and that this will open up for his siblings to do less, it felt like this was just another obligation in the pile of responsibilities. And if getting stronger ties requires him to work hard for everyone seems pretty stressful. He also mentioned that if he will not provide for the external families (such as this parents and his wife's parents) there will be a conflict or an argument. The reason of the conflict might be that the traditions or norms are not followed. If you do not contribute, the family may see it as a betrayal (Alipio 2013). This proves the traditional gender roles and how they affect the WLB of the men. Thus, it can also be seen as a cultural attitude that seem to stress the male respondents rather more than the females. Since the male respondents seem to more often bring this up. The experienced stress of the males might be explained by what Parreñas (2001) also confirmed that the father of the family still has the biggest responsibility of providing. This leads on to the different gender roles.

Traditional gender roles
In this study the gender aspect got included since many existing researches already established it as a big affecting factor when it comes to Work Life Balance. The gender roles also have an

impact of how the genders divide the roles and responsibilities between each other (Teo 2016, Lewis et al. 2007, Austen & Ong 2014, Coltrane 2004). Because of the gender roles women are having a hard time finding an operating WLB (Coltrane 2004). However, in the interviews there was no proof that one gender had the worse WLB. But we suggest that women face many challenges given dual burden and cultural expectations which might keep them from doing other things they would rather do outside work. What was notable was that women seem to worry or at least include many more factors in the problems of WLB. Lewis et al. (2007) argued this, that women in cultures with traditional gender roles were more concerned about their WLB. The women of this study were concern about how to have time for everything. When we asked the female participants, which is their biggest responsibility in life, many of the females believed their biggest responsibility in life was to be a mother, raise and take care of their children and family.

> ...being a mother, it is really hard being a mother. It is like you are the centre of the world. You need to see everyone, even my partner. Even his own clothes, I need to take care of them even though he is old enough to choose what he will wear tomorrow. I need to prepare that too. It is my obligation and my responsibility. Being a mother is really tough, being a mother like me, I can say I am a superwoman. (Maria, call center agent, low income, 32).

Maria is including the complexity of being a mother and that she has more than one responsibility in life. Raising a child, being the centre of the world, but also to take care of a partner. Compared to the males which first answers nearly every time were to provide.

> I think it is to provide for my family financially, which I am happy to do with a work I love. (Adam, freelancer IT-programmer, high income, 24)

Why do those answers differ so much from each other? One possible answer may be that the traditional gender roles about breadwinner and caregiver (Christiansen & Palkovitz 2001) are very much still existing in the Filipino society. How do those gender roles affect the WLB? The expected behaviour or roles seems to have a very big impact on how people actually behave and plan their time and chores. In general men seem to plan their time around work while women plan their time around children and household chores, which is in line with the gender roles. The different roles seem to have existed for such a long time which make them very embedded in the Filipino culture and in the way every individual think. Being a woman can be directly translated to be a loving, hard-working mum, not only mum of the children, but also mum of the husband sometimes. One of the respondents said that "the tradition" is passed on and children are brought up with those gender roles.

> The household chores are mostly being taken care of the wife. Even if they both have full time jobs. The main responsibility of the husband is to have a good time. Even if they do not have a job they mostly try to have a good time. I think it is because of old traditions, before one of the traditions was really to have the wife working in the household while the husband was the one providing for the family. And as the years go by, the wives are trying to have their own money. The main object of the husband is to have a good time, because they always think that they have a wife so they can take a break. That is the normal everyday situation, that is what they grew up thinking. And the next generation comes in and they learn from their parents. So it depends on the traditions. For example

my father provided for our family needs but he was never there. He was only working and having fun. We never saw him in my family, he only went to work came home drunk and went to work the other day. (John, Chief IT Architect, high income, 39)

What John means with having fun is hard to say. Fun seems to equal drinking and not doing domestic work. In this case the existing attitudes seem to be rather old fashioned and once again based on the traditional gender roles where the woman has all the responsibilities at home, caring and cleaning. And his dad seemed to do things apart from the family which is not a usual thing among our participants. As said in the quote those "traditions" or attitudes might be hard to change since everything is like is has always been and the children learn from their parents. However, we saw many signs that this is starting to change which will be encountered later on.

There are many examples when the female respondents feel like they have two jobs or a double burden. Teo (2016) calls this the "invisible labour", which Maria explains very well.

> When I am done with my work here (work), I am working there (at home). When I get home I am going to work as well. (Maria, call centre agent, low income, 32).

Coltrane (2004) is talking about that women have double as much household chores and child care responsibilities as the men. To connect this to our study and one of the questions of choice, how do gender have an impact of WLB? In general, it is clear that most of the women do a lot more of domestic work and that the traditional gender roles still are existing.

> In the household I do most, I mean I do everything most of the time, he is not doing anything. He comes back to the house and he says: I am hungry. I give him the food, I wash the dishes and the clothes. I do pretty much everything. He is also working in a similar company, the work is very stressful I know the feeling because I am in the industry as well. For him the rest it is just, he watches a movie and falls asleep, every night. (Maria, call centre agent, low income, 32).

Thus, the women are well-aware of the fact that they are the "caregivers" (Christiansen & Palkovitz 2001) and it seems like some of them have accepted this but many of them want a change. Seeing the previous quote of Maria makes it very clear that she is not happy with her situation. She is trying to make sense out of the fact that she is doing everything at home while her husband has a similar paid job as her. This clearly complicates her WLB. As stated before, Maria is experiencing two jobs, one invisible labour and one paid labour (Teo 2016). Being totally preoccupied and hard working in both spheres every day, does not seem like a balance which makes her happy. Specially not when she sees the relaxed private life of her husband, or just like John's father spent his time drinking.

> Sometimes to be honest, I just do everything at home. I go to work and at home I do all the household shores, and that is very stressful for me. That is probably what most of the fights with my husband contains of. I am so tired, could you help me to do this? We are both working the whole day and my work is also stressful, I know your job is stressful, but I have a stressful work too. In that way I am complaining to my husband, hey you have to help me with the kids. I do the household tasks could you take care of the kids? Something like that, we have to balance everything, not only one of us. (Fiona, sales representative, low income, 33)

As stated here many of the women are not satisfied with the uneven divided chores and responsibility at home and therefore search for a change. The female high income-earners seemed happier with their situation than the low income-earners. The reason for this seem to be their control over their own time, as discussed in the previous section about social classes and work conditions. Many women with high income had higher positions at work, and with those higher positions came flexibility and bigger freedom to work from home or do errands since there is no manager checking upon them the whole time. The flexibility taking form in flexible work hours do definitely facilitate the WLB for both men and women (Kelliher & Anderson 2010). The lower-income women have set hours which force them to stay in the workplace within a specific time span. Another factor is actually money and social class. The middle and higher class seem to afford nannies, housekeepers and other kind of helpers or staff at home, which unburden the higher income women. One family had a driver who was very trusted and drove the children to and from school every day, but also babysat at special occasions.

> We have a housekeeper who takes care of the home while we work and the children are in school. Then we also have a girl who is resident, she started as a nanny and takes care of our boys. (Alicia, Office manager, high income, 39)

All those different types of help made the high-income women experience their WLB differently than for example Maria who experience having two jobs. The lower middle class or lower class seemed to get help from less pricey resources. Those were neighbours and grandparents, who also were a good help for the middle/low income women.

> Whenever I am around, of course I am usually the one taking care of my children. But when I am out working I leave them with my neighbour, she usually does errands for me and that is one thing she does for me, taking care of that little guy whenever I am not around. Usually I am not around from 4-8 hours a day, so she is taking care of my little child. And the older one is studying so he is mostly in school. (Maria, call centre agent, low income, 32).

The only problem was that the neighbours and grandparents were not always available and the problem and stress about childcare was present. Therefore, income and gender do influence the experience of WLB.

Cultural attitudes and gender roles are changing
As stated above the traditional gender roles and family-oriented culture are two big affecting factors of the Filipino men and women's WLB. However, there seem to be a change in progress.

> In the olden time, men should support the family and the men should not be helping anything in the house, only work. But now it changed, there are equally solutions and we are helping each other. I can't say what other Filipino families do, but for what I know, my family and my friends, husband and wife help each other so men are also doing household work, helping the wife. Before when I was a kid, the father leaves for work and the mother has to be at the house and do domestic work. When the women get married they are supposed to stop working and stay in the house, but now, maybe for financial reasons the wife has to work too. (Kevin, owner of a company, high income, 47)

It was observed in the interviews that many of the men still used the phrase "helping the wife" while speaking about men doing domestic work. This makes one question if the attitudes really are changing. Since the way of expression seem still to be rooted in the traditional gender roles. It clearly shows the prejudice and old tradition of women being responsible of the invisible labour (Teo 2016). Let us presuppose that it is changing since the major part of the respondents seem to spot a change. Why are the attitudes and gender roles changing? A possible explanation shown in both previous Western studies (Coltrane 2004) and the respondents answers from the interviews is that both partners provide for their families and many Filipino women are on the labour market (Parreñas 2001). All the female respondents were working and had been doing it for a while and most of the household were dual earners. As seen in the previous quote from Kevin, but also other respondents, the financial reasons also have an impact of having two breadwinners within the family. In the families of the respondents it seemed like the both sexes need to work to be able to survive and maintain a good life standard. Two breadwinners might force a change within the household chores since the women will also be busy working outside the home. Another possible factor might be women empowerment and many influences from the Western world. As stated before the women of this study seem to be aware of their situation and seem to be willing to aim for change. By adapting a Western perspective of WLB it might shine a light and focus on improving WLB.

> Before I was thinking; I want to be a good wife and be good to my husband. But now I feel like I want to contribute and provide my family. I want to have my own money and saving, hopefully I will also have my own business eventually. I changed my mind a year ago when I met my Norwegian boyfriend. I have seen he is very independent with his economy, which I am striving for too. I want us to have a family one day together and then I want to contribute with my own money. (Rita, waitress and student, low income, 28)

Seeing how the Western people behave and handle certain things seem to be an inspiration to some Filipinos. This could also be seen in the employees who have been working for Western companies and being introduced to flexible work hours. Once being introduced to Western concepts and ideas, some of the interview persons would never go back to work without for example flexible work hours. Although, this has already been discussed in the previous section: social classes and work conditions. It is very hard to state what the changes of cultural attitudes and gender roles may lead to. If the change continues and the culture and gender roles were not as affecting, how would the Filipino men and women experience their WLB? Hopefully, there will be an improvement where both men and women engage in the domestic work and both lower income-earners and high income-earners will have the ability to make use of implement which will facilitate their WLB.

Summary
How do men and women experience and handle their WLB? Women seem to be more stressed since they seem to encounter more things into their puzzle of life, such as child care and domestic work. In other words, women seem to experience more stress due to combining the different part of life while the men feel a bigger pressure of providing and working. Consequently, the impact of gender makes the different sexes experience different difficulties

of WLB. All the respondents are aiming for doing their best while trying to make their WLB work and the biggest motivation is to do it for their families. Gender roles and the family-oriented culture is deep within the Filipino society. However, there seem to be a wave of change where women are starting to get aware of the fact that household chores and caring responsibilities should be shared.

Some people handle their WLB with help from neighbours, grandparents or nannies. One thing they have in common is all the complexity of making the different parts of life collaborate. Women are working more within the household, but this does not necessarily mean that the men work more out of home in a paid work. However, they still have the pressure or expectation to be the head provider for the family.

Final Summary

For this study, the main purpose was to discover how WLB is handled and experienced according to social class and gender and to answer the questions *"How do Filipino men and women in Metro Manila experience and handle their Work Life Balance?"* and *"How do gender and income have an impact of the Work Life Balance?"*

The study has resulted in a greater understanding of how Filipinos manage and experience their work life and private life. As discussed in the literature review and in the analysis, there is a difference in how men and women are experiencing and handling their WLB. Both have difficulties and find different things more or less stressful. As an answer to our first question of choice; Men tend to stress about their obligation to provide for the family. While women are stressing over their ability to combine their work life with their family life, including doing all the household shores and taking care of the children. Gender has an impact thus, due to traditional gender roles in the Filipino society. The family-oriented culture also seems to strengthen the existing traditional gender roles. Since all our participants were acknowledging everything they did was for the family. For example, all men answered that the reason for why they are working is because of they have an obligation for the family to provide. Same as the women were saying that the reason for why they are taking care of the household and are providing is because of the obligation to the family. Family is defined differently compared to the Western world, and does not only refer to your kids and your partner, but also your parents, in-law-parents and siblings. Therefore, it can include many people to provider for and this can create much stress for individuals. Many of our respondents had tried to relive their workload in the household with help from nannies to take care of the children. This is also where our second question takes place, income. Whether the family can afford to pay for assistance in the household. This was not a permanent solution for any of the respondents though. For different reasons they all found it hard to trust the nannies to be with their kids. Without a working welfare system, it is a great challenge for a family where both of the parents have full time jobs, to take care of the kids. Therefore, many get assistance from their parents, in-law-parents or neighbours, this includes mostly people with lower income. Since they tend to have less influence over their working conditions they have to create their life around their job rather than to combine it. In this aspect Filipinos with high income differs from people with lower income, since they rather tend to have a greater ability to influence their work conditions. This shows in the flexibility of the employment, where high earners tend to be able to have flexible work hours and freedom to work from home when needed.

To summarize, gender and income do make a difference in the Philippines in terms of the WLB. This shows in having different obligations to the family, men tend to have a greater responsibility to provide and women have to balance the demands from the household combined with their paid jobs. While women are more likely to have double burden since they are usually responsible for the household and at the same time engaged in a full-time job. Depending on what social class you are in you can handle your WLB differently. People with lower income are more likely to handle WLB with help from their parents or in-law-parents. While individuals with higher income have a higher tendency to use benefits provided by their

workplace to make their WLB work, such as flexible work hours and working from home when it is needed. What also segregates these two is that high earners tend to either have their own business or are working for a Western company, which often involve better working conditions. In comparison to lower income-earners, who mostly do not have work conditions that help them to ease their WLB. As concluded, there are differences in how men and women handle their WLB and there are also differences in how social class has an impact on an individual's WLB.

Reflection

Doing a study abroad in a developing country has been a great experience. We think doing the study abroad made it more fun, challenging and interesting for us. The challenges were to not get distracted by all possibilities and adventures to explore and get to know the new country. However, we think we managed to maintain a good balance, where we both studied and experienced the Philippines. Another difficulty (which does not exist in Sweden) was the lack of a good internet connection. To find a good Wi-Fi we had to go to special cafés which was both time consuming and tiring due to the heavy traffic in Manila. The cooperation between the two of us went surprisingly well. We always motivated and supported each other and completed each other in a very good way. The hardest part of writing the thesis was the literature review and this required hard work.

Many thoughts of feminist character crossed our minds while doing this study. How come some women have accepted their situation as being the only one doing domestic work? How come the men do not react when they see their tired wives working hard at both work and home? What could have been interesting to get answered could be how good men and women would rate their own WLB or how happy the participants are with their current WLB. Moreover, the answers could get compared to each other where you could get the answer who is most satisfied with their WLB, men or women? Maybe this will be a rather quantitative study. But the question: why is this sex happier with their WLB? Would also be very relevant for a qualitative study.

What is interesting is that WLB seem to be more and more mentioned outside the Western world. Only in this study it was discussed and reflected upon of ten people in the Philippines. WLB seem to be a daily problem for many people and therefore applicable in many countries. Future studies could for example focus on the employers and how organisations in the Philippines actually handle WLB problems of their employees. In this study we were only interviewing employees, therefore it would be interesting to see the perspective of the opposite sides. If organisations actually consider this as a problem and have some strategies for it or not? If they do not have it, why not?

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Interview guide

Background

Tell us about yourself?

- Age
- Work
- Education

Family life

How many people live in your household? Who?

Do your children go to daycare or school?

Tell us about your life outside work?

- Hobbies/interests
- Family
- Domestic tasks

What kind of demands do you have at home?

When you do not work, what do you do?

What is a typical day for you?

- Routines (morning/afternoon)
- Domestic tasks
- Childcare

Who has biggest responsibility for the household? What do you think is the reason for this? Is there any other option?

Does anyone in the family help with the domestic work? Who? Does someone else help with the domestic work? Housekeeper, nanny/maid?

Work life balance

How do you combine your work life with your private life? Is it a struggle? Are you happy with the situation?

Do you feel like you need to compromise between choosing your work life over your family life and the other way around? Could you give us some examples?

How do you think the family life and work life can affect each other? Is it good or bad?

What would you prefer, family time or work time? Why?

Why do you work?

Have you ever felt that you had too many things to deal with? When? Where?

Flexibility

Tell us about your work situation?

- full time work or part time?
- How many hours/days?

Do you have flexible work hours?

- Work from home
- Leave earlier

- Stay home with sick children

How much do you earn per month?
Have you ever been afraid of losing your job? Why? When? What happened?

Availability
How would you describe your balance between your private life and your work life?
Does your family/friends think you work too much?
How often do you check your emails/messages from work when you are at home?
Do your boss or colleagues contact you outside work?
Do you want to change something in your work situation?

Attitudes and culture
What is your biggest responsibility in life?
- Family
- Work

How would you describe a typical family life in the Philippines?
Who works the most?