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Lives and The Effects on Workplace Productivity

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Personal Lives and the Effects on Workplace Productivity

by

Niesha Jones

A Dissertation Presented to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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This dissertation was submitted by Niesha Jones under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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Dedication

This is dedicated to my family, especially my son; you mean the world to me.
Acknowledgments

Throughout this process, I have been blessed to have the support of my family and friends, who have not only motivated me but have physically been there for me on this journey. To my husband Raymond Sewell, who has supported my every move towards achieving my career, there is no repayment that can suffice. The numerous hours spent in the library away from my family was never frowned upon. The unconditional love of my parents who kept me emotionally sound is only an example of their support. The assistance of my Chair and committee members who guided me through this research cannot be stressed anymore. The research participants, who gave me the opportunity to invade their private lives, cannot be forgotten, as without them, I could not have completed this research. Thanks to all my professors who have motivated me to continue pursuing academia. Most important, I am grateful for all the obstacles that I encountered along the way, as they made my drive for success a lot more potent.
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Abstract

The phenomenon of personal lives conflict is multifaceted and impacts the workplace in multiple ways. The aims of this study were to examine the various aspects of personal lives conflicts and how it affects the workplace’s productivity. Understanding productivity in the workplace, employers would better be able to manage conflicts at work as well as maintain productivity and by extensions profits. In order to fully understand this issue, the researcher framed the study around these questions: Do personal lives conflict affect productivity in the workplace? Do intimate partner conflicts affect productivity in the workplace? To what extent does intimate partner conflict affect productivity in the workplace? The research focused on a finance organization that offers services to Jamaican immigrants living in South Florida. A total of 10 participants were interviewed to complete the study and to gain insight and answer the research questions. Given the nature of the study, a case study was chosen to gain in-depth understanding of a specific group of people who work in a very specific organization that is often plagued by conflicts and allows for productivity to be measured. The findings indicated that employees often face challenges that are not related to the workplace, but given the culture of the organization, management does not see fit to assist employees who are experiencing personal lives conflict, rather these employees are left to resolve their conflicts with little or no guidance, despite the impact of the conflicts on their performance at work.
Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

For decades, interpersonal and personal conflict has plagued the workplace, and several conflict management practitioners have created theories and suggestions about how to better combat this issue. Yet, it remains troublesome to a huge percentage of managers who grapple with the idea that conflict is inevitable and could also be a positive phenomenon if analyzed correctly. The aim of this paper is to examine personal life conflicts and how they affect profitability in the workplace. To measure profitability, the paper will first highlight performance and productivity as factors affecting profitability.

To be more precise, the paper will examine personal conflicts that affect the productivity or profitability in workplaces. Additionally, it will outline how personal life conflicts have remained a stagnant issue that has not been resolved and managers have found it challenging to better manage these issues. Many researches have addressed interpersonal conflict in the workplace, but not enough has examined personal conflict that is independent of the workplace, and how those conflicts affect the productivity and profitability in the workplace. Hence, the intent of the research is to focus on those conflicts that have been ignored or unrepresented in major statistics, yet they affect the outcome of the economy at large, and the individual’s ability to perform tasks effectively at work.

The literature review will examine several researches that highlighted the effects of personal lives on workplace productivity by emphasizing the most recent and compare them to those conducted in earlier years. In doing so, it will start out by pointing to the
multifaceted issues of workplace productivity or performance in general, and then it will proceed to the various personal lives issues that affect workplace productivity or performance. The review will then examine the trends that have been brought out in the data gathered and point to areas where more research is needed. It will also look at various methods that have been adapted by researchers and compare the results of those that have taken a qualitative approach versus those that have been done quantitatively.

The main hypothesis is that workplace productivity is indeed affected by personal life conflicts, and the literature outlined will discuss the varying degrees to which this is true. Gender will also be examined to determine the popular belief that men are less likely to exert emotions at work, thereby not affecting their productivity. Issues such as social forcing, bullying, cyber loafing, domestic violence, aggression, and depression will be outlined by various authors who have researched the topic extensively.

The literature review is intended to focus on the issues in personal lives, more specifically, intimate partner conflict within relationships and how they affect productivity or performance, in workplaces. Clearly, businesses operate to produce goods and or services, and consequently, a business would be unable to sustain its operations if profit margins are not met. Thus, if conflicts that plague staff members’ personal lives are taken to the workplace, then the potential for a decrease in productivity due to changes in behavior pattern may increase as the conflict increases. For management to control or maintain productivity levels, at least one of the sources of conflict such as those garnered in our personal lives ought to be examined. Productivity not only affects the management’s profits, but it also affects the end users of the products
or services, as a faulty manufacturing process could lead to other domino effects on how the end users utilize the products or services. Therefore, the significance of this research is clearly based on the possible implications that have been outlined.

The research will be conducted with the idea that conflicts in our personal lives, which are not connected to the organization, do affect productivity in workplaces. Conflicts in our personal lives refer to conflicts that are unrelated to the workplace such as those concerned with intimate relationships. This research will be conducted using a quantitative approach to generalize data collected from a large number of staff.

Despite the fact that organizational conflicts have been widely researched, the field still lacks the inquiry on personal life conflicts such as those related to intimate relationships and how those types of personal conflicts affect productivity in the workplace. Years ago, most research examined the issue of personal conflict within the organization and how it affected productivity, in more recent research, the focus has shifted towards intimate partner violence at home and how it affects productivity.

Problem Statement

Personal life conflicts have been an issue over the years for many organizations. Organizations have absorbed a blunt of the burden that is yielded from personal life conflicts, as their productivity is believed to be directly affected by employees’ personal life conflicts. More specifically, conflicts that arise out of intimate relationships at home that are taken to the workplace and thus affect employees’ performance and by extension the productivity of the organization. Hence, personal life conflicts that stem from intimate relationships are absolutely necessary to analyze, as they are often ignored or
overlooked as being a major contributing factor that affects workplace productivity. Given that both employees and employers are affected by these types of conflicts, it would be worth the challenge to fully examine this phenomenon and point to the various ways that it can be remedied.

**Purpose**

The organization that was chosen for the study has had many instances of conflicts among employees as well as employees’ personal conflicts that have affected the workplace. The research was focused on understanding the various types of conflicts that existed in this organization and focusing on the ways in which they affect the productivity of the employees. The study was conducted using a single qualitative case study. In understanding this issue, 10 participants were interviewed who hold varying positions at the company, including management. The research was intended to shed some light on topics that are often ignored or seen as being irrelevant to address.

**Research Questions**

1. Do personal lives affect productivity in workplaces?
2. Do conflicts related to intimate relationships affect productivity in workplaces?
3. To what extend does intimate partner conflict affect productivity?

**Significance of the Study**

The study’s focus is to highlight major issues in an organization that have been unresolved, as well as to contribute to the knowledge in development of workplace cohesion and productivity. More precisely, the study focused on people who work in the
finance or banking industry, who have been plagued by conflicts for years, and haven’t had the opportunity to resolve or manage them effectively. The fact that customers often complain about speedy responses to their issues from this company, it created the need to understand whether this delay in response was related to the conflicts in personal lives that employees have on a daily basis. Fully understanding this phenomenon will definitely help in developing a solution to resolve or better manage the issues and increase productivity and customer satisfaction.

**Operational Definitions**

**Intimate Partner.** People who are involved in an intimate relationship

**Intimate Partner Conflict.** Conflicts that emerge in intimate partner relationships

**Workplace Conflict.** As it relates to workplace conflict, Masters and Albright, 2002; Slyke, 1999) points out that workplace conflict cannot be narrowly defined as conflict that exist where people interact to produce goods and or services. Rather, workplace conflict is described as incongruity between two or more interdependent parties in the workplace, either physical or virtual space where work is performed. Therefore, limiting the workplace to a physical space would automatically eliminate work performed virtually, thereby misrepresenting the category that is assigned to workplace. Despite the focus of the research being intimate partner conflict and its impact on the workplace, the conflict itself becomes a workplace conflict since the remnants if of the conflict affects the workplace.
**Productivity.** Defining productivity has caused much confusion over the years. As a result, this research will adopt the definition of productivity that rests on the premise that productivity is the measure of output against the input of labor (Tangen, 2002). Given that productivity is not easily defined, Tangen (2002) points out that there are certain conditions that have to be met in order to satisfy the explanation of the term. These are as follows:

1. If a company’s resources are not used properly, then productivity is reduced
2. If there is a lack of resource, then productivity is affected
3. Increased production does not always mean increased productivity

**Research Method**

The research was conducted in a qualitative manner or precisely using case study to capture the lived experiences of the participants involved. The methodology that was employed when conducting research was essential to the outcome of the study. The methodology determines how the data is collected and strategy that is used to collect the data and analyze finding (Creswell, 2007). Given that this research was intended to understand the various impacts of personal lies conflicts on workplace performance, a qualitative approach was best suited to gather rich data that would not have otherwise been possible to attain using a quantitative approach.

This chapter outlines the details of the method that was used to study the phenomenon. Therefore, it details not only the method, but the process of the study, to include the data collection chosen, data analysis and a succinct summary of the strengths
and weaknesses of the two types of methodologies – quantitative and qualitative.
Additionally, the aim of the design of this study was to guide the researcher in completing a study that was in accordance with the principles of qualitative research. These principles include the trustworthiness, ethical issues, dependability, and credibility of the research.

**Outline of Dissertation**

This research consists of six chapters as well as appendices. Chapter 1 focuses on background information relating to personal lives conflicts and its impact on workplace productivity, the research method, the problem statement, and research questions. This is followed by chapter 2, which outlines the literature review that highlights existing data on the topic. Chapter 3 provides insight on the research method, providing details of the steps of case study research, ethical concerns, as well as how the data was collected. Chapter 4 focuses on the theoretical analysis of the research topic, by explaining the significance of the theories and how they relate to personal lives conflicts and its impact on productivity in the organization. Chapter 5 alludes to the findings of the study and chapter 6 discusses the implications of the findings and suggestions for future inquiry.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

There are several authors that have presented their outlook on intimate partner conflict and its impact on productivity in the workplace. The literature in this chapter points to measuring performance at work, the impact it has on the workplace, six sigma and performance, and the cost of the conflict in the organization. The gaps in the literature will also be explored to highlight the significance of the study.

To fully understand the direction of the research, the key terms will be defined and used as a guide to ensure there is precise and uncomplicated categorization of data and findings. For Masters and Albright (2002), conflict is present when two or more interdependent parties fail to agree about something and resolution of conflicts cannot be achieved with the absence of mutual agreements. Additionally, Slyke (1999), postulates that the “absence of overtly conflictual behaviors is not indicative of the absence of conflict (p. 14).

Workplace Productivity – The Analysis of Various Authors

Measuring and Maintaining Performance at Work

Kaufman, Thiagarajan, and MacGillis (1997) points to performance improvement in the workplace. In doing so they alluded to the fact that one of the main issues in managing performance is the time in which it is done. Cokin (2004) also reported similar findings and claims that “performance information is typically reported too late, is too financially weighted, and is not predictive (p.46). For these authors, performance specialists tend to start work only after he problem has been identified, thereby being
reactive than proactive. They also stressed that employees work best in environments that foster trust. Hence, employees with personal conflicts may not disclose to their employers or staff members if there is a perceived lack of trust. This then extends to the issue of low performance, as the issue remains unresolved (Kaufman, Thiagarajan, and MacGillis, 1997).

Druckman, Singer, and Cott (1997) focused on enhancing organizational performance by researching organizations responses to environmental changes through training. Despite these studies being useful, they don’t provide any specific outlook on personal conflicts that affects productivity, rather they emphasize the need for training and better HRM functions as a roadmap for leaders to follow in order to gain effective performance in the workplace. These studies were more general than specific and thereby lack hard-core substance that speaks to specific issues that plague the organizations today. Similarly, Cokins (2004) looks at performance management from a measurement perspective. Cokins (2004) postulates that companies often report that they did well in the previous quarter, but there is no precise measure to validate that claim. The author stressed that these claims are often as a result of one department performing well which is sufficient to cover the pitfalls of the others. Additionally, Cokins (2004) argued that organizations usually don’t know how much of each department’s performance actually benefitted the entire organization and thereby helped in realizing the organization’s goal. Hence, measurement is the only way to analyze the claim to have a valid outcome (Cokins, 2004).
Spritzer (2007) looked at the functions of performance measurement and how it affects productivity in organizations. This study revealed that measuring performance determines the behavior that is exerted by employees. Additionally, the author postulates that measurement increases the visible performance, helps employees to become more focused, it clarifies expectations, and promotes consistency, prediction, and feedback, as well as improves problem solving (Spritzer, 2007). On the other hand, Cokin (2004) puts forward the issue of employees’ willingness to work, which is often deterred by their lack of knowledge about the most important task of the day. Hence, they often work on tasks or projects that are less important and sometimes easier. Thus, optimal performance is not realized due to a lack of knowledge of job tasks.

Neely (2007) also speaks to measuring performance by emphasizing the benefits of motivating employee to increase performance. For employees to perform optimally, intrinsic motivation needs to be present. Therefore, motivation is the number one factor that determines the level of productivity. Lazear (1996) in earlier studies found that productivity increases when firms moved from paying hourly rates to piece rates. This data was collected from an auto glass manufacturing company, which measures productivity by the output of employees on the manufacturing floor. Lazear (1996) findings are consistent with Neely (2007) as they both indicate that employees need to be motivated in order for productivity to increase.

Taken from a survey, Parus (1999) looked at performance measurement by emphasizing the importance of using work/life programs as a means of measuring performance through its benefits. Parus (1999) postulated that in order to understand
employees’ performance, one’s needs to look at the benefits of work/life programs in the workplace and how it can be used to reward employees, and then analyze how performance has changed. Work/life programs that include tuition assistance, flexible work time, family care and personal counseling are said to be the most significant in affecting performance and productivity at work, as employees feel a sense of motivation that allows them to perform optimally (Kamau et al, 2013). Others such as Federico and Goldsmith (1998) added that the younger the employee, the more likely there is for low performance if these employees’ demands are not met. They also concluded that work/life benefits are perfectly designed for generation Xers who desire more reward for their performance, thus forcing the employers to measure their performance regularly. The more balanced life an employee has, the more productive the employee will be (Parus, 1999).

According to Baptiste (2008), Tehrani et al, (2007), employees have the need for mental, social and physical safety to cope with the pressures of life. As a result, they look to the work place for this support as most of their lives are spent at work. Therefore, for employers to experience optimal performance at work, they need to assist employees with their personal lives and thereby well-being at work (Schuster, 1998). Clearly, performance for these researchers is contingent upon the input of the employers, and how much focus is placed on the well-being of the employees.

**Sources and Causes of Conflict at Work**

There are several factors that could lead to workplace conflict. For Masters and Albright (2002), there are four main causes of workplace conflict namely: environment,
organization, workplace, and individuals. As it relates to the environment, Masters and Albright (2002) postulates that an individual’s environment will typically affect the nature and scope of conflict that is encountered at work. The environment an also be dissected into many different contexts that will affect the potential for conflict. These different contexts include: “labor and product markets, the legal context, labor force democracy, and the political and social context surrounding the working environment (Masters and Albright, 2002 p, 35).”

Environmental Sources

**The Labor Market.** The product market is said to motivate conflict, as the economy is believed to be a highly motivation for conflict when there is a recession. During this recession period, the company’s profits are more likely to fall sharply, which is often synonymous with layoffs. With employees fearing layoffs and ultimately job loss, they also fear an increase in workloads and a shrunken rank. Consequently, when all these conditions are present, the environment is seen as a target for tension and conflict (Masters and Albright, 2002).

**The Product Market.** The advent of technology and competition has led to markets being fiercer. As a result, the competition not only arise out of the traditional sources such as price and quality, but it now becomes more advanced in technology as human creativity increases (Masters and Albright, 2002). Thus, many products have become obsolete due to technology, which increases the pressure on employees to be creative. With such pressure, conflicts are inevitable as employees vie for survival.
**The Legal Contexts.** Companies with informed employees, who understand their rights, may have conflicts when issues are not addressed in accordance with the labor laws. The law itself does not cause the conflict but it provides the medium through which employees may express their concern for the company’s actions. According to Masters and Albright (2002), the laws become the voice of the conflict in organizations, and companies are often faced with conflict as they try to make changes due to laws that prevail (Masters and Albright, 2002).

**Demographics.** With the advent of generation X in companies today, there is a great potential for conflict to occur given the difference between the expectations a work and what is actually done. Simply put, the generations X workers tend to bring a different set of skills and they are more likely to be technologically savvy and motivated. In addition, they are more likely to be less loyal or devoted to the company on a long term basis, as well as more motivated to balance work, leisure and family. All these differences can cause tensions in the workplace as each set of employees have a different outlook on how work ought to be done, as well as the dress code for work.

**The Political Situation.** In the case of politics, Masters and Albright (2002) postulates that political issues in foreign countries may cause conflicts for companies that try to operate overseas. Additionally, if the foreign country has a judicial system that is undeveloped, fiscal and economic policies may be difficult to predict and as a result, there may be many workplace related controversies. These controversies include: compensation, expatriation, ownership rights and unions. Also, there is a possibility that
conflict could arise if local management teams are sent to the foreign site to run the operations rather than foreign hired managers (Masters and Albright, 2002).

**Social Context.** There are companies that operate in a rural environment and have a very restrictive and paternalistic style of management. The working hours and activities are rigidly enforced, as well as the dress code. However, while this type of atmosphere was accepted by all employees when the company started, the younger generation has different expectations today. Consequently, tensions exist and conflict becomes inevitable (Masters and Albright, 2002). Given that there will be a clash of generation and expectations, the demands for change will increase and this will ultimately lead to numerous workplace conflicts that affect the relationship among staff members and cripple the smooth flow of activities.

**Organizational Sources**

**Financial.** When companies lose profits, its cash reserves shrink, leading to several changes in the organization. Along with the changes are the disagreements and conflicts that arise over who is at fault as employees point fingers at each other. Additionally, labor contracts are often re-negotiated at this time, as layoffs and early retirements increase. As a result, tensions and hostilities loom (Masters and Albright, 2002).

**Mergers and Acquisitions.** If a company changes its operating team through mergers and acquisitions, it is also possible that human resources systems might be integrated. In addition to those changes, “vested interests, rights, and powers” become upset as well as pressures to conform increase (Masters and Albright, 2002, p. 39).”
Therefore, from an organizational standpoint, the company itself is also responsible for conflicts that arise out of structural systems that exist.

**Strategy.** Companies that change its strategic pattern of operating without being mindful of the changes that may occur in areas of operation may experience an increase in conflict among staff. Implementing some changes may result in a reorganization of teams and change in management controls. In order to achieve the new goals that have been set to accommodate the change in strategy, old conflicts may be set aside to resole new ones and “those with interests and perceived rights and powers associated with the old way will still suffer under the new way (Masters and Albright, 2002, p. 40).”

**Workplace Sources**

**Workload and Design.** As workload increases, so does the expectation of management. The inherent nature of work itself has embedded stressors that are difficult to avoid. According to Masters and Albright (2002), even though it is known that giving employees more work in the form of task significance or task variety may motivate them, it is also established that this may lead to more stress. These stressors may even be more likely to appear if individuals are not properly prepared or equipped to manage the challenges (Lipsky, Seeber and Fincher, 2003). Additionally, the employees are concerned about the possibility of being promoted or rewarded for such job enrichment. On the other hand, Lipsky, Seeber and Finchern (2003) points out that jobs that are repetitive are also conflict prone due to tensions that may arise, especially if people perceive a lack of opportunity in their job.
Technology. With the increase in technology, traditional forms and strategies of conducting business have changed. However, when traditional employees are reluctant to adjust to the changes in the workplace, this breathes tensions, as younger employees perceive the older ones as being less capable and less willing to change. With the difference in capabilities among staff, especially those organizations that operate based on teams; conflicts are inevitable when both younger and older generation collide (Masters and Albright, 2002). Not only does technology affect the employees work cohesiveness, but it also threatens jobs for many employees.

On order to accommodate the new technology, skilled staff is usually employed and paid at higher levels than older staff, as they usually come to the organization with more skills and qualifications than those existing employees (Lipsky, Seeber and Fincher, 2003). For those companies that require employees working on teams, there may be a different professional language spoken by the technologically savvy employees and this creates conflicts in communication, and affects the unit as a whole (Masters and Albright, 2002).

Workplace Composition. Masters and Albright (2002) also postulated that workplace composition plays a key role in understanding key sources of conflict in the workplace. When companies are sold, changes in management style may affect the composition of the workplace. For instance, if a U.S owned company is sold to a German company, the diversity that existed with the U.S management such as: race, sex, gender and ethnicity may change. Therefore, under the German management, the diversity that was promoted before would perhaps change to a more skewed German
approach, which is less diverse. Even though diversity is welcomed in many organizations, it may pose its own set of conflicts, as the differences in management style, performance expectations, and behavioral norms can potentially cause tensions (Masters and Albright, 2002).

**Individual Level Sources**

**Personalities.** Often times, organizations make the mistake of hiring employees to work as a team, but ignore the fact that there is a high probability for personality clashes. Most organizations focus on talent rather than personality. As a result, teamwork in organizations becomes a very stressful and conflict-ridden endeavor, as employees are forced to adjust to each other’s personality, but this is not always a healthy adjustment process (Masters and Albright, 2002). Therefore, when organizations give little or no attention to how team configurations affect the outcome of teamwork, the result is conflict and organizational ineffectiveness. However, the question remains – can organizations determine an employee’s personality and use that as a determinant to measure teamwork effectiveness?

**Psychological Disorders.** According to Lipsky, Seeber and Fincher (2003), it is not uncommon for organizations to employ people who are or has become clinically depressed. Taking an example of an organization that had a manager who suddenly departed from his normal behavior, Lipsky, Seeber and Fincher (2003) postulated that the manager had become extremely distraught because he had blamed himself for leaving his family when they needed him the most. Additionally, the authors continued that the manager fell into depression as a result, and his performance at work was severely
affected. Masters and Albright (2002) pointed out that psychological disorders may be the basis for underlying conflicts in the workplace, though it often seems as though there are other factors at work that affect performance, ignoring the individual impacts.

**Physiological Condition.** It is important to note that health related problems might cause conflicts at work, as these problems may be aggravated due to work stress, and consequently become a workplace conflict (Lipsky, Seeber and Fincher, 2003). These physiological problems can “trigger anger, depression, and other physiological states that can difficulties at work, which can make individuals more prone to precipitate or exacerbate conflict (Masters and Albright, 2002, p. 50).”

Additionally, “Alcohol and drug abuse directly and indirectly contribute to workplace conflict (Lipsky, Seeber and Fincher, 2003, p. 36).” As it relates to the direct affect, Lipsky, Seeber and Fincher (2003) postulated that alcohol and drug abuse often result in attitudes and behaviors that are both disruptive and disorderly, which would motivate workplace conflicts. In an indirect sense, it can affect performance that ultimately put a strain on other workers who are forced to pick up the slack. On the other hand, alcohol and drug abuse may be aggravated by workplace conflict, which creates a continuous cycle of abuse and conflict (Masters and Albright, 2002).

**Causes of Personal Lives Conflicts**

Besides the various factors to consider when analyzing personal lives conflicts and how they impact the workplace, there are also specific examples of personal lives conflicts that affect the individual and by extension the workplace. For Jeweks (2002), personal lives conflicts often stem from intimate partner conflicts at home. These
include, living in large family households, living with in-laws, poverty, alcohol and being married. Jeweks (2002) explained that understanding conflicts in intimate partner relationships are even more complex than understanding diseases. The research pointed out that most conflicts were identified among couples who were married and these conflicts were predominantly happening within the first couple of years (Jeweks, 2002). Additionally, the study revealed that couples who lived with their in-laws experienced more conflict than those living together with no other family member present. These couples were also observed to have a higher frequency rate of experiencing ill performance at work as a result of their personal lives conflicts (Jeweks, 2002). As it relates to poverty, the study indicated that individuals with financial issues might find it difficult to cooperate when there is tension and stress as a result of not meeting financial needs Jeweks, 2002).

**Indicators of Workplace Conflict**

There are several different ways of identifying conflicts in the workplace. Cloke and Goldsmith (2000) outline seven different indicators of workplace conflict – *entry, maintenance, performance, employee/labor relations, security, decision-making, and quality of work life.*

**Entity.** Companies that typically find it difficult to manage their conflict or those that are simply ridden by a lot if conflict may experience problems recruiting the right candidates they want. When a company has garnered a reputation for being conflict ridden or difficult, it may have severed challenges recruiting the best candidates for the job, given that people rate companies and the bad press that is released stains the minds
of candidates. Thus, very qualified people with high credentials would be deterred from applying to those companies. Some signs such as a shrinking number of applicants and a decline in the ratio between the job acceptance and job offers are clear indicators that a workplace is infested with conflict (Cloke, 2000).

**Maintenance.** It is challenging for companies to maintain their workforce when there is conflict that is causing disruption. Employees will find different ways to handle the issue or to get away from the conflict. As such, there may be behavioral changes with the employees towards work, which may result in, nonattendance, lethargy and staff renewal as employees may choose to or be forced to leave (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2000).

It is normal for workplaces to have some level of nonattendance, lethargy and staff renewal. At this level, it might not be a significant challenge in respect to production or cost. If there were any indication to surpass the norm, it would be wise for the companies/establishment to find the main source of the issue, which could be conflict (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2000).

The likely indicators are:

- Nonattendance
- Lethargy
- Staff renewal rate.

**Performance.** The indicators mentioned above will affect the work performance. Where employees have conflict with employer, it is likely that it will affect the amount of work performed or produced, and the type or quality of service, as both employers and
employee would utilize quality time in focusing or dealing with the conflict (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2000).

In addition, companies may lack inventiveness and modernization. This could be as a result where workers are not comfortable to express their thoughts, query, or put forward new ideas without a hostile psychological response to a disagreement, particularly if there is any uncertainty about the normal tradition. As such they continue to work with the conventional method (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2000).

The effects of conflict on performance are:

- Amount of work perform
- Quality of service
- Inventiveness and modernization

**Employee and Labor Relations.** One of the functions of employee and labor relations is to resolve conflict before it is escalated, and negotiation makes that process easier. In several countries, labor relation organizations acknowledge and deal with conflict at the workplace to include but not limited to “sexual harassment to discrimination on the basis of age, race, gender, or religion”.

Both employees and employers are affected by conflict or just a difference in opinion of laydown rules or guidelines at the work place, and seek an avenue for it to be dealt with amicable. Depending on the nature and gravity of the conflict it might be able to be dealt with by management or it may lead to a system such as a federated channel or tribe union settlement procedure. Not all disagreement warrants a formal negotiation or mediation but if an establishment is having an increase rate of conflict / disagreement
then it is time for them to investigate the real source of the issue. In doing so, all levels need to be look at, from junior staff to management, considering that a simple issue may lead to a major conflict and a nest for federation or tribe union to strive. Disgruntled workers may go on “strike”, temporary shutdown an organization resulting in the loss of productive time.

Employees are also concern about their welfare while at the work place and there are laws that govern it, which secure them. Any breach of the regulation can cause conflict and if not dealt with early may have to go through legal proceedings. If an organization is having an increase in these issues it gives indication that there is a severe conflict at the work place.

The indicators are:

- Disagreement
- Tribe union/ Federation
- Strike
- Welfare

**Six Sigma and Performance**

Other researchers suggest that the methodology that is used to assess productivity ought to be Six Sigma related in order to produce useful results (Simons et al, 2006). To get this done, employers should use Human Sigma, which “weaves together a consistent method for assessing the employee-customer encounter and a disciplined process for managing and improving it (Simons et al, 2006).” Similarly, Devane (2004) suggests that
there are six criteria for productive work and employees who score high on these criteria tend to be more productive. These include:

“Autonomy in local decision making, continual learning, for which there must be the ability to set goals and accurate and timely feedback, variety in the content, rhythm, and pace of work, mutual support and respect, meaningfulness, which consists of doing something with social value and seeing the whole product or service and a desirable future (Devane, p. 27, 2004).”

Based on the criteria listed, it assumes that employees’ performance and thereby productivity is affected by at least one of the factors and can only be addressed by examining these factors. Though some researchers recommend Six Sigma, Baptiste (2008) suggests that organizations need to utilize multiple sources of HR practices. Any organization that expects to use individual HR practices will only gain minimally from such attempt, as human behavior requires multifaceted approaches that can motivate optimal performance (Baptiste, 2008). The HR strategies that ought to be used to improve or address performance include; “selection practices and internal promotion, employee voice, employee involvement, information sharing, high compensation contingent on performance, extensive training, and learning and development (Bramley, p.289, 2003; Marchington and Wilkinson, 2005; Gould-Williams, 2004).”

For others, Six Sigma is merely a method that worked before the economic recession. Brown et al (2015) argues that employee performance changed after the economic recession, as employees reported a lack of trust from the organization. This is explained, as the employers are not capable of providing overtime work, or guarantee
employment, which led to employees feeling as though their jobs were not secure (Brown, et al 2015). Hence, job security and lack of trust is enough to limit performance irrespective of any strategy used when adopting Six Sigma.

**Personal Conflict and its Impact at Work**

To provide precise examples that support the rationale of this review, Rich (1982) examined conflicts among staff that is derived from status in the organization, and focused on how those conflicts affected productivity. More precisely, it stresses the status phenomenon that affects productivity and communication in public organizations. This literature pointed out that conflicts between different levels of staff have created a barrier to effective communication and organizational change. This barrier has thus resulted in an increase in conflict on an interpersonal level and also a decline in productivity. Sabotage and role encroachment are a result of such status conflict, which directly affects productivity. The author points out that productivity research has ignored the issue of status and prestige as factors deeply affecting organizations productivity (Rich, 1982). Thus, in order to fully understand the issue of productivity from a conflict perspective, one should examine status as major factor that affects productivity.

Barki and Hartwick (2001) looked at interpersonal conflicts within an IT organization and how it affected productivity. Focusing on the lack of conflict management in information system development, the research was dedicated to understanding how individuals who work in an information system development environment make sense of their interpersonal conflicts while they work together to complete projects. In doing so, the researcher examined the correlation between the
interpersonal conflict management that is employed and the outcome of the conflict itself. Interestingly, the study revealed that the impact of interpersonal conflict on the outcome of information system development was considered negative, irrespective of how it was perceived to be managed. Therefore, managing interpersonal conflicts does not affect the negative outcome of the problems it may cause among information system developers (Barki and Hartwick, 2001).

Others have examined several other areas such as social forcing, bullying, and miscommunication, yet they all arise within the workplace. However, Blomme et al (2009) took a different approach to studying organizational conflict by highlighting the effects of family conflict on the hospitality industry. More specifically, the study focused on the correlation between family conflict and its impact on employee turnover in the hospitality industry. Additionally, the plethora of research that is connected to this topic does not directly speak to relationship issues outside the workplace and how it affects productivity.

LeBlanc and Barling (2014) examine the relationship between intimate partner aggression among heterosexual women and two types of work performance outcomes for those women studied. The work performance outcomes for those women were withdrawal from work, withdrawal at work. The study also focused on both physical and psychological aggression in intimate relationships and its impact on women’s performance at work. Withdrawal is one of the most common behavior patterns that were displayed among these women (Le Blanc and Barling, 2014). Another interesting point that this study revealed is the fact that intimate partner violence affects withdrawal
in the form of cyber loafing. This means, employees tend to browse the Internet and or social media sites when they are distracted and unable to focus. Despite them being physically present at work, their presence does not equate to productivity (LeBlanc and Barling, 2014).

As it relates to withdrawal from work, the study revealed that absenteeism goes a bit further to include employees taking breaks for extended period, leaving work before the scheduled time, and talking on the phone for exaggerated periods (LeBlanc and Barling, 2014). To take it further, the study focused on how this would cause these women to increase their doctor’s visits as a result of both emotional and physical stress. Additionally, the researchers highlighted that intimate partner aggression would motivate sabotage, as the men often make it difficult for the women to go to work on time or maintain a job. The affected women often find it difficult to hide the visible signs of aggression and it becomes easier to quit their jobs than to continuously hide the effects of intimate partner aggression at work.

Though this study was done quantitatively, like many others, both quantitative and qualitative studies have revealed that absenteeism at work is one of the most common outcomes of intimate partner violence. The sampling strategy that was used in this research included married women who were not abused, married women who were dissatisfied and physically abused, and non-abused women who were married (LeBlanc and Barling, 2014).

Contrary to LeBlanc and Barling (2014) absenteeism theory, Tolman and Wang (2005) and Yodanis (2004) in their earlier qualitative studies argued that intimate partner
aggression lead to an increase in withdrawal while at work, but not necessarily withdrawal from work. Tolman, Wang (2005) and Yodanis (2004) pointed out that intimate partner aggression is intended to maintain male superiority in order to preserve female dependence. This is possible as women work hard to maintain their economic independence by arriving to work on time to maintain their jobs. Additionally, they report that many women use their job as a safety net to get away from their abusive relationships and get psychological and physical ease of their stress.

In support of Tolman, Wang (2005) and Yodanis (2004), Kelly Lean and Randel (2008) argue that women who experience intimate partner violence are more likely to be employed than those women who haven’t. To support this claim, Kelly, Lean and Randel (2008) used the national statistics on battered women, which reported that 61 percent of women who were battered by their intimate partner were employed. Despite having similar claims to other reports, Kelly, Lean and Randel (2008) added that there are serious financial consequences for both the employee and employers as a result of intimate partner violence. Regarding the employees, it becomes quite burdensome to maintain their financial status if they are constantly out of jobs or find it difficult to operate effectively at work. The employers are also at a disadvantage as it is difficult to maintain productive operations when employees are constantly absent, tardy or display low levels of productivity (Kelly, Lean and Randel, 2008).

Kelly, Lean, and Randel (2008) also focus on intimate partner violence and how it impacts performance at work. The research emphasizes the effects of intimate partner violence on both the organization and the employee. It also looked at the prevalence of
this issue at work and how it is manifested in the workplace. Types of work distraction include stalking, hiding clothes or turning off alarm clocks. These distractions are similar to those identified in LeBlanc and Barling (2014) study. The research highlighted that most employers focus on workplace violence rather than violence in intimate relationships and how it affects the workplace. Additionally, the research revealed that there are serious cost effects for the organization if this type of conflict is not resolved at home. Absenteeism, tardiness, and withdrawal from work are few of the major trends identified in this study, which is as a result of intimate partner violence Kelly, lean, and Randel (2008). To expand, the research pointed out that individuals who were no longer experiencing intimate partner violence exerted less or no work distraction at all. This indicates that intimate partner violence does affect work performance.

Schmidt (2012) added to this phenomenon of distraction or withdrawal at work by alluding to reasons for specific distractions, the type of distractions that are very unproductive at work, as well as the consequences of these distractions on the employee and the organization. For Schmidt (2012), male employees often argue with their intimate partner over phone to show control over the relationship. Of the total number of respondents, 21% of these males would spend time on the phone to simply intimidate the partner, often time the resources used to communicate would be the work phone. To go further, 13% of the respondents reported stopping by specific locations where they thought their partners were to monitor movements. All this was done while the respondents were on the clock and getting paid to work as well as using the company’s vehicle to drive to these locations (Schmidt, 2012). Consequently, this withdrawal or
distraction as it is labeled, is not limited to employees leaving work early or not being focused, but also utilizing company’s resources to support their personal life conflicts that arise.

Where productivity is concerned, Schmidt (2012) postulated that while 80% of respondents said their jobs were negatively affected by domestic violence, the most significant point was the safety hazard that it causes at work. For instance, 19% of respondents indicated that they had accidents at work, which was a direct result of their negative emotion at the time due to domestic violence (Schmidt, 2012). 55% of respondents said they had accidents because they were not focused on the job due to intimate relationship issues, 21% was pre-occupied with memories of negative expressions made by the partner, and 15% was distracted waiting for their partner to call back or on the phone with the partner arguing (Schmidt, 2012). To reiterate, these responses were given by men who were the abusers in the relationships.

The types of accidents at work that were caused by intimate partner violence includes; injuries to respondents or other, example, having a finger cut or banged between doors and or equipment, tumbling from a ladder or roof, using a vehicle or equipment to hit other employee, burning food or dripping chemical or grease as well as utilizing company inefficiently to make up for mistakes made (Schmidt, 2012). All these issues negatively affect productivity, and by extension, profits in the company. In addition to those accidents, Schmidt (2012) reported that it is common for employees to takeout their frustration from personal life conflicts on their co-workers. The frustration would come in the form of verbal or physical fights with co-workers, breaking company property,
hitting co-workers’ car due to reckless driving and or using a fork lift to flip co-workers’ car after arguing with them (Schmidt, 2012). Evidently, this study revealed data that indicates there is need for further research on the issue of personal lives and its impact on the productivity in the organization.

Kelly, Lean and Randel (2008) also pointed to the issue of healthcare costs associated with intimate partner violence. These costs have been described as those in which the employees incur when they seek medical attention for issues such as mental care, drug abuse and alcoholism. These healthcare issues arise, as affected employees seek comfort for their intimate partner violence. In support of this claim, Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) reported that national statistics have demonstrated that the average cost of medical care for intimate partner violence ranges from $294 to $948 for each incident. Additionally, Max et al. (2004) highlighted that the average cost of hospitalization for victims is $14363. This additional cost per incident increases the average cost of healthcare for these victims to $1775 per year, which increases the expenditures for employers as insurance premiums increase as well as absenteeism, which results in an increase in costs (Rivera et al., 2007).

Going back to Kelly, Lean and Barling (2008), many Fortune 1500 executives reported that intimate violence is negatively affecting their businesses. Interestingly, Liz Clairborne, Inc. authorized a study in 2007, which revealed that employers are not interested in addressing the issue of intimate partner violence, as only 13% of employers who were studied believe that this is the responsibility of the organization. Yet, those employers complain about the negative effects on their fiscal prudence (Kelly, Lean and
According to Farmer and Tiefenthaler (2004) intimate partner violence has proven to affect operations at organizations because as victims recover, their ability to fully participate in their jobs improves, and as a result becomes more productive. Thus, since there is evidence that intimate partner violence at home “affects company performance and profitability,” organizations should develop strategies and/or programs to better manage these effects at work (Kelly, Lean and Barling, p. 64, 2008).

In other research such as Swanberg and Macke (2006), intimate partner violence is examined in terms of physical abuse rather than the effects it has on the organization’s profits. Also, even though this study focused on women’s ability to cope on the job, it emphasizes the job interference tactics used by the men to lower women’s ability to cope on the job. However, Swanberg and Macke (2006) do lament that if these violent incidences do occur at work, it could be extremely severe for both the employer and other co-workers. “It may result in significant costs to the employer in the form of increased production, medical, and liability costs (p. 562).”

The job interference tactics used include stealing the car keys to prevent women from going to work, hiding or stealing money used for transportation, and harassment on the phone while at work (Swanberg and Macke, 2006). 43% of women in this study reported that they experienced one of these types of job interferences and 56% experienced it repeatedly. Additionally, 71% of women found it difficult to concentrate on the job, 63% “called in sick because too upset to go to work, 59%, inability to go to work, 53% went home sick because of abuse and 21% lost their job (Swanberg and Macke, p. 565, 2006).”
Swanberg and Macke (2006) criticize the lack of research conducted in this field, and pointed out that most studies have only looked at women who receive public assistance from the government, and who are living in shelters created for abused women. Thus, most studies are flawed, as they tend to rely on information that is not representative of the entire population who fall within the category of being affected by intimate partner violence. Moreover, Swanberg and Macke (2006) argue that there is a lack of literature on the support that the organization provides to help these victims. The main concern of this study revealed that despite the evidence that intimate partner violence affects the organization, not much is known whether the victims are reluctant or not to disclose their personal lives. Even if they do disclose, there is no evidence as to who would be the most suitable to disclose to and what would qualify that person as being suitable.

The issue of disclosure has presented a barrier to managing the effects of intimate partner violence at work. To be precise, Swanberg and Macke (2006) pointed out that:

“sixty-seven percent of women who were employed in the last year reported that they told someone at work about that the violence perpetrated by the partner, the remaining 33% did not tell anyone at work about the abuse. Disclosing women predominantly did so to other workers (72%), immediate supervisors (59%), and no immediate supervisors (5.7%). Other individuals to whom women disclosed with a much lower frequency included: human resource professionals (0.9%), employee assistance professionals (0.3%), and security personnel (0.9%).”
Based on this report, the obvious question is why human resource professionals and employee assistance professional are among the few that victims are reluctant to disclose to? Despite the fact that human resource professionals were not the first priority for disclosing women, those that did disclose were happy with the response they received (Swanberg and Macke, 2006). Also, there were other significant issues that were presented in this study. Categorizing respondents in order of job tenure, job schedule, hourly wage, and current employment status are the most significant categories. Women who disclosed were more likely to have longer job tenure than non-disclosing women. Also, women who disclosed were more likely to have full time jobs than non-disclosing women (Swanberg and Macke (2006).

Indicating similar findings, Swanberg and Macke (2006) and other researchers, who argue that women are likely to keep their jobs as a means of financial independence, has been brought out again in this literature in 2006. Given that Swanberg and Macke (2006) findings indicate that disclosing women are more likely to be employed full time, it is evident that their employment status was maintained for perhaps the same reason as other researches pointed to – the need for financial security. Overall, Swanberg and Macke (2006) highlighted that the social agencies need to incorporate in their counseling programs, a division that handles intimate partner violence as it affects the organization. By doing so, the organization could learn professional strategies that would be useful to managing the impact of such conflict on the organization. While these strategies are recommended, there is still doubt that the organization will be able to manage disclosure
at work without harming the employee any further and in the long run the organization at large.

Taking a domestic violence approach towards intimate partner violence, as well as focusing on the effects it has on males at their jobs, Schmidt (2012) highlighted a few key features of a study conducted in Vermont. Juxtapose the other studies aforementioned, this study focuses on men rather than women in the organization. The research highlighted the responses of supervisors at respective jobs to the effects of domestic violence. Similar to Swanberg and Macke (2006) earlier study, Schmidt (2012) reported that 83% of supervisors at the organizations studied knew that employees would take time off from work as a result of domestic violence. Despite this knowledge, only 32% tried to assist. Additionally, most supervisors made comments that were not conducive to addressing the issue even when it affected the organization’s operations (Schmidt, 2012).

According to Schmidt (2012), there were some common responses that supervisors made in response to the effects of domestic violence on the employee. These include; “you should end the relationship, just think about the kids, just stay away from her, it is a failed relationship, get a life (p.15).” Only in a few cases the supervisors provided constructive assistance that employees could relate to (Schmidt, 2012). Based on this report, the issue of disclosure becomes even more difficult to address, as employees are more reluctant to address the issue at work, despite its impact on the organization and themselves.

One of the most astonishing remarks from the supervisors was a warning or caution to the employee that personal lives should not be brought to work as it presents a
form of distraction (Schmidt, 2012). While most supervisors cared little about the employees’ issues with domestic violence, some were more concerned about the effects it has on the organization. In addition to those who were concerned about the effects on the organization, the study revealed that some supervisors fired the employee when they perceive the employees’ domestic violence as being a threat to the organization (Schmidt, 2012). On the other hand, these male employees are faced with conflicts of their own as a result, because they find it difficult to maintain their employment due to criminal records from domestic violence cases (Schmidt, 2012). Thus, intimate partner violence not only affected the organization since they are forced to replace staff, but also the employee’s ability to find and keep jobs.

**The Cost of Intimate Partner Violence**

Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) examined the relationship between productivity effects and the cost of intimate partner violence on the workplace. Like other research, this research focused on the difference between non-victims and victims as it relates to their number of hours absent from work. In order to gather data, the research used surveys to capture the responses from 823 males and 1550 females who were employed in a medium size company in a southern state (Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly, 2007). Of this sample, 63% of the women and 73 of the men respectively were married. 85% of the respondents were white, 10% African American, and the rest represented other racial groups. The average age of respondents was 40 and most had a college degree, with an average annual income of $47,712 (Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly, 2007). To categorize the data in a simple form, the researchers labeled victims that had experienced intimate
partner violence for a long period of their life as “lifetime victims” and those that had recently experienced it as “current victims.”

The study indicated that the “current victims were more likely to be distracted at work than “lifetime victims (Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly, p. 327, 2007).” This result indicates that as women get used to their intimate conflict, their tolerance to the problem increases and as a result is less toxic on their workplace productivity. Based on this finding, it would appear as though the best option for employers is to hire employees who are lifetime victims, since they tend to exert better performance at work. Besides this, the research also pointed out that intimate partner violence costs companies $3 - $5 billion a year due to losses in productivity (Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly, 2007). In support of this statistics, the NCIPC (2003) reported that each year, women who experience intimate partner violence, lose an average of 8 million days of work, which has an average cost of $728 million and is estimated to lose an additional $893 million in their lifetime.

Despite the statistics presented by the NCIPC, there is still a gap in the data, because the report only uses days absent from work and ignores the importance of other factors such as distraction at work and tardiness. Nonetheless, it is still useful, as it provides fundamental data that motivates continuous research in the field. It also sheds some light on the cost associated with this phenomenon that impacts workplace in many ways, yet employers respond in a reluctant manner towards the situation.

Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) concluded that there is no significant difference between the men and women and the loss of production or increase in productivity costs due to intimate partner violence that leads to absenteeism. Thus, both gender are affected
in the same way as it relates to being absent from work because of intimate violence.

Salary level among victims and non-victims is also an issue as the research revealed that current victims had a lower salary than non-victims (Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly, 2007). The number one explanation for this phenomenon is that salary is a key determinant for intimate partner violence, as people with lower salaries tend to be more economically vulnerable. Hence, the greater effect is on the current victims. Additionally, this could be explained in terms of the victimization driving salary, since victims have more interruptions in their career due to intimate partner violence. In that same breath, it would also be wise to examine the fact that lifetime victims would perhaps be more likely to have lower salary due to the long-term effect on the job over the years (Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly, 2007). Despite this research revealing valuable data, it lacks the effect of the health care cost that is associated with intimate partner violence, which would perhaps give a broader sense of the total loss to the organization.

With an increase in medical costs associated with intimate partner violence, Rothman and Corso (2008) provided a more problem-solving approach to the issue. Rather than focusing on how it affects the organization, the study highlighted the need for employers to tackle the issue. For Rothman and Corso (2008), it is more profitable for organizations to devote a percentage of their human resource budget to assisting victims of intimate partner violence. Workshop during work hours was also recommended, as many employees may be reluctant to attend workshops that are held outside of their work hours, especially those who are experiencing severe control at home. Also, the label attached to the workshop is very important, as men may not be interested to attend if the
workshop is labeled as “relationship skills” rather than “stress reduction (Rothman and Corso, p. 1062, 2008).”

Of all the research presented, Stewart et al (2003) was the only study that emphasized the effect of depression on employees’ loss of productive time. Unlike the other studies that focused on the violence in the home and its effects on productivity, this study took a broader look at depression and how it affects productivity at work. Given that depression incorporates many intimate partner conflicts, it allowed the researchers to examine the costs associated with depression in general and loss of productivity in the workplace.

Stewart et al (2003) pointed out that “depression costs U.S. employers $24 billion annually in lost productive work time (p. 3135).” The major issue pointed out is the fact that depression can be an obscure phenomenon that is very difficult to measure but very significant in explaining work performance (Stewart et al, 2003). Given the intricacies with this phenomenon, overheads can increase for organizations but it can be very difficult to determine some of the sources of it since depression lives beneath the surface of other issues that are more pronounced.

**Gaps in the Literature**

Based on the myriad of literature on the topic of workplace productivity, it is clear that productivity in the workplace is largely affected by personal life conflicts that are indirectly taken to the workplace. Many of the researches that were presented focused on violence in intimate relationships, ignoring the non-violent conflicts that also affect employees’ performance. Additionally, though some of the literature spoke to males and
their productivity at work, most of the literature was centered on women, presenting the idea that females were more affected than men. Thus, this research intends to capture both men and women by interviewing both sexes in order to capture a wider picture of the phenomena. A larger portion of the studies done was also conducted using quantitative data, which begs the need for a qualitative study in this field.

**Conclusion**

The major themes that were brought out in the studies indicated an increase in healthcare costs across organizations, as employees require more health treatment after experiencing intimate partner aggression or violence. Absenteeism is also another major issue that was presented as a byproduct of intimate partner violence, because employees typically choose not to go to work due to extreme physical restraints or psychological dysfunction that affects their ability to perform their job without having their colleagues identifying that something is wrong.

Similar to absenteeism, distraction, in its many forms, was brought out as a common trend that affects employees at work. Most commonly, the employees were distracted by cell phone calls that increased as their intimate partner conflicts increase. However, it is important to note that both men and women are affected by distraction as well as intimate partner violence on the whole. Thus, while women is generally thought of as the weaker emotional sex, there are varying degrees to which men get emotional and affect their job performance as well.

Profitability as a result of low performance in organizations, though difficult to determine, has been measured and analyzed as experiencing a decrease due to employee
performance. This employee performance is evidently determined the intimate partner violence that each employee experiences. Nonetheless, national statistics have presented data that suggests profits are indeed affected by the employees’ lack of performance. On the other hand, there are also gaps in the statistics presented as they mainly focus on low-income employees who is assumed to be more vulnerable. Therefore, researcher bias was a major issue as it relates to statistics. Withdrawal from work versus withdrawal at work is also another major trend that was discussed in the literature and it gives rise to other research possibilities, as it highlights reasons for some women to maintain their jobs despite the personal life conflict while others are not able to cope.

Cyber loafing was mentioned briefly but extremely important for researchers to concentrate on, as the literature pointed out that intimate partner violence leads to cyber loafing. None of the literature emphasized the outcome of the study if it were to be done among same sex couples. Thus, making generalization about men or women could be very risky if the studies are inherently biased against certain groups of people who are counted as employees at these organizations. To examine this phenomenon, it would be a good idea to examine other non-violent conflict among both same sex and heterosexual couples in order to make generalization that truly reflect the wider population.
Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

A qualitative research design was chosen to study the phenomenon mentioned because most of the previous studies that surround the topic was conducted quantitatively as well as ignored the various reasons why and how the problem exists. Therefore, the intent of this research is to uncover the underlining meanings of the intimate relationship conflicts that affect workplace productivity that is not possible to achieve using questionnaires or purely quantitative forms. Additionally, qualitative research provides the opportunity to allow the research to take its own direction as the participants explore and make sense of their experiences. Unlike the quantitative approaches that were used in most of the studies on similar topics, this research will allow for limitless expressions of the experiences and increase the natural responses that cannot be captured on a questionnaire. Thus, the researcher made use of interviews as is expected in a case study (Yin, 2002).

Research Design

A single case study was chosen to capture the information, as case studies seek to answer the questions of how and why of phenomena that is narrowly focused on a certain group of people (Baxter, 2008). The study will be a single case study, as the requirement for a single case study indicates that the phenomena must be either, unique, critical and already been studied, or has previously not been studied (Yin, 2002). The phenomenon in question does fall in one of those categories, because research has shown that personal lives conflict does affect performance at work. Therefore, a single case study was suited
for this specific type of conflict being studied in a single organization with specific
groups of employees. Given the nature of the study, the participants were asked
questions during interviews which were conducted in a private and conducive
environment to maintain trust and validity of the study.

**Theoretical Explanation for Case Study**

The basic premise that surrounds the use of qualitative research lies in
constructivism. The principles of qualitative research is grounded in the idea that people
create meaning based on their own personal experiences, even if a number of people of
the same experience (Crotty, 1998). Therefore, two individuals could experience the
same event at the same time, but each meaning of the event will be recorded differently
by each individual.

Using the concepts of constructivism to guide this research, the researcher adopts
the concept of the various definitions of reality and the subjective meanings that
individuals have in relation to what is reality for them. This case study seeks to identify
personal lives conflicts and the impacts they have on work performance. As a result, the
researcher understands that each participant will derive a different meaning and
experience when answering the same questions. This understanding satisfies the
fundamental principles of constructivism in qualitative research.

Since the aim of the research is to understand this phenomena, the strategy
adopted is inductive in nature, as it allows the researcher to go in with an open frame and
rather than preconceived ideas of the participant’s reality (Esterberg, 2002). Thus, the
primary emphasis is how these participants construct their own meanings of their
conflicts. Also, constructivism dictates that the understanding of one’s lived experiences is only possible through in-depth analysis, which is possible by using open-ended questions in interviews (Gubrium and Holstein, 1997; Hycner, 1999). As a result, this case study used open-ended interview questions to capture in-depth information about the participants’ experiences.

Participants

The target population is people working in a specific finance organization who have either experienced personal lives conflicts or have supervised employees who have. The sampling was purposive sampling (Merriam, 1998). The sample captured employees who predominantly work in service industries. This provided a wide range of feedback from staff across different positions with varying experiences. A total of 10 participants were interviewed to collect data, both management and support staff. The interviews were conducted over a period of 6-weeks to capture a wide range of staff that would have been on vacation, both male and female.

In order to trace additional participants, the researcher employed the use of snowball sampling. Snowballing is a method of expanding the sample by asking one participant to recommend others for interviewing (Babbie, 1995; Crabtree & Miller, 1992). According to (Bailey, 1996; Holloway, 1997; and Greig and Taylor, 1999) those through whom entry is gained are referred to as gatekeepers and those persons who volunteer, assistance key insiders. Neuman (2000) regards a gatekeeper as a person equipped with the necessary authority to provide access to the place being researched. Additionally, these key insider’s guide the researcher only in a particular direction that
may prevent him or her from gaining access to certain people that might be beneficial to the study (Neuman, 2000).

The snowballing method was appropriately chosen due to the nature of this study. This allowed the most suitable candidates for participation to be chosen, as the gatekeepers and key insiders ensured only those that fit the criteria for the study were selected. This was useful in terms of ensuring the safety of those who were chosen to be a part of the study. The greatest reservation many of the participants had were related to security. They were aware that the possibility exists of having information about themselves leaked, specifically personal information about their daily lives could possibly be accessed by unwanted audiences. There are various ways in which this could have possibly occur and it was the responsibility of the researcher to take these instances into consideration. There were certain measures put in place to ensure none of the participating members of your survey felt in any way threatened. This gave them the confidence required for them to provide truthful accounts of their personal story for the purposes of this study.

**Data Collection Methods**

All data was collected using face to face interviews. According to Creswell (2007), a typical case study ought to utilize multiple sources of data to ensure validity. However, the nature of the research and the type of organization being studied did not allow the researcher to utilize any form of company documents to help provide further evidence. Therefore, the research relied on information from the interviews to make general statements and conclusions. Having multiple sources of information is also
known as triangulation, which is typically expected in qualitative research (Stake, 2000 and Yin 2009).

Given the case, there is no other document that could be available for the researcher to use as evidence for validity. To reiterate the study, the research focused on personal lives conflicts and how they impact workplace performance. Therefore, to understand employees’ performance, the study focused on their interpretation of their behavior patterns while experiencing personal lives conflicts. These behavior patterns were not recorded or documented for future retrieval, thus no document would be prove their interpretation of their conflicts.

Research Site

The research site is a financial institution that is based in Miami Gardens. This site was chosen due to the special circumstance that fits the criteria for a case study as well as proximity to the researcher’s environment. There were no barriers to locating this site, which made the process a bit easier and smoother. This specific organization is not a typical financial institution, its base is in England with many peripheral branches in Jamaica. Therefore, this organization, while operating locally, services Caribbean residents living in South Florida. This site provided the opportunity to study a wide range of employees at various levels working in one building. The relationship between management and staff is very direct which allows for more detail analysis of the study, as the participants would be able to give direct responses to situations occurring in the office. This is further promoted as compared to other major organizations, management is usually very distant and the communication is less direct.
Case Study

Steps, Processes and Philosophical Explanation for using Case study

According to Creswell (2007), in order to conduct a study, there are steps that ought to be followed. First, the researcher needs to define the research question, prepare a literature review, create the criteria for finding participants, and develop the questions to be asked during the interview, all of which were followed in conducting this research (Creswell, 2007). Additionally, the researcher garnered signed consent forms to ensure that all participants willingly agreed to participate in the study, so as to eliminate any unethical behaviors. This was done to eliminate the possibility of compromising the integrity of the research, as a result of relaying falsified information. Creswell (2007) pointed out that efforts must be made to ensure that the participants feel comfortable with all the conditions regarding the study. There may be a number of reasons as to why they may feel the urge to compromise the authenticity of the findings. Some of the participants may still be experiencing abuse with their partner while undergoing the interrogation vis-à-vis the questionnaire or experiencing non-violent conflicts within their personal lives. This was addressed by asking the participants if they were comfortable to discuss their personal lives at the time of the study.

The parameters of the research cannot account for unpredictable events such as the persistence and presence of the abuser or the element that causes the conflict. The possibility exists that the object, or the abuser, in violent cases, of the conflict may be stalking one of the participants, thus intimidating or discouraging them from engaging in the study. There may be a need to go the extra mile in preventing events like this from
happening so as to guarantee better and more truthful results (Creswell, 2007). The purpose of such an extent in effort is to provide a safer environment for your participants, thus eliminating their fears of suffering dire consequences as a result of taking part in the study. The researcher conducted all interviews in the absence of all external personnel who might present a threat to the outcome of their responses.

The results collected from the sample should reflect in its entirety the true feelings of each participant (Creswell, 2007). Any deviation would lead to unethical practice, which in turn would be unacceptable to the academic research community and rendered inadmissible. Therefore, it is the job of the researcher to maintain and to ensure the accountability of gathering reliable and factual data collected from the participants. However, the challenge is as dependent on the researcher as it is on the participant of the survey. There may be a myriad of reasons for participants to falsify information as a means of protecting themselves from the possibility of leaked personal information (Creswell, 2007).

In this case study, the researcher trusted the information the participants provided as the questions were not given to participants in group, which would allow participants to plan and share their response. Also, the nature of the research itself was new for all participants, which indicates that the responses were as unique as the research itself. None of the participants had never been in a research of this nature before, therefore their responses were completely pure and unrefined since there were no prior knowledge of the topic as it relates to research.
Therefore, it is the responsibility of the researcher to instill within his/her participants the confidence that information related to this study will not be publicized. This step is essential in governing over the validity, reliability and consistency of the findings presented for further review (Cotty, 1998). The fear of potential endangerment of one’s lives can be a factor and as such, it is important to account for the presence of human emotion that could lead to untruthful statements. The researcher could provide evidence that the information shared about their personal lives will be protected. The researcher could choose to use examples of facial altering, and voice tone changers in previous videos used for prior research questions (Creswell, 2007).

To allow participants to feel comfortable disclosing their personal lives, the researcher guaranteed, through use of a signed consent, that the information collected will be held strictly confidential and only been reviewed, if necessary by the Dissertation Chair. The researcher also explained that the consent forms as well as the responses to questions would be held in a safe, which the researcher is the only person with access.

Further elaboration on the importance of this measure will be addressed in the section that addresses Validity and Truthfulness. The researcher in this capacity being proactive in advance, whereby the steps are taken to ensure that his/her participants feel safe about disclosing their information. Their experiences must be for the purposes of this study completely honest; so as to eliminate the possibility of the researcher using his/her own judgment of what the data collected means. The review and screening of the information must be taken at face value, so as to ensure the information has not been altered, doctored, fabricated nor falsified (Hycner 1999).
In order to correctly analyze the information that will be gained, it is important to understand the concept of analyzing data. Hycner (1999) warns against the use of the term “analysis” with respect to deriving meaning from the collected data. The term analysis suggests that the phenomenon will be broken into constituent parts (Hycner, 1999). As a result, this may lead to the risk of losing the phenomenon altogether. The term explicitation as coined by (Hycner, 1999) involves a series of five steps that are listed below and will be used to better report findings of the study.

a) Bracketing
b) Tracing units of meaning
c) Clustering units of meaning to form themes
d) Summarization of interviews, with possible modification where necessary
e) Determining general themes common from all interviews

**A: Bracketing.** Bracketing is putting aside one’s own beliefs about the phenomena being studied. This step is important as it ensures that the results are completely unaffected by the emotions or beliefs of the person conducting the study. Therefore, the researcher took only what was given when collecting information. The process of bracketing protects the authenticity, validity and reliability of the findings related to the reports coming from participants (Hycner, 1999).

This is done to eliminate any bias or urge to rearrange results and findings to one’s own liking. The danger of researcher bias is that it renders the findings inadmissible due to falsification, as it may not reflect the true nature or feelings of the participants before, during and after interviewing. This also helps to validate the data
collection process (Creswell, 2007). This research will be conducted by following the
guidelines of bracketing so as to reduce the researcher bias. For Humble and Cross
(2010), prior knowledge cannot be eliminated or bracketed, and as a result, bracketing
can be problematic. All these steps outlined were utilized in the study in order to
maintain the principles of conducting a valid case study.

The term reduction refers to the process of acquiring descriptive meanings of the
phenomena repeatedly to get deeper understandings (Hycner, 1999). This process would
allow the researcher to reduce the temptation to take a position, but rather allow the
research to reveal its own meaning. Essentially, the researcher is not allowed to take a
particular side until the results reflect the consistency for or against the researcher’s
assumption. This process will also allow the researcher to listen repeatedly to the audio
from the interviews conducted (Hycner, 1999). In this case, the researcher read the
responses over and over to capture consistency and themes.

B: Tracing units of meaning. At this fundamental stage, the data is then
explicated, where statements that are seen to highlight the phenomenon being studied will
be determined, retrieved or otherwise isolated (Creswell, 1998; Holloway, 1997; Hycner,
1999). At this stage, it is extremely important that the statements reveal and reflect the
true feelings of the participants, so as to avoid explicating unreliable findings. If one were
to picture the steps of this case study as a Mathematics equation, then examining
mendacious statements would equate to changing an arithmetic sign (e.g. changing 2+5 to
2-5) in the middle of the question, thus changing the outcome of the entire equation. This
example serves the purpose of giving a clear visual, as to how important it is to maintain
consistency and report only what it provided to the eye of the researcher. At this stage, the researcher used a plethora of judgement while maintaining the norms of bracketing in order to control the effects of one’s own subjective thoughts. The purpose at this point is to state exactly what the data is telling you the researcher. Also, the researcher took the exact wording used and restate the statements made to ensure that the meaning conveyed was correct. For example, the researcher often summarized the points made by the participants to ensure accuracy of meaning. At the end of the process the interviewer also summarized the information in the presence of the participants to further ensure accuracy.

The important meanings from each interview will then be identified and carefully analyzed to eliminate redundancies (Moustakas, 1994). To achieve this, the researcher will record the information as raw data given by the participant, then calculate the frequencies of occurrences of each meaning given. Moustakas (1994) adds that it is important to record the manner in which these meanings were stated. At the end of the interviews, all repeated information was eliminated at this point to avoid redundancies, but this was done only after carefully examining the frequencies and point at which these responses were made. This was very important, as the participants responded similarly to different questions, but that doesn’t mean that the repeated responses were redundant. However, the responses that were the same in the same questions were highlighted as being redundant, or highlighted as an emphasis that the participant placed on the specific point that was made.

This is important as Hycner (1999) postulates that the meanings might appear to be similar but could very well be distinct in terms of chronology or richness. The process
of eliminating redundancy is explored in rich detail in Step (C) of the phenomenological study. The classification saves us time, as we would when finding addresses for someone residing in the same community. For instance, someone’s address may be difficult to find, however if you narrow it to one meaning (city) such as Pembroke Pines or Hollywood, then locating someone within a general vicinity takes a much shorter time.

**C: Clustering of units of meaning to form themes.** In order to effectively analyze the data, the researcher will be required to continuously bracket any presupposition to stay intuned with the true meaning of the study. As a result, the researcher again used careful judgment to decipher meaning - a step Hycner (1999) describes as creative insight. Thus, the researcher revisited the themes that were set aside as being non-redundant and bracket again to identify further meanings. This stage of examination ensured that information that didn’t provide themes were already present. Once a theme was formed and already highlighted, any discovery of a participant’s statement echoing the same theme was not be recorded as an additional theme.

The extra (redundant) themes will instead be collected and assigned to one label or category. This way the researcher eliminates the confusion or the possibility of incorrectly assigning units of meaning via themes. This would also serve as a means of ensuring that good research practice is being maintained throughout each step of the phenomenon. An example of this is as simple as copying images from one folder on your computer to a folder on “Desktop”, a message will pop up stating “25 of these items already exist” and prompt you to “would you like to COPY or REPLACE”.
The computer at this point is the same as the researcher; the computer is asking you to determine which action is best from this point on. For the purposes of this research, the action which is most consistent with maintaining good practice is REPLACE. This analogy serves as a means of giving a clearer indication of the researcher’s role. The responsibility of the researcher is to ensure that (0 instances) no instances of redundancy within labelling themes ever occur.

Any errors made in this step would irreparably alter the validity and truthfulness in Steps (D) and Steps (E). It is critical that few to zero mistakes are made during this step, as these errors will be reflected throughout the body of the research. The information presented by the members of the study must be in every sense of the word a true reflection of their experiences. The importance of honest accounts of their lives affecting their productivity in the office will impact the validity of the paper. Step (D) is where the researcher summarized and classified each person’s story based on the interview.

Therefore, it is crucial that none of the information presented is in any way falsified for any reason. This could lead to a lot of confusion when revisiting the units to assign useful meanings to them. The process of completing the study could also be extended beyond a reasonable deadline, in addition to the reflection of highly unethical practices once the dishonest accounts are overlooked. The care that must be taken in Steps (D) and Steps (E) means that within this Step, (C) should be assumed. A great deal of care should be taken to avoid or prevent external factors from influencing the
participants. Their unaltered testimony is a pre-requisite for maintaining properly performed and ethically sound research.

Clustering consists of classifying units of meaning in specific categories (Creswell, 1998; King, 1994; Moustakas, 1994). In doing so, the researcher will identify important topics, and the researcher is expected to review the interviews as well as the non-redundant information in order to achieve clusters of significant meanings (Creswell, 1998). Given that human tendencies will prevail, there is a strong possibility for information overlap, but this will be addressed by analyzing the meanings from each cluster to determine themes (Creswell, 1998).

D: Summarise each interview, validate and modify. At this point, the researcher validated the information to determine if the main point of the interviews was captured. The idea at this point was to determine whether or not the findings support or deny the core assumption of this study. In this instance, the researcher connected the results to the assumption that was made, some participants and their responses supported the assumption, whereas few participants denied the assumption.

In doing so, the researcher revisited the participant to identify any errors made and make changes as necessary. The reason for doing this is to guarantee that the statements made by each participant weren’t in any way influenced by external factors. The idea is that the statements must hold true at the time of the study and should remain the same after the study. This is the most accurate way of determining that the participants were not coerced to changing their responses for any external reason.
The double checks or follow-up on participants allow for the researcher to protect the authenticity of the study, as this would determine whether or not the participant’s views would remain unchanged. This simplifies the process as the researcher would be able to determine which information is reliable and which can be discarded. The most ideal situation for any researcher in this position is one where every participant reports no difference in what was stated during interview and after. However, we do know that there will be instances that fall outside of these ideals. Therefore, the researcher must be prepared to take the appropriate action with respect to the findings falling outside these ideals (Hycner, 1999).

Changes in the testimony of the participants may come due to the failure of the recommended mechanisms in ensuring the participant feels protected. However, this may not necessarily be true as there may be other influences, perhaps the influence of the participant him/herself who decided to change their story at the last minute. Thus, falsifying the findings of this particular interviewee and as such must be removed from consideration as a true reflection of their personal life story (Moustakas, 1994). Fortunately, in this case study, none of the information in the study was changed after revisiting the participants.

**E: General and unique themes for all the interviews and composite summary.** After those stages, have been completed, the common themes were grouped and individual variations were stated separately. According to Hycner (1999), the researcher must take note of the differences that exist among the themes, so as not to cluster those that are different with common themes. As indicated in Step (D), there will exist several
instances of commonality as well as, there would exist several instances of differences. The purpose of ensuring that the themes are correctly identified would be to reflect reality as much as possible. The likelihood of all participants expressing commonality regarding how personal relationships affect their professional lives is nearly non-existent. The same can be stated for the likelihood of all participants expressing differences with respect to the same assumption regarding this study.

Some of the participants may indicate that the abusive relationship may have motivated them to perform at their peak in the organization. The opposite may be true for other participants, where as some people are motivated in negative environments, others will be demotivated or uninspired to perform in any capacity. The differences and commonalities were brought out in responses such as these, and gave the researcher the context required to label and the summarize the meanings of the information individually, as well as collectively. This distinction made by the researcher allowed one to see how each participant responded to their respective situation.

The researcher then wrote an amalgamated summary, which reflected the themes outlined and the specific contexts in which those themes originated. This is a process Hycner (1999); and Moustakas (1994) pointed out as a fundamental step in the process. Based on Sadala and Adorno’s (2001) arguments, the researcher, will then “transform participants’ everyday expressions into expressions appropriate to the scientific discourse supporting the research (p. 289).” This was done when summarizing the findings of the study, however, the participant’s exact words were recorded in quotation in the narratives of this study.
Validity and Truthfulness

Assessing the validity of this research method is based heavily on two factors related to the participants and the researcher of the phenomenon. One of these depends on the interviewee’s ability to express what they mean in a way that cannot be misinterpreted. The necessity of this condition mostly serves as a means to eliminate the possibility of mistaken interpretations. This also serves to ensure that the results generated from determining the meaning of each interviewee’s experiences do not get lost in the process. Otherwise, information that is poorly handled, misinterpreted or mistaken can severely compromise the authenticity or truth of the findings (Hycner, 1999; Moustakas, 1994).

In the aforementioned paragraphs related to the ethics of this research, a few suggestions were made to ensure that reliability of the findings is maintained. The reasons for doing so fell under the desire to perpetuate the best practice of ethically sound research, steering away from the direction of academic dishonesty and correctly representing the findings as given to the researcher by members of one’s review. The privacy of one’s personal information is integral in this type of study, for the participants may be experiencing the conditions at the moment that is directly impacting their performance.

Naturally, there are usually several logical and practical reasons for maintaining a particular professional charade, so as not to cause concern or panic amongst your working peers. However, it is important to note that this may be the same reason as to why collecting reliable information from such candidates can prove to be difficult. There
must be a method the researcher can use to successfully convince his subjects. In this way, a researcher will get his participant to disclose as much truthful information as possible with the confidence that the results or discussions remain private.

The researcher negotiated a deal with management (company) ensuring that no unwanted presence would be welcome near the premises the day of the interview or no other employee be present in the room where the interviews were being conducted. This was difficult in terms of convincing a company to put stricter vigilance in place, however for the sake of protecting the validity and true results of your research the management agreed. The real reason for doing so is to ensure that the participants feel safe. In every human experience, no one wants to take part in an event that is likely to lead to an inevitable punishment following his or her decision.

The researcher made it a point of duty to indicate that fear for their safety may completely render your findings inert. Thus, the researcher emphasized that the interview can end at any point the participant felt uncomfortable or fear of any kind. If not addressed, this feeling experienced by the participants could lead to them providing false information. The researcher should try and implement these methods of protecting his/her participants from experiencing any discomfort, which could alter the findings. The importance of making sure honesty is maintained throughout has to do with the researcher’s own emotions and ability to remain impartial or without opinion. The researcher avoided the trap of developing emotional attachments to participants on the basis of their experiences. If this was not done, the possibility of affecting the reliable reports of the researcher him/herself would have been an issue. This was avoided so as to
eliminate the possibility of inserting one’s own thoughts and suggestions as to the direction or outcome of the study.

Snowballing was also used because not all participants knew about the research and as a result, they suggested other employees who were on vacation at the time of the first interview. While the risk or the possibility exists, that some participants may gain access to information of the others, there were ways to avoid this as a potential pitfall to the proceedings. The researcher maintained confidentiality as there were no discussions about what other participants said in their interview, not even with management. In doing so, the researcher delivered the promise of confidentiality, as some participants were concerned that their employer would perhaps fire them if information regarding the company was ever leaked to management.

The purpose of this exercise is to complement these measures with the previous suggestions of communicating safety in the participant’s disclosure. The participants would see examples of previous participants of other studies being completely unaffected by the information given during interviews. The confidence therefore leaves the researcher in a position where the only factor left to worry about is the researcher’s own discipline. The researcher maintain discipline and refrained from adjusting results or data to suit personal thoughts or preconceived notions.

Additionally, the researcher can ensure that modifications be done on the faces of every single participant without exception. The participants signing an agreement have the right to take legal action, in the event of the researcher’s failure to protect the most sensitive information possible. These methods while not foolproof, could serve as the
necessary motivation for your participants to feel safer about the disclosure of personal and family life information. As mentioned earlier, the combination of the snowballing and purposive sampling method and the coding of data was an essential step towards reducing the participant’s apprehension.

The participants as a result of the efforts placed to protect their information and their livelihood, would yield rewarding responses from the participants. The participants were more confident and more honest about disclosing the pleasant and unpleasant details of their personal history. The researcher was also confident that the responses being collected were true reflections of every single participant.

The key is to provide the assurance that all these fears while valid will not come to pass, as the researcher goes the necessary distance to ensure the data collected will never be shared outside of this environment at any point in time. The information being more meaningful to the researcher would lead the researcher to rename all interviewees or participants, giving them labels in Numerical order such as P I, P 2, P 3 etc, or in Alphabetical order such as Participants A, B, C, D, E, F and onwards. This layer of protection creates a risk-free environment so as to put all participants at ease, thus removing their need to present false or doctored information regarding their own personal experiences.

**Ethical Concerns for the Study**

One of the biggest ethical concerns for this study is the interviewee’s ability to express their true reflections of incidents they’ve been involved in. There are many ways in which the authenticity can be affected, as indicated multiple times in previous sections.
The reason for insisting on the prevention of informational influence stems from the desire to maintain honesty for the purposes of ethical academic research. The participants may be harder to control in the respect of how elements independent of the study would affect their safety. The process of interviewing needs to facilitate an environment where all matters related to the study can be discussed uninterrupted.

The other aspect of difficulty stems from the researcher steering away from taking a side, stance or position. There are a series of steps in phenomenological reduction used to eliminate the chances of breaking this rule. The idea is that the researcher should not take away from nor make any amendment or any additions to the statements provided by participants. This could lead to the corruption of the actual thoughts presented by each of the interviewees. Their statements must remain as is to maintain the trend of the steps taken to summarize each of them into distinct meanings. This allows the researcher to continue with the process of good sound ethical practices of a phenomenological study.

The researcher must be able to via the process of bracketing in Step (A), separate one’s own thoughts or assumptions from what is being reported. The researcher must also protect the participants and ensure that they are not persuaded to provide false testimony. Therefore, the two-fold step while difficult is feasible as the researcher’s own initiative must play a major role in providing sound and secure confidentiality (Crotty, 1998). In order to achieve complete ethical guidelines adopted, the researcher adhered to these principles outlined by Crotty (1998).

The phenomenon in this case, is the way in which their productivity has been affected by their personal lives conflicts. Efforts must be made in preventing the
possibility of disruptions to the discourse of the interviewing process. The participants may be partners and spouses with people that have great potential to be stalkers or might have been in conflict with others that could lead to an escalation of the conflict. This could lead to many complications, which would affect both the candidate and respect for the 5 Step process of collecting the reliable data.

There must also be an account for the possibility of disruptions to the process of the interviews. To ensure this, the researcher and the participant agreed to dates in which there were less people in the office or no one except the participant at that time of the day. Consequently, most of the interviews were done in the evening after business hours. The secrecy or confidentiality of the study, was kept from the unwanted or unwelcomed guests, so that the potential for bodily harm, assault or other abusive tactics are not used as a way to dissuade your would-be participants. The knowledge one’s needs to have of your own participants is key in determining the ways to protect them accordingly. These conditions fostered an environment leading to a more positive feeling of participation, and leave them in a position where they are more likely to express or retell their phenomena with a greater degree of honesty.

The considerations mentioned earlier eliminated every chance there would be for a participant to change their mind, alter their statements or disrupt the interview process. The purpose of the methodology is to ensure that the basis of the research is preserved due to information, which truly reflects the views of those who participated in the interviews. This way the researcher can successfully use the results to make analogies,
draw comparisons, generate themes, and meaningful commonalities that allow the participants to be grouped correctly (Hycner, 1999).

The researcher did not present incentives in return for the information provided by each member of the sample. This could have lasting negative effects on the truthfulness of the results. Hence, the accounts of each participant could be exaggerated for the purpose of presenting an unrealistic view in the way in which all participants were affected by the same phenomenon. Falsified results when ignored results in potentially misleading the entire scientific community and as such should be avoided at all costs.

The researcher avoided adding, subtracting or changing the meaning presented or represented by each individual participant. The reason for ensuring that this doesn’t take place is to report what was given to you as the researcher as is. The information must not suffer the fate of being distorted as if it were being passed down the line in a game of “Chinese Telephone”.

The message from the original sender all the way to the final person changes from one context to something completely remote, foreign and unfamiliar. As researcher, everything was done to to prevent the data received to suffer the same process. This could lead to another breach of ethics within the research methodology, which would severely compromise any measure of consistency and authenticity. Essentially, it is the job of the researcher to double-check with the participant, to ensure that both parties understand the intended meaning (Esterberg, 2000). Therefore, this research followed these guidelines in order to main ethical research standards.
As indicated earlier, every effort was be made to guarantee truthful representations of the data collected as given by the participants, and as reported by the researcher as they are seen. The participant may not be fully reliable with respect to controlling their emotions, therefore the measures taken to reduce their anxiety or withdrawal was addressed.

**Summary**

The chapter outlined the methodology (case study) employed for conducting this study. In doing so, it also made clear the justification for choosing such methods. The method was chosen based on the nature of the study, as the conflict was studied in a very specific organization using all employees as a sample for the study. The researcher focused on the steps and processes of conducting a case study, by highlighting each step and justifying them. It also demonstrated the need for the researcher’s position and how it impacts the study. Ethical concerns for the study were a major concern that was also pointed out and carefully explained to give a clear understanding of the procedures taken to maintain ethics throughout the study.
Chapter 4: Relevant Theories and Major Thinkers

Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Symbolic interactionism is a sociological theory that was coined by George Herbert Mead but further developed by Herbert Blumer, and is very influential in the field of psychology as well (Lemert, 2013). The theory rests on the premise that human beings are social creatures and therefore acts and makes decisions based on the meanings that they attach to their interactions with any social phenomena. It also goes a bit further to explain that the social reality that is used by humans to operate in society is derived from the interactions they experience in society and how they make sense of those interactions (Lemert, 2013). Therefore, people respond to things or situations based on the personal meaning that they derive from their own understanding of the world.

This theory is useful in analyzing this case because it provides the framework for understanding how employers rationalize the usefulness or importance of providing assistance for employees with intimate relationship conflicts. Additionally, it is useful in analyzing the various reasons why employees are reluctant to disclose their problems to management while at work. Given that his theory is applicable to both employers and employees, it allows the researcher to provide a broad view of the issue by examining the social reality of the major parties involved.

To relate this theory to the research, it is necessary to relate to the major issues pointed out in the literature review. As discussed, many employers were reluctant to address the issues of intimate relationship conflict because they perceive it to be an issue that ought to be addressed by a counselor or at home with the absence of employers.
Also, some employers believe that intimate relationship conflict is not a significant threat to the organization and as a result is not important to either invest money or time to remedy the issue. Others perceive the issue as being easily resolved if employees are dismissed or penalized. Thus, if employees are no longer working, then the organization’s productivity is not compromised and if the employees are penalized for a lack of or decrease in production or productivity, then the need for addressing the problem of intimate partner relationship conflict is then resolved easily.

For the employees, the literature review pointed out that many employees are reluctant to disclose their intimate relationship conflict to management, as they perceive a lack of trust, which would eventually either cause them to be terminated or have them being criticized for having such problems. Also, the women who chose to remain in relationships that are toxic explain that there is huge financial loss if they are separated from their partner. Thus, they prefer to maintain the relationships, which ultimately affect their work life. On the other hand, these women also chose not to disclose the issue at work, as they would risk losing their source of independence, given that their jobs are often the only source of finance and thereby their key to independence.

Based on social interactionism theory, the interaction between the Human Resources Manager and employee will be viewed as a type of exchange. From here it takes on the form of Erving Goffman’s dramaturgical analytic perspective (Goffman, 1959). Taking a female as an example, the employee plays a different role in every scenario where her audience changes, which means she will not behave in the same way at home with her abusive partner, as she would with her Human Resources Manager.
A term such as “keeping up appearances” may come to mind when thinking about the dramaturgical analysis’s view on the presentation of self (Goffman, 1959). This is the ideal version of one’s self, or in this case the employee’s self that one would like to present to their intended audience. In this case, let’s assume the employee wishes none of her peers or her HR Manager to be aware of her troubled intimate relationship. The disguise would come in the form of impression management, where she may behave, dress and speak in an optimistic, cheerful and happy tone so as not to offset the premise that she could be experiencing difficulties in the home.

This is viewed as a theatrical performance, whereby the viewers are the people whom the employee would like to give the impression of a perceived normalcy. Essentially, doing her utmost best not to surrender any clues that her portrayal could possibly spell evidence to the contrary. Essentially, she would replace all the negatives of her relationship and present herself as if she is involved in a conflict free intimate relationship. Nonetheless, this doesn’t prevent her from going to work and behaving in a manner that yields an unproductive workday. Therefore, no matter how much the employee is capable of hiding, it becomes almost difficult to control the effects of the intimate relationship conflict on productivity at work.

Such a tactic would serve her interests regarding her desire to conceal the nature of her conflict ridden intimate relationship. This is a matter that will be revisited, in the Rational Choice Theory where she decides it is best for her co-workers and seniors not to know about her personal life (Levin and Milgrom, 2004). This brings up an interesting
perspective when viewed from the angle of her abusive partner, for whom she’d perform
in a different manner so as to be consistent with dramaturgical analysis.

From the other end of the spectrum would be her performance for her lover/
abuser in question. She may choose to dress more casually, or more revealing and
possibly become more hospitable in the home. She may go further than the norm, in her
attempt to appease him as a means of being perceived to be more spontaneous. This
performance could be used to shield herself from further abuse, as she may have taken
steps with her HR manager to file a restraining order against him or some other form of
legal action.

This behavior serves her well as this facilitates her second option of disclosing the
nature of her relationship to her senior HR Manager. The purpose of this theatrical
exercise, is to give her spouse the impression of saying such as “she’s being so much
more submissive, willing and more generous these days.” In both scenarios, she portrays
a self that is unlike what her real-life situation is suggesting. In this particular instance,
her partner’s suspicion will not be aroused unless it’s a dramatic reversal of her usual
behavior.

The purpose of this performance would be similar to the magician using sleight of
hand, in distracting him with kindness, conformity and excellent treatment to conceal the
fact that she has begun the process of separating herself from him. This scenario will be
revisited in the section of rational choice theory, where she believes it is in her best
interest to inform her supervisor (HR Manager) of her troubled home or abusive intimate
situation. Thus, the meaning that the employee attaches to the situation will determine how the conflict is dealt with as well as how productivity will be managed.

**Rational Choice Theory**

The theory coined by a pioneer Sociologist George Homas, suggests that people pursue their preferences on the basis of their self-interests, which are said to be most rational (Levin and Milgrom, 2004). The assumptions made by the theory point out that one must have sufficient information to make these decisions. The most notable aspect of this theory is the process of social interaction, which one uses to determine whether or not building a connection with another person is more beneficial to them than the potential disadvantages. There are categories of preferences that are labeled for the purposes of understanding the degrees of preference for individuals listed as follows:

a) **Strict Preference** – Must have Sprite over Coca Cola.

b) **Weak Preference** – You will accept Coca Cola in the absence of Sprite.

c) **Indifference** – One will pick Sprite or Coca Cola, where either outcome is acceptable.

The theory suggests that the actor (person) making the choice is doing so in their pursuit of an optimum self-interest (Levin and Milgrom, 2004). To simplify, one would say that the person is acting or choosing to act in the hope that the result yields a more favorable preference than any of the alternatives. In relation to the case of employed women in abusive intimate relationships, there are a number of possible considerations to be made by both parties (employer and employee) involved. To ensure that the theory’s
premise is kept intact, the preference of the outcome should result in the maximization of benefits outweighing all the negative consequences.

To relate Rational Choice theory to the case, the possibility exists that the employee affected by the intimate relationship conflict, will make the choice not to disclose any information to the H.R manager regarding the problem. The employee may have weighed in favor of doing so, due to the possibility that the H.R manager representing the company may disregard the issue. There also exists the possibility that the H.R manager may deem the employee unfit for duty then decide to relieve the employee of duty on the premise that the intimate relationship conflict may affect the company’s productivity. The employee may have also considered being heavily criticized for having done nothing on his or her own to remedy the intimate relationship conflict. All these possibilities are explained by theory in such that the employee’s and employer’s choice to disclose or not to disclose the issue is motivated by a calculated decision that will be most desirable or beneficial to either parties.

Another choice for the employee comes in the form of actually disclosing the information to her superior or in this case the H.R Manager. The belief of this yielding a more positive outcome would stem from a sound relationship with the H.R Manager that may exist on and off the job. This would leave the employee to believe that the likelihood for her to be ridiculed or heavily criticized will be far less. Most of the decisions involving the choice to disclose or not to disclose seem to favor the strictest preference, as the employee involved would like to reduce their chances of unemployment as much as possible (Levin and Milgrom, 2004). In this respect, no other outcome is welcomed.
nor would be entertained, as the employee’s state of security and financial independence is at stake.

On the other hand, there is the perception of the H.R Manager who may decide what their level of involvement is going to be depending on what is presented. The H.R Manager’s response is equally important, for it indicates whether or not the employee’s suspicions were true or false. Moreover, their response determines the stance of the company, for this person is the representative voice acting on the company’s behalf. The Manager may choose to act based on the following options:

The H.R Manager may choose to act in favor of the best-case scenario for the employee and decide to help in a number of ways. The conversation between them would allow them to identify the next logical course of action resulting in the lowest chances of additional trauma. This would place the employee under significantly less stress because of the support he or she may be receiving. This eliminates the mystery or the uncertainty of whether or not your employer will help you in your cause to put you back in emotional order. This may also result in the employee feeling as if he or she is valued, and that the representative of the company sees it as more beneficial to be helpful in place of leaving you to your devices.

For the reasons mentioned above, the H.R Manager’s choice to help implies a strict preference for avoiding further lacking in productivity resulting from withdrawal from work or at work (Levin and Milgrom, 2004). On the other hand, we have to explore the possibility of the HR Manager’s choice to act in the complete reverse of that scenario. The HR Manager may believe that helping you would be a financial burden to the
company in terms of providing counselling and the possibility of additional staff specific
security details. Therefore, from their perspective you’d be an additional cost, and not a
benefit for a problem they possibly see no need to fix as this exists independent of the
organization.

All of these choices on the side of the employer and employee speak specifically
to the preservation of one party’s security. The employer’s choice in deciding that
helping their employee is in their best interest, for the cost of avoiding the problem would
eventually result in serious losses to the company. On the other hand, the employer’s
choice in avoiding the problem stems from the viewpoint that the employee’s personal
dilemma is one outside of the company’s jurisdiction, and as such chooses not to
intervene in addition to their belief that their financial gain does not exist in this scenario.

The employee also has the choice to make, for the possibility of losing the job
may result in their inability to eliminate their dependence on their partner. Therefore, the
choice not to disclose this information eradicates any possibility that the H.R Manager
will be informed. The rationale would be to isolate one’s HR Manager from this ongoing
affair, as you’d rather not risk the chance of unemployment due to a justified reason for
poor or less than optimal work performance. The other concerns may not comparatively
weigh as much as the individual’s desire to keep one’s job, as the other reasons for not
disclosing are purely to avoid embarrassment in social standing.

The alternative for the employee is highly dependent on a higher degree of
certainty, that the information they present to their HR Manager will not be used against
them as previously mentioned. This decision would also result in a boost in one’s self
worth, as the representative of the company would support you during your battle with a socially intimate personal issue. Therefore, it stands to reasons that there are two types of gains and two types of losses for the employee; there are the psychological losses from the humiliation of job loss, the psychological gains from being valued by the company, the financial loss of losing the job, and the financial gain by remaining employed due to non-disclosure.

**Maslow’s theory of self-actualization**

The theory of Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs relates to this case specifically. The theory was developed by Abraham Maslow, an American Psychologist who focused on motivation (Maslow, 1943). The theory demonstrates an ascending order of needs for individuals to be self-actualized. There are five (5) specific categories of needs we as individuals have on the path to becoming self-actualized. The five (5) categories listed are as follows:

The needs start with (a) physiological needs – referring to all the needs we require for our survival. (b) Safety and security – referring to the employment which provides this sense of security and means to provide for family. (c) Love and belonging – which serves as an extension of achieving security through communities such as family within the home, or family within the workplace or other social situations. (d) Self-esteem – which results from the confidence gained from other needs being met. Any one of the aforementioned needs from (a) to (c) can contribute to this sense of fulfillment. (e) Self-actualization – when one’s full potential is achieved through the means of creativity, morality, spontaneity and existence purpose (McLeod, 2014). These are the needs where
at least one should be met to some degree, in order for employees in any given role or task within an organization to remain motivated or inspired to deliver their optimal performance (McLeod, 2014).

This research speaks directly to the matter of safety and security where the intimate relationship challenges negatively impact his/her performance. The sense of love and belonging is challenged in this regard, as the conflict at home could be described as hostile, tense or even toxic to other needs such as self-esteem. However, it is possible that the satisfaction of the need ‘safety and security’ through continued employment may provide the confidence one may need to achieve. This could alternatively turn or offset the outcome in the reverse to gain a higher sense of self-esteem.

As mentioned earlier, there are instances when intimate partners challenge these needs as the hierarchy of needs suggest that all the lower needs must be reasonably satisfied. This means, that any disruption to a need such as safety and security, may stall or prevent an individual from advancing on to the need of love and belonging (McLeod, 2014). In this case, the sense of love and belonging is certainly the center of this particular problem where intimate partner conflict would tarnish this achievement.

The purpose behind an employee deciding to remain in such a relationship would clearly represent the basis of working through a temporary situation. Therefore, the affected employee could develop enough safety and security, to take firmer actions in freeing themselves of their intimate partner conflict. This would allow them to focus on achieving love and belonging, through a renewed focus on their career or perhaps a new career altogether.
This need could also be met through a new partner, after working on achievement after achievement. It is quite possible that love and belonging can be revisited, after experiencing an improvement in one’s self-esteem. The reasoning behind this notion is due to the fact that distractions were previously eliminated after achieving maximum security through employment. Shifting focus from an intimate partner, to improving performance at the company will result in a positive response from peers.

The statement from Abraham Maslow suggests that a fulfilled and self-actualized person is one who follows the rules: “a painter must paint, a poet must write and a musician must make music if he is to be at peace with himself (Maslow, p. 371, 1943).” Essentially, through our experiences and endeavors in life we are searching for purpose and meaning, and as such the person we were meant to be or the role we were meant to play within our society. Therefore, the maximization of productivity for the employee in this case must come at the cost of the distraction in the form of the intimate relationship. However, this goal cannot be achieved without first achieving the highest level of safety and security in order to move up the level of needs.

This allows the employee to maximize their finances by continuing to remain employed regardless of the tension that may exist in the home. The losses that could incur as a result of continuing the relationship will wear on the individual’s ability to ascend to the peak of one’s life experiences. The aim ultimately, is to make oneself less of a liability to the organization, which could result in job loss, which again is detrimental to the process of being self-actualized. The result of this process could lead the employee to a place of self-discovery (McLeod, 2014). This transition from one set of needs to the
next will provide the employee with the motivation required to excel. Whereby they move from career to career (safety and security), proceed to finding the right partner who supports their goals (love and belonging), receive promotions in current job or moves on to a higher position in another job resulting in a confidence boost (self-esteem) and finding out how to be the person you were meant to be (self-actualization). On the other hand, if the employers are reluctant to provide assistance for employees with intimate partner conflict (love and belonging/safety and security), then the employee may be less motivated to effectively perform his or her tasks, which results in low productivity at work.

In conclusion, safety and security is the specific need that must certainly be addressed with top priority, as it will make the process more seamless. The longer one remains employed, the more the sense of empowerment increases. Additionally, the employer will be less likely to experience high staff turnover. This need will also invigorate him/her to continue advancing towards owning their own property, their own independence and ultimately their purpose in life according to the role one fills in every community to which one belongs.

**Conclusion**

Given the theoretical explanation presented and the existing research that indicates there is a connection between intimate partner conflict and workplace productivity, there are clear indications that a case study is needed to further understand the various explanations for how and why intimate partner conflict affect productivity in the workplace. In moving forward, the next chapter will outline the steps and processes
of conducting a case study, and in particular how this study will be conducted. Given that the purpose of the case study is to answer the question of “why and how?” of a phenomenon that has already been studied in a rather basic manner, the approach to this study would provide a more in-depth analysis of the topic at hand (Baxter, 2008).
Chapter 5: Research Findings

This study was guided by specific research questions with aims of examining the various personal lives conflicts and their impacts on workplace productivity. The questions are as follows: Do personal lives conflict affect productivity in the workplace? Do intimate partner conflict affect productivity in the workplace? and To what extent does intimate partner conflict affect productivity in the workplace?

In conducting the study, using open-ended interview questions, the participants were asked general questions that led them to describe their perceptions of personal lives conflicts and how they impact the workplace. They also mentioned the number one type of personal lives conflict that affects employees’ performance at work, and by extension, the workplace in general. This chapter will focus on the reports of the research findings, which are based on semi-structured interviews conducted by employees who hold various positions in a financial organization.

**Background**

There were 10 participants who participated in this study. They comprised of managers, administrative staff, and support staff. The study consisted of 7 females and 3 males. Overall, all the participants had at least 4 years’ work experience in the financial industry. Two of the participants had over 20 years’ experience working in the same company, while all others had experience working in other organizations that were also financially centered. Only one employee didn’t have at least a bachelor’s degree, but that participant was in progress of completing a bachelor.
This organization services Caribbean residents living in south Florida, who often invest in properties and other financial services in a specific Caribbean Island. For the purpose of confidentiality, all participants’ names are replaced with the letter “P” and a number to protect their identities. The name of the organization is also masked to maintain anonymity throughout the analysis of the findings.

The organization that was being studied has been in operation for over 60 years. Its main office is located in London, England, and its other core branches are based on an Island in the Caribbean. However, its south Florida office has been opened for over 10 years. Only two of the employees (P1 and P2) who participated in the study were transferees from the Caribbean. This means they were transferred from the Caribbean when this office was opened in South Florida. Their main purpose was to use their skills and experience from the Caribbean office to tailor this local office to best mirror the operations in the Caribbean. These two participants held management positions in the organization. The remaining participants had never worked in the Caribbean before.

This organization was chosen because there have been numerous issues regarding employee performance at work, which was reported to have fluctuated as time went by. Some employees’ performance would differ from time to time, but no clear understanding of the real reasons was ascertained. Additionally, customer service was affected during times of employees’ unusual behavior. Customer service is at the heart of what this organization offers, and thereby essential to the operations of the company due to strong competition. Thus, this study was necessary to better understand the underlying reasons for employees’ performance.
Participants Demographics

Table 1

Demographics

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<tr>
<th>Participant number</th>
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<td>Male</td>
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**P 1** – Single female manager, no children, with over 20 years experience in the same company. She transferred from Jamaica to lead the staff at this Florida location. She has no other work experience in any other company, as she was offered a position straight out of high school. She has been working there since. She has been a manager for over 10 years. She holds a Masters degree in Public Relations.

**P 2** – Single female supervisor with one child. She has 20 years experience in banking in various companies. She was relocated from Jamaica to take the position in Florida. She has worked in multiple banks in Jamaica, which has amounted to her years experience in banking. She is in process of completing her Bachelors degree.
P 3 – Married female with 2 children. She has 8 years experience in the banking industry in the United States and the Caribbean. She is the administrative assistant to the Manager. She has been working for the company for 5 years. She has an associate degree.

P 4 – Married female with 1 child. She has 10 years experience in banking and has held management positions before at other financial corporations. She has a bachelor’s degree and has held the same position since the office opened in Florida. She is currently a Mortgage Loan Officer.

P 5 – Married female with 1 child. This staff has 5 years experience in banking and working with foreign nationals from the Caribbean. Her work experience is completely based in the United States, as she has never worked internationally before. She is a Business Development Officer. She has a bachelor’s degree.

P 6 – Single female with 2 children. She has 9 years experience in banking. She has some supervisory experience in other companies. She is a Business Development Officer with a Bachelors Degree.

P 7 - Single female with no children. She has 12 years experience in banking. She is a Business Development Officer. She has a bachelors degree.

P 8 – Married male with 15 years experience in banking. He has a Bachelors degree and holds the position of Mortgage loan servicer. He has 2 children.

P 9 - Single male no children. He has 5 years in banking and holds a bachelors degree. He is a Customer service representative/Marketing representative.
P 10 – Single male with 1 child. He has 18 years experience in banking. He has a Masters degree and holds the position of Senior Marketing representative.

Findings

The study brought out a few themes based on the information that the participants gave. The themes that emerged are as follows:

1. Conflicts in intimate partner relationships are the number one type of personal lives conflict that affect the workplace.
2. Younger employees are more prone to having their personal lives conflicts affect their work performance.
3. Employees with personal lives conflict tend to spend more time on the cell phone, take more bathroom breaks and surf the Internet, all of which affects productivity.
4. Violent intimate partner conflicts affect work performance more than non-violent ones
5. Employees are reluctant to disclose their personal lives conflicts due to a lack of trust in management.
6. Employees who have never had conflict management training are less equipped with the skills needed to manage their interpersonal conflicts at work.

These findings emerged as a result of responses to most of the research questions. Some responses overlapped in the questions, as some participants responded with similar answers for different questions. This resulted as the participant developed their
responses; other thoughts were brought out even without the researcher motivating the specific response.

**Interview question 1**

*How would you describe a disturbance in workplace productivity?* Most of the participants had similar responses to this question. In general, they believed that a disturbance in productivity is experienced when employees prescribed duties are not done on time and the quality of the service or product is diminished. They also summarized that productivity is disturbed when there is a lack of inefficiency and tasks are not completed in due time. More details of these responses are given below.

**P 1.** “I think that first productivity is where a company is operating effectively and accomplishing all its tasks on time. When employees are working optimally and everything is in sync. Therefore, a lack of productivity of a disturbance in productivity is where there is no efficiency or not enough efficiency. So, if employees are not at work on time, if they don’t complete their duties on time, if employee don’t meet goals at the end of the month or year. In this company, I could say that it would be situation where the employees don’t complete files to be sent off to Jamaica on time, this might cause a delay in processing and of course could cause a loss in commission for that month. Everyone could be affected if the files are not completed because each of us play a different role in getting new customers, investors or maintaining existing customers. Therefore, I would say that when productivity is different in many companies but more or less the same fundamentally.”
**P 2.** “A workplace that is not productive is where workers don’t do their tasks properly or on time, they don’t get along with others at work, they don’t work as a team. I think a productive workplace should be a place where everyone is working for a specific goal and getting the job done on time and to the best quality. So anything other than would be unproductive or a disturbance in productivity at the workplace.”

**P 3.** “A productive workplace is definitely not this place. I think a disturbance in productivity is seen when people who work in an organization are working as a team, they are not unified and they don’t work to achieve a common goal. If the employees don’t complete tasks on time, or if there is a breakdown between management and employees, then that is a lack of productivity. When management and employees have conflicts or employees don’t agree with management and it is clear to everyone, then that is a disturbance in productivity because productivity should be the opposite so a disturbance is everything that is the opposite of what the workplace should be.”

**P 4.** “When there is no unified pattern of behavior among employees. For example, when employees do as they please or don’t come to work on time, don’t complete assignments on time, or when they have a nasty attitude at work, it causes everyone else to have a negative vibe. The negative vibe then cause everybody else to be less focused because they are aggravated or distracted by other employees’ behavior. Therefore, employees can’t perform the way they should in order to produce good quality work or service to customers.”
P 5. “A disturbance in productivity at work is where the job is not being done or not being done properly. When managers and employees are not unified, when there is a lack of quality in either service or production. Often times, employees don’t get along with management and this causes conflict at the workplace, which leads to a low level of productivity. Well, I believe that when you come to work, it shouldn’t matter if you get along with anyone; you are being paid to work so do your work. The bottom line is when things don’t get done on time and in the right way that it is suppose to, it means that the work you are being paid is not being done, so therefore, there is a disturbance in productivity.”

P 6. “I would say that a disturbance in productivity is when employees arrive to work late, when there is a lot of anxiety, aggression, lack of achieving targets on time. Unqualified staff, impolite staff and those who are not good at communicating with people or customers would be an example of a disturbance in productivity. When staff cannot present product well, or a lack of good representation of the company is also affects productivity. Those wasting time on the job to do things that are not related to the job is also a disturbance in productivity.”

P 7. “When employees are taking longer than normal to complete tasks or to get started with the job. A disturbance in productivity is also when you cant focus on the job, your mind wonders to a conflict or concern that is bothering you. If employees are not performing in the usual way that is negatively affecting the
outcome of the job then that is a disturbance in productivity, because if you are productive, then you would be doing ought to be done in the right way.”

P 8. “Not being efficient, not making profits for the company or making too little commission. If your performance is costing the company more money than usual, then there is a decrease in profits because of your performance so that should disturb productivity. The most important is meeting goal, if employees can’t meet the goals of the job then they are not productive.”

P 9. “A lack of attention, not focused on the job, doesn’t follow rules or complete tasks. If employees refuse to do important tasks and they are not behaving as if they are serious about the job, this is the opposite of productivity so that I think is a disturbance in productivity. Also, if the employees are constantly late or miss work, it causes them to be less productive because they have to try and make up for what they didn’t get to complete the days they were absent. If not, then other employees are forced to do their job and this takes away from what you have to do so either way, it make the workplace itself less productive. For example, at this job, if one member is out, another person has to do two jobs at the same time, but they are being paid to do only one, so they don’t do they job the way it should be done, they care little about it because they don’t want to do it. Even though the job affects us all, because we all need submit documents to Jamaica on time in order to complete the accounts within the time we promise customers. So when there is one person missing, it really changes the flow of work.”
P 10. “I believe anything that causes one to be distracted or unfocused during work hours is a disturbance. Whether it be undisclosed personal or family issues or an emergency of a relative, friend or spouse.”

Interview question 2

Can you explain your understanding of workplace productivity? The fundamental reason for this research question was grounded in the fact that participants might not fully understand the first question. To ensure that the question was actually understood, this research question presented an opposite view of the first question. Therefore, the answers to this question was aimed at identifying if the participants were providing answers to questions that were understood in the way they were intended. Most responses to this question were the opposite of the response to the previous one.

P 1. “Productivity in the workplace is an integrated system where information flow properly. If employees can access supervisors easily, speak directly to supervisor or management, then that workplace is productive. When all employees can information, when the leader is a good leader who set goals, and who is not distracted. When employees go to work on time.”

P 2. “Being able to do the job, to fulfill responsibilities, exceeds expectations and creativity. Accomplish goals and get things done in the way they are expected to.”

P 3. “Everyone knows what to do and are focused on the job. A workplace that has self directed staff that doesn’t need micro management.”
P 4. “A workplace where management guides employees, there is regular progress evaluation and supervision.”

P 5. “Employees interact with each other, all staff members get along and there is cohesion. Productivity is where everyone is working in accordance with schedule, interaction with management is good and employees can ask for help if they need. Management should be able to give advice or ideas and share thoughts.

P 6. “The opposite of the answer to the first question. Employees being at work on time, company achieving the desired profits, meeting goals and everybody getting along.”

P 7. “Productivity in the workplace is when all units of operation and departments are working in unison to achieve a specific goal. If employees achieve the desired goals, then there should be productivity.”

P 8. “No miscommunication between employees, everybody getting along, everyone understands each other’s role and duties. If there is a absent staff, that also affects the productivity of the workplace, so excellent attendance for work.”

P 9. “I believe that this is when an employee had his/ her full attention to the daily responsibilities they have on the job. Unaltered by any event which may cause stress or discomfort.”

Interview question 3

Do you believe factors outside the workplace can affect productivity in the workplace? If so, give some examples. (Follow-up) Which one do you believe is the number one factor? This research question brought out the first and third theme listed
above. Of the 10 participants, 8 responded by explaining that intimate conflicts within your intimate relationship at home is the number one factor that affects employees’ performance at work. These responses formed the first theme indicated above. The remaining two employees (P 9 and P 10) explained that finance and raising children are the number one factor respectively. There were certain specific responses that are worth mentioning verbatim as they indicate direct relationship to the theme. These include:

**P 1.** “There are certainly factors outside the workplace that affects performance. Most of the conflicts are related to family or financial issues. Sometimes people are stressed because they are unable to meet family’s needs due to financial difficulties, or because they have illness in the family, often times a close member such as mother or father. I believe that the number one factor that affects employees the most is when there is conflict between couples and they argue and fight. The employees often come to work very miserable or constantly using the cell phone to text and or go the bathroom very frequent to make short phone calls.”

**P 2.** “Yes, problems at home, in the family, if there is family illness or if someone dies, financial issues, or major events in family.”

**P 3.** “Yes, there are many factors that affect performance such as severe illness in the family, if a close family member is sick then employees might be worried and unable to concentrate. Also if there is a lack of finance and the bills start to pile, then that could increase stress in relationship and partners sometimes cheat, which also causes more stress in the relationship. The number one factor would be the
conflicts in relationships because your partner is the closest person to you who you share a lot of time with and devote lots of emotions to the relationship. When there are issues in the relationship, emotions rise and people sometimes act very crazy, even more emotional than they would if they have financial issues. So I think the relationship affects the performance at work more than the others.”

P 4. “Factors such as divorce, illness and cheating, could affect performance at work. The number one factor is cheating in relationships because, especially women, they try to find out about the person their partner is cheating with, they spend a lot of time on the computer investigating this person and texting their partner to argues or express their anger. They tend to be very distracted and are unable to concentrate on what ought to be done. They sometimes waste time surfing the Internet to keep their minds off the issues, but they don’t realize that they are unconsciously thinking about the problem. Because they can’t concentrate, surfing the Internet allows them to seem busy but they really aren’t.”

P 5. “Yes, conflicts with spouse, family illness, finance, and lack of sleep due to conflicts with partner and this increases the stress. Also you are tired more easily when you are stressed, so you cant perform at work. You are unable to complete tasks at work, very distracted by the phone because you are always on the phone texting or calling or waiting for responses.”

P 6. “Yes they do, relationships issues, family members being ill, finance, traffic patterns driving to work. I get so angry when I am stuck in traffic and it drains my energy when I get to work.”
P 7. “Yes, personal life does affect your performance, example, when small children are sick, family finance issues usually breathe aggression and tension in the home and then this is taken to the workplace.”

P 8. “Yes, finance is a major factor because when people can’t meet their financial obligations, they commit suicide, their morale is affected, people’s health become affected, they get heart attacks at other health related issues. People sometime quit because the stress is too much to balance work and personal life. When they quit, the company has to find new employees and train them, which takes time and money. Other issues such as relationship, divorce and general family illness affect the workplace too.”

Most of the responses to this question produced similar responses that all fell within theme (1) indicated above. The two participants (P9 and P10) gave somewhat different responses to the questions. They believe that it is finance and raising children that affects the performance at work more than anything else.

P 9. “When people are financially unstable, they are unable to make decisions that would bring happiness and peace of mind. So, they tend to be worried and stressed. This stress is then taken to the workplace and it affects their performance.”

P 10. “Mothers have a lot on their hands when there are children in the home. Many women find it difficult to manage the stress of raising children and the career at the same time, so they are often very stressed. They are sometimes tired when they go to work, and as a result, they can’t perform well. Also, the stress
from managing the children could lead to conflicts with the husbands and this is stress is taken to work indirectly.”

Interview question 4

Do you believe appraisals are effective? The responses to this question were all similar, as all participants believed that appraisals were effective but only if they are done correctly and in a timely manner. A summary of the responses is as follows:

P1. “Yes appraisals are effective but not 100%. However, they could lead to other discoveries. Sometimes supervisors tend to evaluate at that moment and ignore the other events over a period of time. They focus only on what is going in now but not what you before. Supervisors tend to lack the ability to take regular notes throughout the time to monitor the behavior so they often don’t have enough to say, except for what is happening now.”

P 2. “Yes, when the supervisor is people oriented, the evaluation is better because they try to understand the employees and not just see them as a body doing work. Since the supervisor makes the judgment, he or she should have people skills to correctly evaluate but often times they don’t, so the evaluation is not a true reflection of what is happening.”

P 3. “Yes because sometimes you don’t know that there are areas to improve so it is good, but it is not always done in the right way.”

P 4. “If they are done correctly, then they are effective. Often times they are done at the end of a period rather than ongoing. When it is done in an ongoing manner, you get a chance to chance what is wrong, rather than doing the same thing
constantly, because you need to wait until you are appraised at the end of a period, usually a year, before you can identify what is wrong. It should be about being mentored rather than being judged. This feeling of being judgment breeds resentment and stifles productivity.”

P 5. “I think it is useful but not the best option. It sometimes creates imbalance and breathes jealousy due to competition. It is only good if done properly, taking many factors into consideration.”

P 6. “Yes I think it is good, because I took my job seriously and based on my experiences, appraisals were useful.”

P 7. “Yes, but only if the evaluation is done properly, but if you don’t get incentive no one cares anyway so the evaluation is useless. If after the evaluation you don’t get any incentive or doing a good job, you are demotivated and you don’t care to work hard to do better.”

P 8. “It is generally useful if they employer or supervisor doesn’t use their personal feelings when doing it. If a supervisor does not like you, they might give you a bad evaluation, so then the evaluation is no good anyway.”

P 9. “I think they are useful but not 100% accurate.”

P 10. “I think they are effective for the most part.”

Interview question 5

Do you believe that men’s performance at work is more affected by personal lives conflict than women? The second theme was brought out by responses to interview question 5. Most participants believed that the age of the employee makes a difference,
rather than the mere gender. Many respondents reported that the older the employee, the less likely it is that the personal life stress will affect performance. Examples of these responses are as follows:

**P 1.** “Women are more emotional and exert more feelings that men. Men tend to be more rational and they hate drama.”

**P 2.** “Both men and women have the same level of stress in their personal lives but men are better at compartmentalizing their issues and as a result, they are less emotional and display less stress. However, it doesn’t mean that their performance is not affected. Men often focus less or make more frequent phone calls but they are less dramatic so it doesn’t seem as if they have stress at home. They can go out after work with friends and have a drink and release the stress, while the women hurry to go home after work to manage the home and children so they get less chance to resolve their issues outside the home.”

**P 3.** “Men can compartmentalize better than women so they show less emotions, but it doesn’t mean that their performance is not affected. They might be less focus but less vocal about their issues at home or simply show less stress on the outside. So it is hard to say that men are better at dealing with this issue simply because they don’t show emotions. They could be making a lot of mistakes but no one would know why because they try very hard to be tough and hide emotions.”

**P 4.** “I think there is no difference, the job is affected in different ways because men might not show a lot on the outside but they could be dying on the inside. Just the same way women lose focus, they could lose focus too, they might not
cry or act strange but they are affected too, just in a different way. It is more about the age of the employee than the gender. The younger you are, the more likely you are to have certain stress affect your job because you are less experienced with dealing with stress.”

P 5. “Men are better at managing their personal life stress at work, but they secretly suffer from their stress, but it is not evident because they are more secretive and they show less emotions. For management positions, it is better to hire someone who is older and a male, because they usually don’t have the same type of family life stress with relationships and so on. Usually at age 45 or older, they are married and settled, so they tend to cheat less and have less relationship issues, so they are more productive at work. When you are older, you are more experienced with personal life issues so you know how to manage your stress better at work. Both older men and women manage their conflict better when they are at work, but men are more serious so they are the best managers.”

P 6. “I don’t think there is a difference. Society thinks there is because men can hide their issues, but they are still less focused on the job, so there is no difference. What really makes a difference is the age of the employee. Younger employees are more distracted since they have many more difficulties settling down in jobs and in life in general. The process of settling down, buying a house, a car, raising children will cause you to be more stressed and you might not have enough experience at that point so your behavior towards stress is different at that age.”
P 7. “When you are at a certain age and have a limited amount of experience to be professional, you don’t know how to hide your conflicts well. It doesn’t mean you are not stressed, but it is how much of that stress you can hide. Men and women have the same level of stress so the gender is no difference, it is the age of the employee that counts.”

P 8. “No, it is the same. Depending on the person, if the man is the head of the household, then he is going to be more stressed if he can’t pay the bills and be a man. Relationship issues affect men and women the same. There are some men who are just as emotional as women, so it is not true that men are less stressed or manage personal stress at work better. Also, older people don’t really show stress a lot, they always seem to be so fine. It always seem as if the only stress older stress have is health, and that you cant hide, if you are sick, then you are sick.”

P 9. “I believe it is the same for men as it is for women. Men are said to be emotionally tougher than women, but this is a façade men perpetuate so as not to appear weak. However, men are just as susceptible to being emotionally disturbed resulting in compromised work performance. I think more so, the age has a lot to do with performance at work.”

Interview question 6

Do you believe that people whose work performance is affected by personal lives conflict are more or less educated than their co-workers? All but one participant believed that education makes a difference in how employees handle their personal life conflict at work. All others believe that there is no difference if the employee is educated
or not. For that reason, the answers were summarized to give a succinct analysis of the responses to this question.

P1, P2, P3, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9, and P10 – All participants stated “no” to this question.

P 4. “Yes education makes a difference in the way you behave at work. Less educated people show more stress at work because they are less professional. Professionalism comes with education as well, so the less educated you are, the greater the possibility that you are going to be less professional.”

Interview question 7

Do you believe that intimate partner conflict affects performance at work? If so, how? The third theme listed incorporated several research questions, including this one, as responses to many questions yielded the information in the theme. For quite a few questions, the respondents pointed out that employees with personal lives conflict tend to spend more time on the cell phone, take more bathroom breaks and surf the Internet, all of which affects productivity. All respondents mentioned at least one of the effects mentioned in their explanation of how personal lives conflict affect productivity in the workplace. Examples of these responses include:

P 1. “Yes, if employees are unhappy in their relationships, they might not be happy and they usually don’t perform effectively. The forget things, they are not focused, and they keep texting and making phone calls. For example if the woman is not satisfied I her relationship because she thinks she is not beautiful enough, she might consider plastic surgery. If she cant afford this, she might be
miserable with herself all the time and this affects the job, especially if a beautiful new employee comes in and start making improvements and everyone favor that new employee, jealousy might kick in and she becomes even more resistant to do a good job. I have experienced this before with staff. Women are jealous of other women who they perceive to look better than them, this then affects their relationship at home because they start demand money or material things from their husbands and that causes stress in the relationship.”

P2. “I can speak for myself, I have been to work on many occasions when I am stressed because of issues at have with my husband and I cannot function properly. I am on the edge all the time, if a customer calls about account details, I don’t spend the time to search for anything on the system, I simply tell the to call customer service toll free number. I sit at my computer and doodle most of the day. I cannot concentrate so I stare at the monitor or surf the Internet, sometimes I don’t even know what I am looking for. When the boss is walking around, I sometimes go in the bathroom more often to text or send voice notes.”

P3. “I always go shopping when I get stressed, then later regret the money I spend. When I am at work, I shop online to let the day pass because I cant concentrate. I made a huge mistake once when I had some problems with my boyfriend at home. A customer called to get information about an account and because I was not focused, I completely forget to ask for verification details, and I went into details giving account information to someone who is not on the account. The actual account holder came in the office and he was pissed, I
couldn’t tell the boss I was the representative he spoke to because that would have
cost my job. Instead, I made it seem as though the customer was assuming that
the person actually called the office. It was a major issue for us because we also
lost that customer and our commission was cut as well.”

P4. “I hate when I have to go to work while there are issues going on at home
with my husband. I remember when we had a big fight because I saw a purchase
of airline ticket on his account and he didn’t travel. Evidently, he was cheating.
We had minimal contact for about 3 months, no sex, no talking etc. It took a toll
on me, especially in the first 2 weeks. I drove to work everyday arguing in the car
until I reach the office. At the office, I would sit at my desk and think about it,
then suddenly get up and go to the bathroom and give him a call just to argue and
let the steam off. I think if I had some way to talk to others and get it out my
head, I would have gotten over it faster. My boss started noticing that I was very
angry and I told them I wasn’t feeling well because I have been going to bed late
and getting up early. Overall, it is not something that you can just tell your boss as
they will either laugh at you or criticize you for going crazy over a man.”

P 5. “Yes it does affect the way you perform at work. You are less focused, you
make lots of mistakes, and you stop from work more often.”

P 6. “Yes it does, if people have fidelity issues in their relationship, this can be
very disturbing when they go to work. They will be less focused on the job,
because they are busy trying to find out about the woman or the man that is
partner is cheating with. They spend a lot of time on the computer researching
about the person. Sometimes they spend time calling the person to get deeper understanding of the issue. Women tend to shop online to take their minds away from the issue. While they are shopping, they are wasting the company’s time and productivity is low.”

**P 7.** “Yes it does affect performance. Employees take more time off from work to have issues settled, they are more aggressive at work, they spend more time on the cell phone, texting and communicating. They also surf the Internet instead of doing work at their desks. While they surf the Internet, they often shop as well, then later regret it. But in general, they can’t perform the way they are expected to perform, customer service is low, their energy is low and the attitude is usually high.”

**P 8.** “Yes, they are less focused, they are less accurate, they are slower, they can’t multi-task, and they usually have a nasty attitude or just don’t care about anything. The profits shouldn’t get affected because you can do extra work and make up for what was lost in other days. However, if more than one employee is going through the same issue at the same time, then it might affect profit, so only the quantity of employees and the length of impact affects productivity.”

**P10.** “My wife found out that I cheated on her and my life was hell after that. In the beginning, I would go to work and she would text me all day. I am never usually on my phone much at work, but for that period, it was crazy. It was the first time we had ever had such major issue so I never saw my wife behave like that before. This was new for me and I didn’t handle it well. My co-workers
didn’t know I had issues but I was dying inside. I tried to hide every hint of it but
doing so was even more difficult than dealing with the problem itself. I sat at my
computer and surf the Internet casually.”

**Interview question 8**

**Does the type of relationship (heterosexual or same sex) makes a difference in the type of intimate partner conflict that exists?** The responses to this question were all the same. All 10 participants responded “no” to this question. P1-P10 – There is no difference between gender and the type of intimate partner conflict they have.

**Interview question 9**

**Do you think management should be concerned with personal lives conflict and its impact at work? If so, how do you think it should be handled?** This study revealed that management should be concerned with personal lives conflicts. Most of the participants believed that management should care about this because the impact could severely affect the workplace. The manager of that company however, believed that it is not the responsibility of management to resolve employees’ personal conflicts. The examples of participants below indicate the overall tone of participants towards this question.

**P 1.** “It is good if management could care a little more about personal lives conflicts, but in reality, businesses are set up to make profits, and anything that prevents that from happening is seen as a threat to the business. This is the reason management pay little or no attention to personal lives issues. If employees can’t figure out their own problems, it shouldn’t be the responsibility of the business to
fix their problem. If management starts fixing everyone’s problems, when will they have time to focus on the business? Also, if everyone has different problems, how do we individually fix each issue? If an employee can’t fix their own problem, then they are not fit to work, it is simple.”

P 2. “Yes they should be concerned. If an employee behavior is too distracting, then their behavior distracts others too. They should probably ask if everything is ok and offer help. If help is refused, then that could create severe problems. The supervisor could sit with the employee and explain how their behavior is affecting the business or the company. They could probably give a timeline to fix the problems. Some people don’t like to show weakness so they don’t like to talk to their boss about their personal issues even though it affects their job. SO it is difficult to fix the issue, but this is something that not many people think about even though it is so severe.”

P 3. “Yes management should be concerned about this, they should be more accepting that conflicts affect work and be more supportive. The fact that management has shifted to include more women, the family is now more a part of the organization. Before, men held the top positions predominantly, so the family was not a major concern. However, management should now understand that society has changed and they need to accommodate that change. They need to figure out ways to assist employees who have personal issues. Probably they could offer therapy, training sessions, or paid time off from the job.”
P 4. “Yes because it affects profits. Management should try to support them in any way they can. They could probably offer flexi-time or money so they can pay for therapy. I think management should offer special arrangement for children too. Probably employees could have a day care at the workplace so they have at least one less stress to leave work and hurry to pick up children. This can cause a lot of stress because when employees are already stressed with managing their relationship issues, the last thing they want is to deal with children when they are so stressed. Supervisors need to find a way to talk to employees and find out how they can help.”

P 5. “Yes, it does affect performance in a major way. The company should offer time off to allow employees to resolve their issues. They could also use outside professionals to offer therapy or counseling to employees who need it. However, this is possible only if the supervisor has a good relationship with the staff. Having good management in the position is the only solution to this problem. The managers who ignore this are supposed to seen as being inept or incompetent, because personal live conflicts are so stressing that it is almost impossible to not affect the workplace. It is so interesting that for so many years, we operate the same way by ignoring the impact of these issues, yet the suffers tremendously from these issues. It is as if management does not learn.”

P 6. “Yes they should think about how the employees’ personal life affect the business. But this is difficult too, because even if they know something is wrong, they might not be able to fix it. However, I think they don’t care enough, so
employees just continue without trying to get help from the company. They just think it will pass and that’s the way it has been for decades. Management really need to figure out to help employees who need assistance though, because when employees have personal problems and come to work, they drain everybody’s energy, and that is not good. It takes too much out if you to either ignore the attitude of your co-worker or to try to find out what is wrong, without them realizing that you are doing that. The time it takes to be so distracted could be used on doing more productive things.”

P 7. “Yes, leaders need to be involved in how employees feel since it affects their performance. They need to try and listen as well as propose solutions. If the employees don’t want to talk then the manager or supervisor could wait a while to see if the emotions might disappear or ask for external help. Some employees might not feel comfortable discussing this with the supervisor because they don’t trust them or because they don’t feel they will be helpful at all.”

P 8. “Yes they should be aware, that’s why they don’t hire couples, because it affects work performance. It depends on the severity of the problems, if it is just a regular fight then it shouldn’t matter much. If it is a divorce then they should offer counseling. Companies should invest in this because it affects them too.”

P 9. “I believe this should be a concern of theirs, as their employees are also human and are subject to changes in mood which may affect overall productivity. These changes may very well be detrimental to their ability to concentrate on their tasks.”
Interview question 10

Do you think personal lives conflicts are handled well in your organization?

Most participants had similar responses as it relates to how well personal lives conflicts are handled at their job. They all believed that it is not handled well and listed a few reasons to support their claims. They indicated that management is not trained or skilled enough to deal with the magnitude of the issue, they also mention that management don’t care, and employees don’t trust their superior so the issue has never been brought to the table. There is an unstated agreement with the employees and the company, so employees understand that they shouldn’t look to management to offer any assistance.

Below are quotes to support this information.

P 1. "It is difficult to access that because management tries to stay out of the employees’ personal lives. In doing so, we expect employees to resolve their issues and be able to separate their personal lives from work. This doesn’t mean that an employee might not come to work and feel stressed or have an attitude, but they are expected to balance that issue and work at the same time. Imagine all employees come to work with their issues and management is supposed to find ways to fix these issues, there would be no productivity at all."

P 2. "No it is not handled well at all. Because I have experience in other companies, I know what it should be or how things should be, so I can compare. There are some things that I agree with and some I don’t. There are some people here who have personal problems and no one knows. I understand that not everyone can keep everything inside, so some employees will show more
emotions that others. However, I think it is equally management’s responsibility as well as the employees’ to ensure that their personal lives conflicts don’t interfere with the job. Since management has goals and expects employees to meet their goals, they should also understand that there are things in life that will present challenge to us achieving goals. These things are sometimes out of our control, being human comes with different challenges.”

P 3. “No, they try not to get involved. They should get involved to a certain extent. I don’t expect that the employees will tell them everything, but the supervisors should try to at least try and offer assistance whenever they can. They should offer private counselors. Probably they should first start by establishing good relationships with employees. They could also suggest employee training to agents that are provided by the company. Some boss, when they find out that you have personal issues that affect your job, they talk to you and give you a time frame to fix the problem. If you don’t fix it within that time, then they threaten to fire you. But the fact that they talk to you and give a time, that is a sense of threat to your job, because you feel as if they reprimand you when they do that. Therefore, either way, if they give you a time frame or not, it’s like a warning rather than a type of assistance. They need to find better ways to approach this problem, because they get affected too; I guess they don’t see this. Not until they realize that the business suffers as well, they won’t try to help fix this issue. Even that might be a problem too because there are more employees than jobs today, so they will always have the option to get rid of you fast, since there is always a
replacement waiting. I guess only the economic of the society can change this cycle.”

P4. “No, I don’t think so.”

P 5. “No, most companies don’t care about these things. They believe that it is unnecessary to fix employees’ personal lives. They think this is something that companies should do on their own. They prefer to replace employees because it is easier”

P 6. “No, it is the worst I have ever seen. Management has no interest in employees. There is a lack of experience in senior management, as she has never worked in this position in other companies before. Also, the HR component is non existent, so the soft skills necessary are not present. “

P 7. “To some extent, yes. Management has tried to help employees by asking what is wrong to help resolve the issue. Most times employees don’t want to talk about it, so there is not much they can do at that moment.

P 8. “I don’t think so, I believe that there is more that can be done about it. Management can take more responsibility to help employees who have issues, especially since this matter affects the business to. Management’s idea is to replace, but is going to happen when they have depleted their resources? When there is no more employee that is skilled enough to fit the spot, are they going to take anyone and try to create a miracle to make it work?”

P 9. “No, I don’t see how management help me when I have personal issues that affect my job. The only help they provide is to warn you about your performance,
but I still have the issues inside and it affects me mentally. They think it is all
good and well, but I only act normal to protect my job, but when it gets too bad, I
sometimes take a vacation to cool off.”

P 10. “To an extent, it’s a tough question because sometimes when you have
tough problems, like intimate problems, the supervisor is afraid to step in and ask,
as well as the supervisor might be given strict rules from management to keep out.
So probably not entirely handled well, but there is an attempt.”

Interview question 11

Do you feel comfortable to discuss personal lives conflict with your
supervisor? Most of the participants stated that they don’t feel comfortable discussing
their personal life with their supervisor. They had similar responses to the question and
they believed that one of the reason there is conflict at the workplace is because there is a
lack of trust among management and employees. However, the manger also felt that she
would not feel comfortable discussing her personal life with her superior because they
might think less of her. Below are samples of their responses:

P 1. “I would not discuss my personal life or personal issues with my boss. Well
there is a difference because my boss is in another country. He is not here to see
if I am angry today or upset because I have personal issues. But, I can see the
issues with other employee because I am their boss, and I work in the same office
with them. Also, my boss is a male, and if I had personal issues, it would not be
most comfortable thing to do. I think you should not take your personal life to
work, period.”
P 2. “I think the company tries to accommodate employees with issues but they are not doing a good job at it. Some employees don’t feel comfortable going to talk to the manager, probably because they fear her response might not be the solution. I wouldn’t go because I think it wouldn’t help. If I am caught being angry and acting weird, and they demand that I speak about, I probably would, but I would not just go on my own.”

P 3. “No, there is a lack of trust and integrity. If this were different, I would expose a lot more of me and feel motivated to do so, and motivated to work.

P 4. “In my other job I did, but not here. I don’t fell comfortable because I think I would be criticized for having my personal issues affect my job, rather than being helped.”

P 5. “No, I don’t feel comfortable. But it doesn’t mean that if they offer to pay for therapy or counseling I wouldn’t take it.”

P 6. “Yes, I probably would talk about it if it is very bad and affecting my performance at work. If my boss threatens me to fire me because my personal issues are affecting my job, then I guess I would think about the risk of losing my job in that case. If there is no threat of losing my job, and no one is probing me to discuss it, it would definitely not.

P 7. “I guess not, especially the fact that my boss is a female and they tend to be very judgmental and jealous of other women.”

P 8. “I don’t think many people would want to discuss their personal issues with their boss even if these issues are affecting their job. For me, I wouldn’t because I
feel as though it wouldn’t help. If I need help to fix my problems, it wouldn’t come from my immediate boss. She is not trained to manage personal issues, I am sure she has some of her own. I think it is too risky to discuss those things with your boss or supervisor. Its better if they assume what is wrong rather than you telling them what is wrong.”

P 9. “No, I wouldn’t feel comfortable at all.”

P 10. “No.”

Interview question 12

Do you think the non-violent types of personal lives conflict affect performance more than violent conflicts? Of all the participants, one participant believed that both violent and non-violent types of intimate partner conflict affect the individual the same way. The other 9 participants responded by indicating that the violent conflicts affect the individual more. For those participants who believed that the violent type of conflict affects the employees’ performance more than non violent, they also believed that the main reason for that is the fact that there is physical suffering and pain as a result of violent conflicts in their relationships.

On the other hand, the participant who believed that there is no difference explain the following:

P 6. “People might think that because the conflict is violent, it has to be more severe. They don’t understand that he mental pain that is caused by non-violent conflict is just as bad as the physical or even worse at times. When you go to the hospital and get treated for physical pain, the bruises can disappear. When you
have mental scars that haunt you for life, there is no easy fix to that. There are lots of women that have never been hit by a man, and they severe mental issues that affect them throughout their life. Just the same for women who have been beaten by their spouse, these types of abuse cause them to lose focus at work as well, but to assume that the physical scars hurt more than the mental ones is a bad judgment. That is the reason we have so many issues in workplace today, because people think that there are only certain issues that should be mentioned, and as a result, they pay little attention to things that are very bad.”

Interview question 13

How many years of experience do you have working in this industry? The responses to this question is grouped in the table that describes the background information for all participants in the study. The table details the years of experience in the industry, the level of education, and the position of each participant in the current job.

Interview question 13

Have you ever had conflict management training at work or for your own personal gain? None of the participants have ever had conflict management training before at any of their jobs. Most employees were not aware of the concept of conflict management training. They all mentioned that they have had organizational development training, and the government in the country in which the company is based mandates this training, and as a result, the process is adopted here in the United States. The organizational development training that they have received does not include conflict management or ways to reduce or manage conflicts that occur in the workplace.
Summary

Chapter 4 provided an overview of the responses to the interview questions. The responses derived from interview questions that were semi-structured. The research was conducted using face-to-face interviews that allowed for follow-up questions. The reporting was divided into two parts: themed responses and specific questions responses. Therefore, the first section focused on the questions that led to the themes mentioned. The second section focused on how those responses relate to the research questions. These two categories provided the avenue for the researcher to categorize the responses in terms of the theme that they formed as well as how they related to the specific question that was asked to produce such response. To guide the findings, the researcher used the research questions to frame the direction of the responses. The next chapter will examine the various meanings that have derived from the findings and identify their relation to the research questions that guided the study.
Chapter 6: Discussion, Recommendation and Conclusion

The main aim of this research was to examine the various types of personal lives conflicts and how they affect performance at work. To get the understanding of this phenomenon, the research was done with 10 participants who all work for the same company and have had work experience for more than 2 years. This chapter will outline the responses of those participants in detail by emphasizing their understanding of the questions as well as how they feel personal lives conflicts affect them or others on the job.

This chapter will also focus on the implications of the findings and suggest possible future research to remedy the issue. To better analyze the findings, the researcher will use the three main questions that guided this study. These include:

1. Do personal lives affect productivity in workplaces?
2. Do conflicts related to intimate relationships affect productivity in workplaces?
3. To what extent does intimate partner conflict affect productivity?

The research questions were analyzed based on the responses that each participant gave in relation to the questions. As such, each question will be used to guide the remainder of this section, as well as the themes that were identified. The responses that are related to each question will therefore be the focus of this analysis to highlight the main point of the research.
Theme 1

Conflicts in intimate partner relationships are the number one type of personal lives conflict that affect the workplace.

Research Question 1

Do personal lives affect productivity in workplaces?

Interview Questions that Guided the Research

1. Do you believe factors outside the workplace can affect productivity in the workplace? If so, give some examples. Which do you think is the number one factor that affects employees’ performance?

2. Do you believe that intimate partner conflict affects performance at work? If so, how?

Of the 10 participants, all believed that personal lives conflict does affect productivity in the workplace. When participants were asked this question, they didn’t hesitate to think about their responses, which indicates that this was not a new topic to them. To convince the researcher that the question was understood, there were follow up questions that alluded to their definition of the concept of personal lives conflict. Even though their definition differed somewhat, considering their choice of words, the meaning was still the same. They all believed that someone’s personal life affect their work performance. Additionally, their concept of what productivity is was also similar in meaning. This therefore provided more evidence that the question was understood in the manner it was intended to.
The follow up questions also provided more support to the understanding of this question as well as created one of the themes that emerged from this study; do you believe factors outside the workplace can affect productivity in the workplace? If so, give some examples. (Follow-up) Which one do you believe is the number one factor? The responses to the follow-up question indicated that the number one type of personal lives conflicts that cause a disturbance in performance at work is intimate partner conflict. The participants described a number of personal lives conflicts that cause employees to be less productive at work. These include, family illness, finance, children, and most important, relationship issues.

**Connection to Previous Studies**

Though these examples of the types of personal life conflicts are specific to the participants in the study, some of these examples were also brought out by other research in similar areas. Going back to pervious studies, Jeweks (2002) pointed out a number of sources of intimate partner conflicts, which does include poverty. Poverty in that case is synonymous with what is described by the participants of this as “finance.” Despite this research being internationally, and among a very limited demographics group (blacks and poverty ridden), there are still similarities between the studies’ findings, as it relates to the causes of personal lives conflicts, and in particular, those conflicts associated with intimate partner relationships.

**Family Illness**

To further dissect these responses, 8 out of 10 participants stated that when there is family illness, the employee could be at work very worried and nervous, but it usually
affects them more if the family member is an immediate or extremely close family member. Also, 3 out of those 8 reported that the stress of going to the doctor or hospital could take a toll on anyone very easily. This stress is then reflected in the employee’s performance at work and by extension their productivity. P 3 stated, “When my son was very ill and had to do surgery, I was nervous at work and couldn’t concentrate. The stress of going to the doctors and hearing the sad news was difficult. Worse, the cost of the surgery, especially since we had no insurance made me angry because I think it was overpriced.”

The job position of the employee didn’t make a difference in the responses to these questions. Simply put, the management staff as well as support staff indicated no difference in the way they perceive the effect of personal lives conflicts and its impact on the workplace. Considering all other factors such as qualification and marital status, none of those impacted the results of these questions as the responses were all the same more or less.

**Finance**

All 10 participants reported that finance could be major issue in the home and this could lead to stress that is often taken indirectly to the job. The participants mentioned that the inability to cover bills and expenses in our daily lives could severely impact our behavior when we interact with others. Giving that we spend a huge amount of time at work, our interaction with others is inevitable. To be more precise P 2 reported that “finance issues could also cause problems in the relationship or marriage and that could be very toxic for work.” Giving that all participants gave similar responses, the
demographics, education, and work experience of those in the study was not significant or affected the way they perceive finance as a threat to workplace productivity.

**Children**

To reiterate, 7 out of 10 participants have children. All the participants who have children stated that the stress of raising children could affect your performance at work. However, they stated that these issues are usually present in women, as they are the caregivers in most cases. On the other hand, only 1 of the 3 participants who do not have children didn’t mention that raising children could lead to changes in performance at work. This 1 participant - P1 is single, she lives alone, and has no children. This was worth noting, as the others, even those who have no children, were either married or lived with someone. Therefore, the perception of the factors that affect performance at work could be different based on the marital status as well as the relationship status. This fact is also important to consider given that the participant who never thought of this as a factor was also the manager of the branch.

**Relationship**

Only 1 participant never reported that intimate partner relationship conflict could affect an employee’s performance at work. Again, this one employee was the manager (P1). All others mentioned that conflicts in your relationship at home could affect you at work. Education and experience never appeared to have made any difference, as P1 was not the only employee with a Masters degree. However, she was the only participant who is single, lives alone and has no children.
**Number 1 Factor That Affects Performance at Work**

All the participants who mentioned relationship as a factor, all reported that intimate partner conflict is the number one cause because it is more severe and lead to more emotional disturbance than any other type of personal live conflict. The common explanation is that your spouse is the person you see everyday at home. Thus, you tend to be closer to this person and more emotions are involved as opposed to having issues with a family who does not live with you. Also, the fact that you share your with this person leads to more attachment that breathes more possibility for conflicts to arise.

**Theme 2**

Younger employees are more prone to having their personal lives conflicts affect their work performance.

**Research Question 2**

Do conflicts related to intimate relationships affect productivity in workplaces?

**Interview Questions that Guided the Research**

1. Do you believe that intimate partner conflict affects performance at work? If so, how?
2. Does the type of relationship (heterosexual or same sex) make a difference in the type of intimate partner conflict that exists?
3. Do you think the non-violent types of personal lives conflict affect performance more than violent conflicts?
For this theme, there were overlapping questions that provided insight for both the 2nd and the 3rd research question. Nonetheless, the responses provided the researcher with the guide needed to complete the study. Overall, all participants answered yes to this question, even those who did not mention it in the previous questions, that asked for the types of conflicts that affect work performance. Based on the responses to the questions so far, and the research questions as well, it is evident that all participants who are working in this company acknowledge that personal lives conflicts can affect work performance. More specifically, intimate partner conflict is realized by all, as a factor that affects productivity in the workplace. However, they believed that if the intimate partner conflict is violent (domestic abuse), it affects the performance at work far more than it would, had it been a simple argument.

Not only is intimate partner conflict a factor to consider, but it has also been recognized as the number one factor that affects productivity based on these participants’ perceptions. The participants also provided some examples of their own experience that has led to their performance being below standards. The responses indicated that both married and unmarried employees have experienced intimate partner conflict at home and how it has affected their performance at work.

The sexual orientation of the employee was not reported as a factor that would affect the employee more or less when there is intimate partner conflict. However, none of the employees reported that they were gay or bisexual; therefore, all these perspectives came from people of the same sexual orientation. Thus, using a sample of straight men and women would be enough to determine if sexual orientation is a factor in general, but
it does indicate that productivity issues that this company face is not a result of intimate partner conflicts among gay or bisexuals.

The responses that were garnered from these interview questions also led to other findings. 7 out of 10 participants, including the manager of the branch reported that age plays a major role in how personal lives conflicts are managed. Based on the responses, the younger you are, the more likely you are to have relationship issues, giving that you are in the process of building a foundation and the relationship hasn’t been fully developed as yet. As a result, it is likely that the conflict at home with your spouse could affect your performance at work.

The manager (P1) noted that her experiences working in Jamaica with more senior people was a lot different from her experiences working in South Florida in the same company, but with a younger population. Even though the younger employees agreed that age plays a role in how the conflict is managed at work, they never compared the difference between working with an older population versus a younger population.

**Connection to previous studies**

From the other studies that were mentioned in the literature review, none of them mentioned the factor of age as it relates to this topic. The previous studies predominantly mentioned intimate partner violence and its impact on the workplace, ignoring the non-violent aspect of conflicts. None of the previous studies in this field revealed age as a factor that affects the way in which conflict is handled or managed. Therefore, this research has revealed issues that are important to consider when analyzing the issue of intimate partner conflict and the impact on work performance.
Theme 3

Employees with personal lives conflict tend to spend more time on the cell phone, take more bathroom breaks and surf the Internet, all of which affects productivity.

Research Question 3

To what extent does intimate partner conflict affect productivity?

Interview Questions that Guided the Research

Do you believe that intimate partner conflict affects performance at work? If so, how?

The first part of this question was addressed in the theme preceding this one. However, the second portion of the question that asks how intimate partner conflict affects performance at work has brought out some key points in this research. All the participants gave examples of how they thought performance would be affected. The ones that were common among most participants have been identified as frequent bathroom breaks, more time on cell phones and surfing the Internet.

Some participants mentioned that employee’s inability to meet goals due to lack of focus also affect the entire branch, as a part of their salary is based on commission and yearly bonuses. Additionally, 2 participants discussed the fact that there is conflict that has not been “brought to the table.” As a result, they have not been addressed. However, both participants pointed out that they believe the conflicts haven’t been resolved because their root cause lies in their personal life and this is too delicate to discuss at work.

One participant (P2) recalled herself surfing the Internet without a specific reason, simply because she was not able to focus. Also, she pointed out that there have been
instances that she knows for a fact when other employees are affected by intimate partner conflict and their behavior changes at work. She mentions of her observation of this fellow staff member, which includes the co-worker constantly going to the bathroom to make phone calls and send text messages. She hoes a bit further by discussing the numerous times she has been to the bathroom and over-hears that co-worker arguing on the phone with her partner. Then after she returns from the bathroom, the co-worker would be very abrupt when talking to customers and often make mistakes when completing transactions.

P2 also explained that there are sales targets that have to be met on a monthly basis that are often affected by employees lack of focus due to personal lives conflicts. However, she made it clear that not all the conflicts can be proven to be a result of intimate partner conflict, but she is positive that there are many instances when customers or transactions are not handled well and this results in further issues that affect all staff members.

Overall, the responses indicate that a part of the conflict that exist in the workplace is as a result of employees being affected by their personal lives conflict while they are at work. This affect leads to other employees criticizing others, which further breathes conflict. In general, customers wait longer if they are being assisted by an employee who is not focused, the service is less than the standard it ought to be, and targets are not met. Given the nature of their job, customer service is at the core of what they do. Therefore, a very productive workplace would be one in which there is minimal or no disturbance is customer service, or targets that ought to be met.
Connection to previous studies

In Le Blanc and Barling (2014) study, it was reported that employees tend to spend a great deal of time on the cell phone and surfing the Internet. These behavior traits found in the participants are similar to those traits found in the participants from this study. However, Le Blanc and Barling (2014) study was conducted in a larger group using phenomenology, while this research was conducted in a qualitative form, using a single case study approach. Nonetheless, the similarities that were yielded from both studies indicates that the effects of personal lives conflicts affect many employees in different categories and positions in workplaces in many different parts of the world. Also, the fact that this study was conducted using participants who work in a specific industry, which is different from the other studies that is being compared to, is a also an indicator that the type of job or industry does not play a major role in determining the impact of personal lives conflicts on workplace productivity.

Theme 4

Violent conflicts in intimate relationships affect workplace performance more than non-violent conflicts in intimate relationships.

Research Question

To what extent does intimate partner conflict affect productivity?

Interview Question

Do you think the non-violent types of personal lives conflict affect performance more than violent conflicts?
Based on the responses in this research, the analysis revealed that employees at the site being studied perceive violent types of conflicts as more of a threat than non-violent conflicts. For these employees, when there is physical evidence of a conflict, the burden of coping with the conflict is greater. All but one employee believed this to be true. As a result, they believe that management tends to put less focus on the issue unless an employee goes to work with physical bruises and scars that are evident of intimate partner conflicts. To reiterate this fact, the manager emphasized that it is not the duty of the organization to fix employees personal lives and if employees are unable to fix their lives, then they should not be working there. However, she was also quick to point out that she would ask an employee what is wrong, should they turn up to work with physical bruises. In that case, the need for help or concern is only yielded when there is physical or violent conflict.

**Connection to previous studies**

This phenomenon is also brought out in previous studies that were conducted using different methodological approaches. In most of the studies mentioned in the literature review, the focus was placed on violent types of intimate partner conflicts. More specifically, they focused more on domestic violence rather than non-violent types of intimate partner conflict. This connection provides added evidence that management is more concerned with violent types of conflict than non-violent ones. Therefore, the fact that management is believed to have little or no care at all about employees’ personal lives, the only thing that would make them care is if there is evidence of violence.
Theme 5

Employees are reluctant to disclose their personal lives conflicts due to a lack of trust in management.

Research Question

To what extent does intimate partner conflict affect productivity in the workplace?

Interview Question

Do you think personal lives conflicts are handled well in your organization?

Most of the participants believed that there is a lack of trust and thereby explains the reluctance of employees to disclose their personal lives conflicts on the organization. The reluctance they have is based on a variety of factors. They believe that the fact that their manager is a female, there is a potential for their disclosure to cause a lot more harm, as they fear she might discuss their personal life issues with others, causing embarrassment. Also, the fact that the manager is adamant about employees managing their own personal life issues, this has presented the impression that she would not be interested in assisting, but rather criticize them.

For the male participants, they believed that it would be uncomfortable for them to disclose simply because of the difference in gender. They would be perceived as the weak gender and that would disable their image as a real man in the eyes of a woman. Also, they believe that if management is not skilled or qualified enough to handle these issues in a professional manner, then disclosure would simply result in harm than good.
This theme was formed as a result of trying to answer the fundamental questions to the research and leads to other connection with previous studies.

**Connection to previous studies**

Similar to this study, other studies conducted pointed out that a lack of trust does lead to reluctance of disclosure. Kaufman, Thiagarajan, and MacGillis (1997) points to performance improvement in the workplace. In doing so they alluded to the fact that one of the main issues in managing performance is the time in which it is done. Cokin (2004) also reported similar findings and claims that “performance information is typically reported too late, is too financially weighted, and is not predictive (p.46). For these authors, performance specialists tend to start work only after he problem has been identified, thereby being reactive than proactive. They also stressed that employees work best in environments that foster trust. Hence, employees with personal conflicts may not disclose to their employers or staff members if there is a perceived lack of trust. This then extends to the issue of low performance, as the issue remains unresolved (Kaufman, Thiagarajan, and MacGillis, 1997). Swanberg and Macke (2006) also pointed to a lack of trust in workplace. The greatest highlight of this is the fact that these studies were all conducted in a quantitative form, which provides a good source of comparison, as this research was conducted in a qualitative form, measuring the same phenomenon.

**Theme 6**

Employees who have never had conflict management training are less equipped with the skills needed to manage their interpersonal conflicts at work.
**Research Question**

To what extent does intimate partner conflict affect productivity in the workplace?

**Interview Question**

Have you ever had conflict management training at work or for your own personal gain?

None of the participants had ever received conflict management training. As a result, there is a lack of skill set that is necessary for them to effectively manage their conflicts. Some employees have never even heard of conflict management training. They did agree that they received professional development training but not conflict management training. This theme is an indicator that one reason there is low productivity at this organization is as a result of the inability of both staff and management to manage conflicts effectively. Notwithstanding the fact the management sees personal lives conflicts as a non-organizational concern; the need for conflict management training is even more obscure than it should be.

**Connection to other studies**

The previous studies showed no indication of training provided to employees or management, to help manage conflicts at the workplace. The fact that employees are not skilled to manage these issues, it would be a good start for management to invest in conflict management training for all staff across all levels and departments. However, like this study, many of the previous cases revealed that employees did receive
organizational development training, that emphasized procedures and policies for the organization.

The diagrams below summarize the main tenets of the case study by pointing to the themes, the research questions and how they were answered. The diagrams also emphasize the behavior patterns of employees when they experience personal lives conflicts at work. The theoretical explanations are also included to solidify the main findings of the case study.

Figure 1. Matrix
Figure 2. Research Themes

- Employees spend more time on cell phones, internet and take more bathroom breaks.
- Employees are reluctant to disclose.
- Intimate partner relationship #1.
- Younger employees are more affected by personal lives conflicts.
- Violent conflicts at home affect employees more than non-violent ones.
- Employees not trained to manage conflicts.

Rational Choice Theory
- Employers choose not to invest in personal lives conflicts.
- Employers choose not to disclose their personal life conflicts.

Maslow Heirarchy of Needs
- Employees not motivated due to unmet needs.
- Major unmet needs: Job security and Trust.

Symbolic Interaction
- Employees perceive trust and care as symbolic.
- Employers perceive personal life conflict as a threat to productivity.

Figure 3. Theoretical Relevance
Discussion

Based on the responses to the questions, it appears as though there is latent conflict at this organization and it is identified by some of the employees. The employees are all experienced staff members who have been working in the field of finance or banking for a number of years. Therefore, a lack of work experience is not a factor to be considered in analyzing the case. All participants were well aware of what productivity is and how it can be affected. They pointed to a number of issues that could possibly cause a disturbance in productivity, but also identified the main cause or the most notable cause to be intimate partner conflict or conflict – conflict that occur in intimate partner relationships. To go a bit further, none of the participants have ever had conflict management training at work or on their personal time.

Despite the fact that all participants were aware of the effects of intimate partner conflict, the support staff, those not included in the two-management staff strongly believed that management ignores the effect of intimate partner conflict and how it affects productivity. Additionally, it is believed that the current conflicts that arise at the workplace are somehow partially as a result of intimate partner conflict taken to the workplace indirectly.

They also pointed out that there is a lack of trust and between support staff and management. As a result, employees are reluctant to discuss their personal issues with the manager or even try to seek assistance from the company. This issue of trust is not unique to this organization, as Kaufman, Thiagarajan, and MacGillis (1997) pointed out similar issues in their studies conducted. Due to the fact that employees are not
comfortable disclosing their personal lives, they often take a few days off if they can, or they go to work and leave early, using the excuse that they are sick. This trend of absenteeism or early departure from work is similar to those views expressed in previous research captioned in the literature review. For example, Le Blanc and Barling (2014) pointed out that absenteeism and withdrawal from work were two of the main findings of their research. Despite the fact that this research was done in a quantitative manner, it still yielded the same results.

**Theoretical Relevance**

**Maslow’s theory of motivation**

The lack of trust forces employees to manage the conflicts on their own, which clearly isn’t the best option. On the other hand, the manager pointed out that she believes conflicts are not handled well, but she doesn’t think that anything can be done to remedy this issue, as people cannot be forced to talk about their issue. Additionally, she mentions that her best solution would be to force employees to talk about it or to seek assistance outside the workplace. If they are unable to do these two things, then she believes that termination is the best option, as keeping the employee on staff would simply dwarf the team. However, she never mentions the option of the company providing assistance to staff. This is probably as a result of the manager’s own belief that employees should be equipped to manage their own conflicts.

As afore mentioned, employees are not motivated to disclose based on the lack of trust that permeate the organization. Maslow’s explanation of motivation highlights how important it is for employees to achieve the various levels of motivation in order to be
self-actualized. For this theory, self-actualization is only possible if all needs are met (Maslow, 1943). In this organization, employees find it difficult to self-actualize, as the need for security is absent. Simply put, the theory points out that employees have the need for security, which in this case, is job security. The employees feel as though their needs are not considered, as management is quick to terminate them if their performance is affected by their personal lives conflicts.

**Rational Choice theory**

Rational choice theory is a sociological theory that is fundamentally based on the principles of economics (Browning, Halcli and Webster, 2000). The theory rests on the premise that people are rational when they calculate their decisions. The decisions are considered rational because individuals examine the cost versus the benefits of the decision being made. As a result, they tend to make decisions that are more economically beneficial to them. Therefore, the interaction between members of society is characterized by the ideals of exchange theory (Browning, Halcli and Webster, 2000). Exchange theory is quite synonymous with rational choice theory, as it focuses on the cost and benefit of interaction between members of society. The theory is sociological in nature and is rooted in a functionalist approach to analyzing human behavior in society. The exchange component is the negotiation between the parties that determine the benefits of the negotiation versus the costs (Browning, Halcli and Webster, 2000).

As it relates to this case study, the theory explains how management in this organization rationalize the decision to pay little or no attention to the employees who find it difficult to manage their personal lives conflicts. To reiterate, the manager of the
organization clearly stated that it is the employees’ responsibility to resolve their personal conflicts, thereby ensuring that it doesn’t affect their work performance. Thus, rather than investing time and money in assisting employees who need assistance, management has made a rational decision to give employees an ultimatum to either quit or resolve the issue on their own in a very limited time frame. Therefore, that decision has indicted, based on the theory, that is more cost effective for the organization to pursue this solution, as any other method would not be favorable since it might include costs to the company.

On the other hand, the exchange theory component of this case lies in the fact that the employer has negotiated with the employees to resolve their issue on independently of the organization, or else they might face termination. Thus ultimatum is reflected in the theory of exchange, as it shows the exchange of understanding between employees and employers. However, it doesn’t mean that the exchange is fair for all parties, but given the situation, employees have no choice but to agree.

The choice to terminate employees, who are unable to resolve their personal lives conflicts, is a rational choice, but it also begs the question whether a rational choice is always the best choice for the party that is perceived to be benefitting. In this case, if there are very good employees who are perhaps skilled in very unique areas, how easy or cost effective it will be for management to replace that employee in a very short time frame? Better yet, the untested hypothesis that if these employees are actually given assistance to resolve their issue, they would perform even better than they are already performing, is another factor that ought to be considered.
The rational choice theory is also applicable to employees, as they rationally decided to not disclose their personal lives conflicts with management, as they perceive a lack of trust. This lack of trust would be considered as the cost of disclosing, and this cost is seen as outweighing the benefits of receiving help to resolve their issues. Therefore, both the employees and the employers have decided to make a rational choice that is in each other’s best interest.

Other key elements of the research include errors on transactions that cause delays for customers. These errors are also factors that affected the not only the customer but the other co-workers as well, as they might not meet certain goals if transactions are cancelled or delayed until the next week, which might be a different month. To restate, this company is a branch of the main hub that is located in Jamaica. As a result, customers’ funds and transactions are held in Jamaica, therefore, when transactions are completed, they are insured in Jamaica, not in the United States. Thus, it is not as simple for a customer to walk in and walk out having all completed, it often takes days to complete these international transactions. Any further delays could offset a great deal of delay than would normally be expected. Especially of there are errors that need to be audited or investigated to resolve issues.

The frequent breaks often lead to a back-p in lines in the lobby or longer wait time for customers. The fact that this company has its main competitor operating within close proximity, there is always the fear of losing customers to that competitor. As a result, the aim of the company is to assist each customer as soon as possible so as to reduce their temptation to take their business elsewhere.
Part of the job requires Business Development Officers to seek new customers by following up with phone calls and sending emails. However, when employees surf the Internet as a therapy for releasing stress, they are often unable to make the number of phone calls per day or send all emails that ought to be sent. Thus, customers often come in to the branch complaining that there was no follow-up communication from the representatives. Also, the company has a policy that requires Business Development Officers to complete follow-ups within 24 hours of receiving leads. This target is often not met when employees are stressed from personal or intimate partner conflicts.

Two of the employees who are Jamaicans, are involved in relationships with someone who lives in Jamaica. Often times, they are very distracted and spend a lot of time on the Internet trying to resolve immigration issues to have their partner in the United States with them. This can be a very tedious task, as immigration requires a lot of information and procedures that can be very distracting for work. Also, when the relationship ridden by stress that is caused by lack of trust and physical proximity, these employees have openly agreed that this has resulted in them losing focus on the job.

Most participants stated that they believe management doesn’t care enough about these issues despite the fact that it affects everyone in the organization. When asked if the gender of management makes any difference in the conflicts are handled, 8 out of 10 reported that a male would better manage conflicts at the workplace and the staff would feel more comfortable trusting a male. Also, this led to the point that because the manager is a female and most of the staff are females, there is high fear that their personal life might be the center of discussion if they reveal their personal stories.
One participant pointed out that sexual intercourse in relationship can be major problem, but only affects the younger group of people. This participant admitted that he would not talk about something of this nature with his manager, as it is too sensitive. He explained that he has had experiences with his wife who decided to not have sex with him because she suspected him of cheating. As a result, he would be constantly miserable and distracted at work, as this was against the norm for relationship. He would constantly think about all the possible things his wife is considering and why she has chosen to punish him in such a way. Even though he didn’t show that there is problem at home, he thought that it was one of the worst times for him when compared to other marital issues that arise.

The participants believed that violent types of intimate partner conflicts have far more effect on work performance than non-violent ones. However, none of the participants mentioned or indicated that they had ever experienced violent intimate partner conflicts or have they believed that their co-workers are experiencing domestic violence at home. Therefore, the emphasis is usually on the violent type of conflict in intimate relationship, giving little credence to the effect of non-violent types of conflicts in intimate relationships. Perhaps this could help understand why organizations see no need to invest money in these types of issues. Also, management believe that if there is violence, employees would or should seek help from the police, therefore, the need for the organization to play a role in this phenomena is not necessary.

When the researcher asked the manager if it is necessary to get involved in intimate partner relationship conflicts, she replied, “It is not my business what employees
do at home. They need to understand that they are at work, and their personal life
shouldn’t be left at home. Anyone who can’t understand this, simply doesn’t need to
work here.” She continued, “I can’t stop a man rom beating his wife or girlfriend, that is
the police job, they need to figure out their issues on their own.” Based on this response,
it is clear that this organization doesn’t see the need to invest in providing any assistance
for employees who are in need of therapy or other type of personal assistance.

On the contrary, the other employees had mixed feeling about this issue. Some
pointed out that management should try to assist whenever they can, but also mentioned
that it might be difficult to talk to employees about their personal issues. Nonetheless,
participant 3 shared the same view as management, but added that anyone who is unable
to separate their personal life from work is not ready to be employed at all.

Management’s responses are not unique, as most studies mentioned in the
literature review indicated that management doesn’t pay enough attention to these types
of problems. However, none one the studies in the literature review revealed that sexual
intercourse could be a major factor in intimate relationships and that could also affect
performance at work. In addition, most of the studies conducted on this topic focused on
personal lives conflict in general and was studied either qualitative or quantitatively but
not using case study method. This case study provided the researcher the opportunity to
understand not just anyone who works in a random company, but employees who work
for a specific company that has experienced conflicts that have been unresolved.

It is also key to note that the personal life of the manager could also affect the
way in which conflicts are managed at work. Perhaps the fact that she is single and lives
alone could explain the reason she never thought of how raising children could indirectly be a potential threat to the workplace. Additionally, the fact the employees think she ignores the impact of intimate partner conflict and the impact on performance at work should be considered given her own personal life status.

In general, the employees felt that personal lives conflict affect the workplace and the most severe type of personal life conflict that presents more threat to performance at work is intimate partner conflict. It is very severe as it alters their ability to meet organizational goals, lowers the quality of customer service, it forces some employees to work harder than others to suffice for where others fall short when goals not met, and as a result it breathes tension and conflict in the organization. It forces employees to be less productive because they spend a great deal of time on the cell phones texting or making phone calls. It also causes some employees to surf the Internet and often times shop to ease their stress. This shopping in the long run alters their fiscal prudence, which results in even more internal conflict. To reiterate, financial difficulties was listed as one of the types of personal lives conflicts that affect employees work performance.

**Similarities to Prior Studies**

As noted in the literature review, prior research on topic similar to this has revealed that management tends to center their decisions on the wellbeing of the company rather than the wellbeing of the employees. As a result, when there is conflict at home that is taken to the workplace, management believes that this is the duty of the employees to fix their own issues (Le Blanc and Barling, 2014). Similarly, this research revealed that management has the same mindset regarding the issue. In summarizing the
points made by management in this study, it was noted that management believed that employees should come to work prepared to work and leave their personal problems at home. In doing so, they should not burden the workplace or the employer and force them to seek measures to help them fix their personal crisis or problems. Additionally, it was pointed out that employees who are not able to resolve their personal conflicts at home should not be employed at all, as they are a burden to the organization, and they are the reason there is low productivity. These employees are considered to be less productive because they are seen as wasting time doing other activities while they are at work.

Even though Le Blanc and Barling (2014) pointed out that employers care little about helping employees resolve their personal conflicts, their study only focused on intimate partner aggression and how it affects work outcome but not necessarily on how the nonviolent or non-aggressive component of intimate partner conflicts affects the work outcomes of employees. Also, they focused more on how it affects the females, ignoring the effects on males.

The interesting finding from this study was a bit synonymous with Le Blanc and Barling (2014) study, as the participants of this research indicated that the violent conflicts in intimate partner conflicts affect the work performance of employees more than the nonviolent ones. This is an interesting point because most research in this field focuses on the violent conflicts between partners in relationships. Perhaps the constant focus on that aspect automatically places emphasis on the violent and thereby ignores the impact of everything else. Therefore, there is no proof that the participants have ever compared the differences before. Thus, their belief that the violent type of intimate
partner conflict is more severe or have more effects than the nonviolent intimate partner conflict could very well be an incorrect observance if they have never had the opportunity to compare the results.

**Recommendations for Findings**

Upon understanding the source of the conflict that permeated the organization, the researcher recommends that organizations invest in conflict management training for employees, marriage therapy or counseling for those who need it, and personal financial management training. The research revealed very interesting issues that would have never otherwise been discussed in depth had this research not been conducted, especially in the manner in which it was, using the methodology that was selected. Consequently, the researcher’s recommendation is largely based on the findings that were derived based on the approach to the study. Hence, had the study been conducted in a quantitative form, it probably wouldn’t have yielded such rich information and the recommendations would have been different.

**Recommendation 1: Conflict Management Training**

Many organizations today focus more on profit making ignoring the internal conflicts that could hinder profit margins. As a result, employees are left alone to resolve issues while they are burdened with their tasks of meeting organizational goals. As it relates to the organization that was studied, management have ignored the need for conflict management training, as none of the participants (employees) had ever received conflict management training while working for the organization or throughout their life. Better yet, the concept of conflict management raring was foreign to all participants.
With intimate partner conflict being at the forefront of the issues that affect productivity in that organization, a good start to fix the root problem, would be to offer conflict management training to all staff. This approach would give them the opportunity to face their conflicts and better understand how to behave or how their behavior affects each other on the job, as well as how it affects their own performance.

Even though intimate partner conflict is personal, general conflict management training would provide the basic understanding to better equip employees to alter their behavior when they are at work. Additionally, since employees’ behavior also affect other co-workers, training sessions that address interpersonal conflict at work as well how to manage personal life conflict would help alleviate the extent to which the employee’s personal life conflict affects others at work as well as their performance. By extension, their customer service would be better.

It is key to understand that one conflict management training session is not the complete solution the problem, as employees are human beings, and conflicts among them does not simply become extinct after a single or few training sessions. Therefore, they might need to give it time before measuring the usefulness of training. Thus, management should also understand that this investment has long-term benefits and might take some time to manifest. By pointing to the fact that optimal performance is altered as a result of these personal lives conflicts, it is in the best interest of management to realize the financial loss that has accrued as a result. More specifically, the fact that this organization competes in a very tight competitive market, it should be a good
motivator for management to see how employees’ personal lives conflicts causes them to not meet targets at times.

Management should also invest in follow-up training session to measure improvement as well as to give the employees the opportunity to have practical simulations that could identify if the previous trainings were understood in the way it was intended to. This would also allow management to identify if the investment was worth their while and provide further insights for those who need additional help.

**Recommendation 2: Marriage counseling/therapy**

For both the employees who are married and who unmarried but in a relationship, this would be just as useful to help them manage their intimate partner conflicts. While it is a reality that therapy isn’t a “conflict proof insurance,” it does help couples to better address their issues by pointing to key areas that they might have ignored, and could be addressed to better resolve their issues. As afore mentioned, conflict management training would provide the employee the necessary skills to identify when they need to alter their behavior or seek therapy.

The recommended therapy should be indirectly provided by the organization. Since many employees are unwilling to discuss personal issues with management and management is not necessarily trained to manage these issues, it would be best for employees to have private therapy sessions without the knowledge of management. This would be possible if the organization start to offer insurance packages that include the total cost of therapy. If employees are faced with the burden of paying co-payments, whether high or low, they might be demotivated to pursue such assistance.
Currently, many organizations provide insurance that covers general physical health, but not emotional health that therapies address. Hence, this would be a new strategy for businesses to assist employees and reduce the effect of personal lives conflicts at work. By doing this, the employee would not have the need to discuss anything with management, rather, they would make an appointment to seek help and the employers would not be involved. While this is a cost to the organization, it ought to be treated as an overhead expense that is standard since all organization employ human beings, and a part of human nature is to experience conflict at some point in life. Similar to any other overheads that businesses incur, such as utility charges, the business should accept this responsibility rather than ignore it, as clearly ignoring it comes at a very high cost.

Going back to the literature, national statistics have indicated the average cost of healthcare for issues related to domestic violence. To recap, Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) reported that national statistics pointed to the average cost of medical care for intimate partner violence and how it ranges from $294 to $948 for each incident. Also, Max et al. (2004) emphasized that the average cost of hospitalization for victims is $14,363. This additional cost per incident increases the average cost of healthcare for these victims to $1775 per year, which increases the expenditures for employers as insurance premiums increase as well as absenteeism, which results in an increase in costs (Rivera et al., 2007).

Most of these statistics were derived from violent type of conflict, not much as been mentioned about non-violent types of conflicts that require therapy. Therefore, the same approach that is adopted to helping victims of violent conflicts in relationships
should be taken to help those who suffer from emotional trauma as a result of non-violent conflicts in relationships.

**Recommendation 3: Personal and Financial Management Training**

Of the many types of personal lives conflicts that were identified, financial issues stood out as one of the most popular ones. In every organization, there is at least one employee who has had financial difficulties at some point in their life. However, it doesn’t mean that it has affected their performance at work, but in many cases, people it has. During a typical professional development training, which many businesses offer today, it could be mandated that they prepare a segment that alludes to personal financial management. While many organizations offer professional development training, they see no reason to teach or coach their employees on how to manage their personal finance, yet some jobs require that you have a certain credit score to be qualified for the position.

Based on these requirements, it is then evident that after you have managed to fulfill the requirements to get the job, there is no possibility that the employee may fall in a financial crisis and not know how to manage or recover. In any event, the business suffers if they fail to assist, as employees get stressed and this stress is filtered into their performance. Consequently, one way of attempting to resolve this issue is for employers to provide financial management training to employees so as to reduce the occurrence of financial crisis that affects the organization.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This study sets out to understand the types of personal live conflicts that affect workplace performance and to what extend they do. Upon completing this study, quite a
few facts have been revealed that points to the need for future research. This case study research was conducted on one specific organization among a total of 10 participants. The findings of the research revealed that there are several types of personal live conflicts that affect work performance, these include, family illness, finance, raising children, and intimate relationship issues. Intimate relationship conflict was the most notable.

Given the previous studies conducted on similar topics, the literature indicated that most of those studies focused on domestic violence and its impact on the workplace, overlooking the nonviolent impact on the workplace. Subsequently, future research could focus on non-violent intimate partner conflicts and how it impacts the organization. More specifically, future research could pay close attention to conduct qualitative studies that allow for more detailed information from participants, as most of the prior research was done quantitatively. Additionally, in doing so, the research should compare how both large and small businesses manage these conflicts in the workplace. A comparative study of this nature would help business better address their current situation based on identifying the ills of the organization and what can be improved in both types of organizations.

If businesses decide to invest in therapy for employees or training sessions for financial management, it would be a good idea for researchers to conduct studies to identify if there are any changes as a result, as well as how management have adjusted as a result of the changes if there are any. Since profit is a major concern for businesses, this research would try to identify if the choice to invest was worth the cost for businesses, based on employees’ performance after receiving assistance from the
organization. For instance, the research ought to examine the cost of investing and the amount of money saved as a result. Thus, profits could be measured in that sense and future direction of the company would be better projected. The fact that this study was conducted with a privately-owned company, perhaps doing the same research on a larger publicly owned organization might yield different responses from participants.

With the changing in work environment today, which allows many people to work remotely from home or at other various locations, it begs the questions of how personal lives conflicts are managed in these environments. If employees work at home, does it mean that they are not likely to have their personal life conflicts affect their work performance? If so, to what extent and how is it managed or treated? The answer to these pertinent questions can only be found if in-depth qualitative research is conducted on these specific cases. Do people who work at home manage their personal conflicts better than those who work in traditional office environments? How different is the conflict when there is no one around? Does it fall back on the family since the employee is at home? If so, does it increase the chances of escalating the conflict when the employee is at home? Does the type of jobs performed increase the possibility of the employee’s work performance being affected?

To fully understand the phenomena of personal life conflicts and its impact on work performance, further research must be conducted which takes into consideration the various working environments, the types of jobs performed, the family background of the employees, as well as age of the employee. While these are all necessary to simply understand the phenomena of personal live conflict, it provides businesses the tools they
need to be more efficient and productive if their employees are better selected and managed based on the various issues that life presents to us.

**Limitations**

Given that there were only 10 participants, the study probably would have yielded more variations if there were more participants. However, the total participants are the total number of employees working in the organization. Also, the ratio between male and female could have been more balanced if there were more males. Of the total participants (10), there were only 3 males. The research was also done using employees who work in the local office, but did not include employees working in the overseas office. Doing this might provide a broader framework that represents more than one branches of the same organization.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this case study, the research concluded that management, in the specific organization that was studied, perceived personal lives conflicts as no threat to the organization, if employees can easily be replaced when their performance is affected by their personal life conflict. This conclusion was drawn as a result of the responses from management in relation to the questions that were asked regarding personal life conflicts and how they are handled in the organization.

Another major point that came out of this research is the fact that intimate partner conflict is the number one type of personal life conflict that affects performance at work. The other factors include family illness, raising children, and finance. As it relates to
intimate partner conflicts, the violent conflicts are perceived to have more effect on performance than non-violent ones.

The main behavior patterns displayed when employees are experiencing personal life conflicts are frequent bathroom breaks, increased cell phone usage, and more time spent on the internet cyber loafing because or shopping. The main behavior pattern for employees is the reluctance to show care or concern for these employees, rather they force them to resolve these issues outside the workplace, and if they are unable to do so, they simply fire them.

The employees on the other hand are reluctant to disclose their personal information due to a lack of trust in management. Additionally, they believe disclosure would not be helpful if they are not given the opportunity to get professional assistance. Rational Choice, Symbolic Interaction, and Maslow’s theory of motivation were the theories used to analyze this case study. Recommendations for both the study and future research were also provided for the overall understanding and contribution to a better or more equipped management model for organizations.
References


Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How would you describe a disturbance in workplace productivity?
2. Can you explain your understanding of workplace productivity?
3. Do you believe factors outside the workplace can affect productivity in the workplace? If so, give some examples. Which do you think is the number one factor that affects employees’ performance?
4. Do you believe appraisals are effective?
5. Do you believe that men’s performance at work is more affected by personal lives conflict than women?
6. Do you believe that people whose work performance is affected by personal lives conflict are more or less educated than their co-workers?
7. Do you believe that intimate partner conflict affects performance at work? If so, how?
8. Does the type of relationship (heterosexual or same sex) makes a difference in the type of intimate partner conflict that exists?
9. Do you think management should be concerned with personal lives conflict and its impact at work? If so, how do you think it should be handled?
10. Do you think personal lives conflicts are handled well in your organization?
11. Do you feel comfortable to discuss personal lives conflict with your supervisor?
12. Do you think the non-violent types of personal lives conflict affect performance more than violent conflicts?
13. How many years of experience do you have working in this industry?
14. Have you ever had conflict management training at work or for your own personal gain?
Appendix B: Consent Form

Informed Consent Form for Research Entitled
Personal Lives Conflict and its Impact on Workplace Productivity

IRB protocol # 2016-543
Principal investigator
Niesha Jones
Ph.D. Candidate
Department of Conflict Resolution Studies
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3301 College Avenue
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For questions/concerns about your research rights, contact:
Human Research Oversight Board (Institutional Review Board or IRB)
Nova Southeastern University
(954) 262-5369/Toll Free: 866-499-0790
IRB@nsu.nova.edu

Site Information
Nova Southeastern University
Center for Psychological Studies
3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33314

What is the study about?
You are invited to participate in a research study. The goal of this study is to understand how personal lives conflict affect productivity in the workplace

Why are you asking me?
We are inviting you to participate because you are currently working in an organization where productivity can be measured. There will be 10 participants in this research study
What will I be doing if I agree to be in the study?
You will answer approximately 15 questions during an interview. You will also be interviewed by the researcher, NIESHA JONES, who will ask you questions about personal lives conflict and the workplace. The interview should take no more than 30 minutes to complete.

Is there any audio or video recording?
This research project will include audio recording of the interview. This audio recording will be available to be heard by the researcher, NIESHA JONES, personnel from the IRB, and the dissertation chair, Dr Berna. The recording will be transcribed by NIESHA JONES, who will use earphones while transcribing the interviews to guard your privacy. The recording will be kept securely in NIESHA JONES’S safe at her home, where she has exclusive access to it. The recording will be kept for 36 months from the end of the study. The recording will be destroyed after that time by shredding the tape and deleting any saved recordings on the device. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the recording, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed although the researcher will try to limit access to the tape as described in this paragraph.

What are the dangers to me?
Risks to you are minimal, meaning they are not thought to be greater than other risks you experience everyday. Being recorded means that confidentiality cannot be promised. Sharing your opinions about personal lives conflict may make you anxious or bring back unhappy memories. If this happens you have the option to stop the interview at anytime. If you have questions about the research, your research rights, or if you experience an injury because of the research please contact NIESHA JONES at (718) 662-4724. You may also contact the IRB at the numbers indicated above with questions about your research rights.

Are there any benefits to me for taking part in this research study?
There are no benefits to you for participating.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?
There are no costs to you or payments made for participating in this study.

How will you keep my information private?
The tape recordings and responses to the questions will be kept in a safe, where no one else has access. As mentioned, the tapes will be destroyed 36 months after the study ends. All information obtained in this study is
strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. The IRB, regulatory agencies, or Dr. Berna may review research records.

**What if I do not want to participate or I want to leave the study?**
You have the right to leave this study at any time or refuse to participate. If you do decide to leave or you decide not to participate, you will not experience any penalty or loss of services you have a right to receive. If you choose to withdraw, any information collected about you before the date you leave the study will be kept in the research records for 36 months from the conclusion of the study and may be used as a part of the research.

**Other Considerations:**
If the researchers learn anything which might change your mind about being involved, you will be told of this information.

**Voluntary Consent by Participant:**
By signing below, you indicate that
- this study has been explained to you
- you have read this document or it has been read to you
- your questions about this research study have been answered
- you have been told that you may ask the researchers any study related questions in the future or contact them in the event of a research-related injury
- you have been told that you may ask Institutional Review Board (IRB) personnel questions about your study rights
- you are entitled to a copy of this form after you have read and signed it

Participant’s Signature: ___________________________ Date: __________________

Participant’s Name: ______________________________ Date: __________________

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent: _____________________________

Date: ___________________________