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LUCAS ALMEIDA DE MENDONÇA SOARES

MILLENNIALS AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE: A Study at Management Consulting Firms

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Master's dissertation presented to the COPPEAD Graduate School of Business, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, as part of the mandatory requirements in order to obtain the title of Master in Business Administration (M.Sc.).

Supervisor: Adriana Victoria Garibaldi de Hilal

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Approved on February 19th, 2020

Adriana Victoria Garibaldi de Hilal, D.Sc - Advisor
COPPEAD

Paula Castro Pires de Souza Chimenti, D.Sc
COPPEAD

Ana Luiza S. V. Lopes, D.Sc
UNIRIO

Rio de Janeiro

2020

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RESUMO

SOARES, Lucas. **MILLENNIALS AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE: A study at management consulting firms**. Rio de Janeiro, 2020. 123pp. Dissertation (Master's Degree in Business Administration) - COPPEAD Graduate School of Business, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2020.

Estudos relacionados a equilíbrio vida pessoal e trabalho começaram na década de 1960. Entretanto, o tema tem recebido mais atenção nos últimos anos devido a uma crescente tendência relacionada a valorização dos empregados como recursos essenciais e estratégicos para empresas. Pesquisadores tem focado na atual geração de trabalhadores, os Millennials. Esta geração está cada vez mais presente em posições de liderança e representa uma grande mudança quando comparada a gerações anteriores. Por isso, a importância de entender suas expectativas em relação ao mercado de trabalho e ao equilíbrio entre este ambiente e a vida pessoal. Apesar das más condições de trabalho, a indústria de consultoria estratégica ainda atrai os Millennials. Portanto, esta é uma indústria interessante a ser estudada. Esta pesquisa oferece uma avaliação da percepção dos Millennials em relação a interação entre trabalho e vida pessoal. Além disso, ela oferece informações referentes a indústria de consultoria estratégica. Entrevistas detalhadas foram conduzidas com Millennials que trabalham ou trabalharam na indústria – previamente mencionada – no Brasil. Esta pesquisa qualitativa teve como resultado três pontos principais. Primeiro, a indústria estudada não apresentou mudanças significativas nos últimos anos. Segundo, apesar dos Millennials terem valores específicos relacionados a trabalho, estes eventualmente escolhem não os seguir – no curto prazo – para alcançar seus objetivos finais. Terceiro, o cenário socioeconômico do país estudado impacta diretamente nas decisões relacionadas a trabalho. Finalmente, um modelo para ilustrar como estas duas últimas variáveis interagem foi apresentado.

Palavras-chave: equilíbrio vida pessoal e trabalho, bem-estar no trabalho, satisfação no trabalho, engajamento no trabalho, fatiga, burnout, consultoria de gestão, consultoria estratégica, millennials

ABSTRACT

SOARES, Lucas. **MILLENNIALS AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE:** A study at management consulting firms. Rio de Janeiro, 2020. 123pp. Dissertation (Master's Degree in Business Administration) - COPPEAD Graduate School of Business, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2020.

Studies regarding work-life balance are rooted in the 1960s. However, the topic has received additional attention in recent years with the rising acknowledgment of employees as key and strategic resources of the company. Of particular interest of researchers, is the current generation of workers, the Millennials. This generation is reaching leadership positions and represents a turning point when compared to other generations. Hence, the importance of understanding their expectations regarding work and work-life balance. Regardless of bad work conditions, the management consulting industry still attracts Millennials. Therefore, it is an interesting context to be studied. This research provides an assessment of Millennials perception concerning the interaction between work and private life. Additionally, it provides further information regarding the management consulting industry. In-depth interviews were conducted with Millennials who work or have worked in the related industry in Brazil. This qualitative research led to three main findings. First, the industry hasn´t changed much in recent years. Second, even though Millennials have specific work values, they eventually choose not to follow them – in the short term – in order to achieve their final goal. Third, the socioeconomic scenario of the country directly impacts work-related decisions. Finally, a model to illustrate how these two variables interact is presented.

Keywords: work-life balance, work well-being, work satisfaction, work engagement, fatigue, burnout, management consulting, millennials

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LIST OF ABREVIATIONS

BCG	Boston Consulting Group
EST	Escala de Satisfação no Trabalho
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HR	Human Resources
IBGE	Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatítica
IT	Information Technology
JB	Job Burnout
JDI	Job Descriptive Index
JD-R	Job Demand Resources
JDS	Job Diagnostic
JIG	Job in General Scale
JSS	Job Satisfaction Survey
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MBB	McKinsey & Company, Boston Consulting Group and Bain & Company
PWB	Psychological Well-being
R&D	Research and Development
SDT	Self-determined Theory
SWB	Subjective Well-being
WB	Well-being
WE	Work Engagement
WF	Work Fatigue
WFC	Work-family Conflict
WFG	Work-family Guilt
WLB	Work-life Balance
WLC	Work-life Conflict
WLI	Work-life Interface
WS	Work Satisfaction
WV	Work Values
WWB	Work Well-being

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies regarding the conciliation of work and private life are rooted in the 1960s (e.g., Goode 1960, Kahn et al. 1964); however, the topic has seen explosive growth in the 1980s (Williams et al., 2016). The discussion started when more women entered the workforce and, as a consequence, employers became more aware of the challenges faced by working mothers and nuclear families (Santos, 2018). This new scenario led to more family friendly policies and to an improved work-family balance (Lewis, 1997). In the following decades, due to a necessity to encompass other challenges experienced by different groups of employees, the scope of the concept was extended. Thus, leading to a more inclusive definition of 'work-life balance' (WLB) and 'work-life conflict' at the turn of the century. In addition, there was also a focus on how the integration of work and personal life would lead to harmony or tension, both affecting the well-being of the individual (Wilkinson, Tomlinson and Gardiner, 2017).

Although WLB is still the most commonly used term, it has been highly criticized. First, it gives a perception of goal and equilibrium that may not reflect the reality of several groups of workers, considering their working-life pressures, challenges and dilemmas (Wilkinson, Tomlinson and Gardiner, 2017). Second, it implies that a clear distinction between 'work' and 'life' can be done (Donkin, 2010; Eikhof et al., 2007; Warhurst et al., 2008). Finally, it gives the perception that a balance can be achieved or an equal amount of time should be allocated in each "side of the equation", which does not consider the "perceptual experience of time and the subjective meanings people assign to it" (Thompson and Bunderson, 2007; Sturges, 2013). Therefore, a better term could be work-life interface (WLI); however, since WLB is used interchangeably, this terminology will be used during this work.

In Brazil, most studies concerning WLB are cross-cultural and performed by foreign researchers. Nevertheless, the country is depicted as offering fewer formal organizational work-life policies, when compared to other countries (Carlier et al., 2012; Ruiz-Gutierrez et al., 2012); moreover, most studies performed in Brazil focused on health in the workplace and employee well-being (e.g.: Ferreira et al., 2009; Martinez and Latorre, 2006), with few focused on WLB per se (Santos, 2018). Therefore, considering the economic power, the technological evolution and the recent changes in the Brazilian work policy, the country presents a rich scenario to study WLB. Additionally, the country´s socioeconomic situation indirectly creates different interactions – between prospective consultants and management consulting firms – that are not found in developed economies.

The perceptions regarding WLB are highly affected by the generation comprising the workforce. As a way to better understand these different generations, four categories can be mentioned: the Silent Generation (1925-1945), the Baby Boomers (1946-1964), the Generation X (1965-1981) and the Millennials (1982-1999) (Durocher, Bujaki & Brouard, 2016). Of particular interest for researchers is the current generation of workers, the Millennials.

Millennials have received an increasing attention from scholars mainly due to two factors. First, professionals from this generation are reaching leadership positions – they are expected to comprise 35% of the global workforce by 2020 (Statista, 2016) and 75% by 2025 (Delloite, 2014). Second, they represent a turning point when compared to other generations. Therefore, it is important to understand their expectations regarding work and work-life balance.

Millennials have experienced the integration of technology since their birth; as a consequence, they leverage the most extensive personal experience and comfort with technology, such as internet, email, cellphones and social media (Weber, 2017). Moreover, they are more accepting of diversity and more prone to work in teams than the previous generations, are skilled with advanced communication, information technologies and multitasking and are capable of seeing problems and opportunities from different perspectives (Weber, 2017; Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010). Overall, they are considered the most well educated and technology-savvy population in the history of humankind (Philips, 2014).

Management consulting is an advisory service provided to organizations by trained, qualified and independent persons who aim to assist their client´s to identify, analyze and solve management problems (Kim and Lee, 2011). This profession has received increasing attention from students, in a wide varied of career stages, for reasons such as high status, above the average learning opportunities and compensation plans and the promise of a dynamic and rapidly changing environment. Furthermore, the industry is known by its long working hours, high pressure work environment and constant travelling; hence, an interesting context to study potential conflicts between private and work lives.

WLB has become a pressing social issue, driving not only an increase in the number of studies on the topic, but also an increase in changes in government policy, employment legislation and organizational policy and practice (Abendroth and Den Dulk, 2011; Booney, 2005; Gerstal and Clawson, 2014; Kelly et al., 2014; Warren et al., 2009). This growth is a result of the changes in the perception of different generations, from Baby Boomers to Millennials, regarding what is the ideal balance between work and private life. Moreover, considering the transition of generations in the workplace, the number of studies about the topic will continue to increase. Although a universal concern, the balance between work and private life must be carefully analyzed according to cultural differences and family structures (Spector et al., 2004).

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to analyze the perception of work-life balance of Millennials who work or have worked for management consulting firms. This analysis will be driven by three key elements: work well-being, work-family conflict and Millennials work expectations and values.

Work related well-being will be analyzed according to its positive – work satisfaction and engagement – and negative – job burnout and work fatigue – outcomes. Moreover, work-family conflict will also take into consideration the impacts of work-family guilt on work-life balance. Finally, Millennials work expectations and values will be compared with the existing environment of management consulting firms.

1.2 RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

As technology improves and becomes more accessible, organizations are becoming more commoditized. As a consequence, in order to have a competitive advantage, companies have to focus on another subject: human capital. The perception that employees are key and strategic resources is an increasing trend and, since their happiness and well-being are partially driven by the time they spend at work, more attention is being given to the improvement of the work environment. Nevertheless, the perceptions regarding this environment are highly affected by the generation comprising the workforce, which is also a relevant aspect of this study. Millennials are expected to comprise 35% of the global workforce by 2020 (Statista, 2016) and 75% by 2025 (Delloite, 2014). Therefore, it is important to understand their expectations regarding work and work-life balance.

Regarding the management consulting industry, there are two interesting factors. First, the presence of Millennials in the workplace may happen faster than the statistics forecast, since the industry´s turnover is relatively high and leads to continuous recruiting in universities. Second, even though the industry´s WLB is considered bad by the market, management consulting is still growing and attracting new talents. Therefore, it is relevant to understand what drives this phenomenon.

Finally, the Brazilian socioeconomic context presents various differences when compared to the American and Western-European countries, places where most studies found in the literature took place. Therefore, this study aims to understand the behavior of Millennials in a scenario of high unemployment, low job stability and, as a consequence, an oversupply of labor.

That being said, three elements comprehensively explain the relevance of this study. The first element is the importance of human capital for companies, focusing on Millennials. The second element is the additional knowledge regarding the management consulting industry; specially in developing countries, like Brazil. Finally, the third element is the impact of the socioeconomic context of the country in which the study is undertaken on the behavior of Millennials.

1.3 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This section aims to determine the characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of this study. This research is based on – but not limited to – the topics presented in the literature review. Due to time and financial constraints, interviewees´ selection was limited to former and current employees of the management consulting industry living in the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. Furthermore, since the objective of this study was to better understand Millennials´ perspective of the industry, job roles of interviewees were from the lower hierarchical level – that required an undergraduate degree – of the companies and ages were limited to the range comprising this generation.

1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

This research is structured in five parts: introduction, literature review, methodology, results and conclusion. The introduction presents some facts to demonstrate the pertinence of the topic and motivate the reader to continue. Purpose, relevance and delimitations of the study were described.

The second chapter contains the literature review on the topic. The main studies of each section are briefly described and discussed. Moreover, the Brazilian scenario is also presented, together with a brief comparison with international studies.

In the third chapter, the research methodology is presented in five sections: type of research; universe and interviewee selection; data collection; data analysis; and methodology limitations.

The fourth chapter builds the heart of the research, the empirical results from the interviews are presented and focus on four core areas: overview of the management consulting industry; work well-being perception; work-family conflict; and work-life balance.

The conclusion begins with a summary of the research. Main findings and conclusions are presented and suggestions are offered. Furthermore, future research directions are suggested.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of the available literature concerning the three core constructs of the study. First, work-life balance (WLB), which will be further analyzed based on two other constructs: work well-being and work-family conflict. Second, Millennials, initially presenting a contextualization of the subject and then discussing about specificities of the generation´s work values. Finally, management consulting industry, presenting its aspects from a historical point of view and correlating them with the current industry scenario.

2.1. Work-life Balance

In order to better understand the conciliation of work and private life, an analysis of the aspects that influence this construct can be performed. Although some of these aspects are interrelated, such as work engagement and satisfaction or burnout and fatigue, a robust predictor of one´s WLB is work well-being (WWB). That being said, an interesting approach is to separate the positive and the negative outcomes of WWB.

Work satisfaction, which results from a match between the needs of the individual and what the workplace supplies (Edwards, Caplan and Van Harrison, 2001), and work engagement, which is defined as an affective-cognitive-motivational state of achievement that reflects the employee´s state of mind in a specific moment (Moura and Ramos, 2015), can be used to analyze the positive outcomes of WWB; thus, they are crucial to build the perception of the already subjective understanding of what is the ideal WLB for an individual. Furthermore, there are evidences that support the association of health status and well-being (un et al. 1984; Ryan & Frederick 1997; Ryff and Singer 2000).

On the other hand, job burnout, which is related to feelings of exhaustion, cynicism, and inadequacy at work (Maslach, Schaufeli, Leiter,2001; Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, Bakker,2002), and work fatigue, which is represented by both extreme tiredness and reduced functional capacity and can impact three types of energetic resources – physical (involving muscular movement), mental (involving cognitive processing), and emotional (involving expression and regulation of emotions) (Frone and Tidwell, 2015) – can be used to analyze the negative outcomes of WWB; thus, these two elements are also crucial to building the perception of the ideal WLB.

Finally, two additional aspects must be analyzed to better understand WLB: work-life conflict (WLC) and work-family guilt (WFG). The former is a construct related to the tensions an individual might experience between his roles at and off work (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). While the latter is a constructed related to emotional responses caused by a decision making process regarding work and family (Conlin, 2000; Duxbury & Higgins, 1991; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Hence, failing to accordingly balance work and family roles, might yield WFG (Napholz, 2000; Santos, 2018).

2.1.1. Work Well-being

Work is a major part of human life, hence work well-being (WWB) has a direct impact on the well-being (WB) of an individual´s life. There is a chicken and egg problem regarding the nature of work and life WB; however, there are studies that show a correlation between a happy, competent and satisfied employee and an overall WB in life (Li, Chen, &Hendrischke, 2016; Rode 2004).

As organizations may have easier access to capital and technology than to good professionals (Gubman, 1998), employees now are considered a key and strategic resource for organizations (Agapito, Filho, &Siqueira, 2015). Moreover, researchers have argued that the appreciation in the value of organizations is driven by their intangible assets - the ones that are rare, valuable and irreplaceable - describing them as a competitive advantage over their competitors (Agapito, Filho, &Siqueira, 2015; Kayo, Kimura, Martin, & Nakamura, 2006). Therefore, due to their knowledge, talents and experiences, employees are considered a part of those assets (Sant'anna, Paschoal, & Gosendo, 2012; Barbosa & Gomes, 2002).

The acknowledgment that the employees´ happiness and WWB are partially driven by the amount of time spent at work, made organizations more concerned about the development of strategies to deliver a better environment to their employees. Organizations focus on the improvement of work conditions because they believe that the enhancement of employees' WB will yield a better performance for the company (Souza, Bertolini and Ribeiro, 2014; Sant'anna, Paschoal, & Gosendo, 2012).

In order to achieve this improvement in WB, researchers have focused on studies of emotions related to work and its environment. Through an analysis of affective concepts and other work-related emotions, they were able to better understand other aspects, such as stress, burnout and mental health of employees (Agapito, Filho, &Siqueira, 2015; Brief & Weiss, 2002; Gondim & Siqueira, 2004).

Over the past decade, a multidisciplinary approach has been used by several researchers in order to study WWB. Professionals that study psychology, economics and sociology, for instance, were able to assess work attitudes, ways to improve work involvement and implications of WWB (Li, Chen, &Hendrischke, 2016; Schaufeli et al. 2008; Sousa-Poza and SousaPoza, 2000; Griffin 1986; Warr et al. 1979). Moreover, constructs used in research related to organizational behavior embrace different branches of well-being, such as job involvement, job satisfaction and emotions and moods at work (Li, Chen, &Hendrischke, 2016; Fisher 2010; Mathieu and Farr 1991; Brooke et al. 1988).

WWB has been studied using different approaches, therefore each theoretical model and definition of WB will assess the subject in distinct ways. One of the most famous theories classifies WB in two distinct, yet overlapping, perspectives: the hedonic (Kahneman et al., 1999) and the eudaimonic (Waterman, 1993). According to Ryan and Deci (2001), the former classifies WB as pleasure and happiness, while the latter classifies it as somethings beyond happiness, i.e., a fulfillment of one´s true nature, an actualization of human potentials.

According to the hedonic perspective, the predominant view is that WB consists of subjective happiness and is related to experiences of pleasure and displeasure that encompass good and bad elements of life (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Diener et al., 1998). In a similar, yet more effective way, Kahneman et al. (1999) defined WB as a function of pleasure and pain. Therefore, WB can be simplified as the maximization of human happiness.

In order to assess pleasure / pain in humans, the analysis through the subjective well-being (SWB) has been widely used. This analysis is based on three elements: life satisfaction, presence of a positive mood and absence of a negative mood (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Diener & Lucas, 1999).

According to the eudaimonic perspective, the achievement of a desire might not yield WB, as the hedonic perspective suggests. This might happen because, even though it would normally generate a pleasant state, the outcomes of this desire might not be good. Therefore, subjective happiness cannot be related to WB. According to Waterman (1993), the eudaimonic perspective is related to the acknowledgment of the individual´s true self. In other words, it is a correlation between life activities and the individual's values (Ryan and Deci, 2001).

The concept of psychological well-being (PWB) was then introduced as an opposing party of the SWB. In order to assess the PWB, a multidimensional approach was presented by Ryff & Keyes (1995). This analysis was based on six elements: autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery, and positive relatedness.

It is interesting to highlight that, for Ostrom (1969), the SWB can be classified in two dimensions: the affective dimension and the cognitive dimension. The first dimension refers to the emotional component of WB, both positive – affection and pride – and negative – anger and guilt. The second dimension refers to a broader view of life satisfaction, encompassing components such as physical and mental capacity and social relationships (Souza, Bertolini and Ribeiro, 2014). That being said, it is clear that there are similarities between the PWB concept and the cognitive dimension of SWB presented by Ostrom (1969).

Another interesting approach, presented by Ryan & Deci (2000), is the self-determination theory (SDT). This theory specifies the eudaimonic perspective as its main driver and tries to determine what the actualization of the self means and how it can be achieved. SDT defines three physiological needs – autonomy, competence and relatedness – and states that they are fundamental for psychological growth, integrity and WB (Ryan and Deci, 2001).

In order to measure WWB, the model developed by Siqueira and Padovam (2008) relies on three dimensions – work satisfaction, work involvement and affective organizational behavior – that encompass the positive attachment to the work per se and also to the organization. The first dimension, work satisfaction, is represented by the relationship with peers and bosses, the tasks performed and the compensation plan. The second dimension, work involvement, is defined by the level of identification with the work and its related tasks. The last dimension, affective organization behavior, is represented by the feelings, both positive and negative, that an individual might have regarding the organization (Agapito, Filho, &Siqueira, 2015; Siqueira and Gomide, 2004).

The next two sections will be dedicated to assess the main outcomes of positive (satisfaction and engagement) and negative (fatigue, stress and burnout) WWB.

2.1.1.1. Positive Outcomes of WWB

Work satisfaction (WS) has been a hot topic since the beginning of the 20th century (Beuren et al., 2017; Mourão, Monteiro and Viana, 2014; Freire, 2012); studies have shown positive correlations between WS and relevant aspects for an organization, such as productivity, profitability, employee retention and client satisfaction (Lai Wan, 2007). According to the same author, these positive consequences of WS are generated by more satisfied and motivated employees, leading to more empathy with the client and, consequently, to a better performance for the organization. In addition, companies have sought to attract and retain qualified employees (Abbad, Loiola, Zerbini, & Borges-Andrade, 2013); hence, demonstrating the significance of the topic and justifying the increasing number of related studies (Martinez & Paraguay, 2003).

Starting from the studies of Frederick Taylor (1856 - 1915), WS was considered an attitude related to the employee cooperation via-a-vis his manager in order to attend his own interests (Mourão, Monteiro and Viana, 2014; Martins & Santos, 2006). Thus, factors such as fatigue and salary would influence satisfaction and productivity. Later on, researchers from Hawthorne widen the scope of factors related to WS, adding the importance of the work break, informal peer groups, etc. (Mourão, Monteiro and Viana, 2014; Martins & Santos, 2006).

WS was initially associated to motivation, i.e., satisfaction was an element of the motivation driving human behaviors to generate more productivity and employee retention and less absenteeism (Siqueira, 2008). Although satisfaction and motivation are intrinsically associated, they are different aspects (Sangwan, 2013) of well-being.

One of the most famous theories, proposed by Herzberg et al. (1959), states that WS is not a unidimensional concept, since intrinsic variables, related to personal growth and development, and extrinsic variables, related to hygienic factors, can also drive either satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Reyes and Brandão, 2011). Thus, factors that drive WS are independent and not related to those that drive work-related dissatisfaction (Reyes and Brandão, 2011; Silva Jr, 2001). For instance, performance and individual work capacity improvements would be consequences of WS, while an increase in turnover and burnout would be consequences of work-related dissatisfaction (Mourão, Monteiro and Viana, 2014).

Another branch of study associates WS with social responsibility, i.e., the employee´s satisfaction is correlated to the well-being of the workforce, whereas the organization is the main responsible for it (Siqueira, 2008). WS can also be related to an emotional state; for instance, Locke (1969) considers WS a positive emotional state generated by the individual´s evaluation of his work (Beuren et al., 2017). Spector (1997) defines WS either as a set of attitudes towards different facets of work or as an overall feeling towards work (Mathieu, 2013).

For Ganzach (1998), cognitive characteristics of an individual shape WS, not motivational nor affective traits. Moreover, according to him, WS can be shaped by the interaction of cognitive characteristics and the environment and by the interaction of the person and the work environment (Reyes and Brandão, 2011).

There are different tools to measure the WS and to identify areas of dissatisfaction, such as JDI (Job Descriptive Index), created by Simth, Kendal and Hulin (1969); JDS (Job Diagnostic

Survey), created by Hackman and Oldhan (1975); JSS (Job Satisfaction Survey), created by Spector (1985); JIG (Job in General Scale), created by Ironson et al. (1989).

Considering the amount of studies and, consequently, opinions related to WS after several decades of research, there is still not a common ground regarding concepts, theories, models, causes or components of WS (Beuren et al., 2017; Mourão, Monteiro and Viana, 2014). This can be explained considering the subjectivity of the phenomenon, which leads to different perceptions for each person, varying according to factors that are both inside and outside the work environment (Beuren et al., 2017; Martinez & Paraguay, 2003).

Nevertheless, a study performed by Siqueira (2008) presented the Work satisfaction Scale (EST – *Escala de Satisfação no Trabalho*), developed and validated in Brazil (Beuren et al., 2017). Such scale considered five dimensions: satisfaction with the work per se, with the supervisor, with peers, with salary and with promotions (Kinicki, McKee-Ryan, Schriesheim, & Carson, 2002; Siqueira, 2008).

Studies related to work engagement (WE) started in 1990, when Willian A. Kahn first introduced the definition of personal engagement and disengagement. In his research, Kahn (1990) defined personal engagement as "[…] the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.". Moreover, he defined personal disengagement as "[…] the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances.".

Studies linked to engagement became more popular when organizations, due to an increase in the number of studies related to burnout, got more interested in the subject. Their main goal was to improve their employee´s motivation at work and, consequently, improve the organizations´ results. Therefore, after several studies, the construct of WE emerged (Porto-Martins, Basso-Machado, &Benevides-Pereira, 2013)

WE is defined as an affective-cognitive-motivational state of achievement that reflects the employee´s state of mind in a specific moment (Moura and Ramos, 2015). In a more conceptual definition, WE is defined by three work-referred components: vigor, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli et al., 2006). The first component represents high energy levels, persistency and mental resilience at work, i.e., how stimulating and energetic work is. The second component represents involvement, pride, inspiration and meaning at work. Finally, the third component represents focus and happiness at work, i.e., it is related to how interesting and captivating work is (Kim, Park, &Headrick, 2018; Porto-Martins, Basso-

Machado, &Benevides-Pereira, 2013). Another approach emerged to embrace all three components; called general work engagement (Breevaart et al., 2012), its main goal is to represent individuals that are more engaged than others and fully dedicate themselves at work. Another branch of study defines WE as energy, involvement and professional efficacy, which are the opposite dimension of burnout (MASLACH; LEITER, 2008). Hence, WE is related to low levels of emotional exhaustion and cynicism together with high levels of professional efficacy (Porto-Martins, Basso-Machado, &Benevides-Pereira, 2013).

A theory that can help the understanding of the antecedents and outcomes of WE is called Job Demand Resources (JD-R), which states that job resources are the main drivers of WE (Wingerden, Derks, &Bakker, 2018; Bakker and Demerouti, 2014, 2007). Resources are considered the antecedents of engagement and are defined as internal and external aspects of a job that help employees achieve their goals. However, these resources are matched with job demands. Therefore, if these resources do not match the required demands, employees will experience low levels of engagement in the three forms presented previously (vigor, dedication and absorption) (Camgoz et al., 2016). This process - starting with job resources, leading to WE and, finally, leading to performance - is called motivational process and gives insights that are useful to impact WE (Wingerden, Derks, &Bakker, 2018). Moreover, it is interesting to highlight the importance that studies give to this mediating role of WE (e.g.: Wingerden, Derks, &Bakker, 2018; Santos, Chambel, &Castanheira, 2015; Porto-Martins, Basso-Machado, &Benevides-Pereira, 2013).

WE is considered a recent, yet promising, psychological concept, which is valuable both for business and academy (Porto-Martins, Basso-Machado, &Benevides-Pereira, 2013; SCHAUFELI, 2012; POCINHO; PERESTRELO, 2011; MASLACH; LEITER, 2008). However, it is important to better understand - individual, social, organizational and labor - factors that interfere in the construct development (Teixeira et al., 2017).

2.1.1.2. Negative Outcomes of WWB

The Burnout Syndrome, which will be referred to as burnout or job burnout (JB) in this research, is an occupational hazard that has a direct link to organizational expenditures, such as employee turnover and absenteeism and productivity- and quality-related issues (Carlotto and Câmara, 2008; Maslach and Goldberg, 1998). That being said, JB has been considered a social problem of great relevance, which has encouraged organizations and researches to better understand the concept, its impacts and how to minimize it (Neves, Oliveira, &Alves, 2014).

Discussions about burnout started in the mid 1970´s by Freudenberger (1974, 1975) and Maslach (1976). JB can be characterized as an overwhelming exhaustion; feelings of frustration, anger and cynicism; and a sense of ineffectiveness. It is important to highlight that JB can harm both personal and social life and that each individual might react differently. For instance, an employee experiencing JB might either leave the job or stay underperforming. The latter scenario has a bad impact both for the employee and for other people that will be affected by the situation (Maslach and Goldberg, 1998).

Most researchers agree with the three dimensions presented above (Maslach and Goldberg, 1998); however, some studies have assessed these dimensions either through a complementary and synergetic way or through a distinct approach.

According to Maslach and Jackson (1981), JB can be classified in three core dimensions: a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, a depersonalization and a reduced personal accomplishment. The first dimension, emotional exhaustion, is considered as the basic stress dimension of burnout. This dimension is related to an overwhelm of one´s emotions and the depletion of one´s emotional resources. The major drivers of emotional exhaustion are work overload and personal conflict at work. The second dimension, depersonalization, refers to one´s negative response to other people, such as careless or excessively detached treatment. Usually, this dimension is a consequence of the first one, i.e., its roots are in the overload of emotional exhaustion. The third dimension, reduced personal accomplishment, is related to the self-evaluation of JB and is a consequence of the second dimension. Since this latter dimension represents the interpersonal dimension of JB, the reduction of personal accomplishment impacts one´s feelings of competence and productivity at work. That being said, the conclusion is that JB is a mix of the individual state, a coping strategy and an effect, whereas each dimension can be studied separately (Sá, Martins-Silva, &Funchal, 2014; Schaufeli & Taris, 2005).

Another branch of study considers burnout to be related to anxiety and depression. Several studies presented empirical differences between burnout and depression, stating that burnout is a problem specific for the work context and that depression is a problem that is present in every domain of one´s life (Maslach, Schaufeli, &Leiter; 2001; Warr, 1987; Freudenberger, 1983). In order to support the presented differentiation, the study of Maslach and Schaufeli (1993) can be cited. In this study, five common elements of JB are presented. First, predominance of dysphoric symptoms - exhaustion, fatigue and depression; second, emphasis on mental and behavioral symptoms and less on physical ones; third, burnout symptoms are work-related; fourth, symptoms manifested themselves in people who did not suffer from psychopathology before; finally, decreased effectiveness and work performance are consequences of negative attitudes and behaviors.

It is important to highlight the occupational health-related outcomes, such as workaholism, recovery from work and general well-being (Salmela-Aro and Upadyaya, 2018; Upadyaya et al., 2016; Shimazu, Schaufeli, Kamiyama, & Kawakami, 2015; Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009).

A second negative outcome, work fatigue (WF) is considered an important construct because it can help to associate employee-related aspects, such as work attitudes, safety, health and performance, with working conditions. Thus, WF can influence both personal outcomes - mental, physical and emotional - and organizational outcomes - turnover, underperformance and cynicism (Frone and Tidwell, 2015). Regardless of the importance of WF, the construct does not have an accurate definition still (Frone, Reis, & Ottenstein, 2018); which impacted the development of relevant and trustworthy studies. Moreover, according to Frone and Tidwell (2015), this problem led to methodological weaknesses in several studies.

Frone and Tidwell (2015) developed a study concerning the main features presented in previous researches regarding fatigue. The conclusion was that three key features related to WF were identified. The first one states that WF involves both extreme tiredness and reduced functional capacity. The former is described as an extreme lack of energy. The latter is described as a reduction in the capacity or in the motivation to respond to stimuli or engage in activities. Both aspects together help to differentiate the normal sense of tiredness, which is a common result from the engagement in activities, from WF. This first feature was developed using definition found in the literature, such as “By fatigue we mean a reduction in the capacity for doing work which comes as a result of work.”, presented by Pillsbury (1922, p. 541), “Fatigue is the state of weariness after a period of exertion, mental or physical, characterized by a decreased capacity for work and reduced efficiency to respond to stimuli.”, presented by Stasi et al. (2003, p. 1787), and “[emotional exhaustion involves] feelings of being emotionally overextended and exhausted by one's work.”, presented by Maslach and Jackson (1981, p. 101). It is worth pointing out the convergence between the burnout and the fatigue constructs, clearly observed in this last definition presented by the authors.

The second feature states that extreme tiredness and low functional capacity can occur through the usage of three types of energetic resources: mental, physical and emotional. The first is related to activities that involve cognitive processing; the second is related to activities that involve muscular movements; finally, the third one is related to activities that involve expressions and regulations of emotions. It is important to highlight that, since the beginning of the 20th century, a clear and frequent distinction has been presented between physical fatigue and mental fatigue. However, due to an increase in interpersonal-related tasks in organizations, the attention to emotional fatigue has grown significantly. Thus, adding the depletion of emotional energy to the depletion of the other two energetic resources (Frone and Tidwell, 2015).

The third feature states that WF is temporally tied to the workday, i.e., it is experienced during the workday. Added to this, non-work factors can also influence WF. For instance, demands originated outside the workplace that deplete energetic resources during the workday (e.g., dealing with family problems at work) can lead to WF (Frone and Tidwell, 2015).

Factors, other than those related to job demands, that can either positively or negatively impact the energetic resources are called affective events. These affective events are considered important drivers of one´s well-being (Gross et al., 2011; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996, p. 31); therefore, the occurrence of events may be predictors of WF (Gross et al., 2011; Parrish, Zautra, & Davis, 2008; Zohar et al., 2003; Zohar, 1999).

That being said, Frone and Tidwell (2015) proposed a definition of general WF: “Work fatigue represents extreme tiredness and reduced functional capacity that is experienced during and at the end of the workday.”. Moreover, they proposed a specific definition of WF based on each energetic resource.

Physical work fatigue: “Represents extreme physical tiredness and reduced capacity to engage in physical activity that is experienced during and at the end of the workday.”

Mental work fatigue: “Represents extreme mental tiredness and reduced capacity to engage in cognitive activity that is experienced during and at the end of the workday.”

Emotional work fatigue: “Represents extreme emotional tiredness and reduced capacity to engage in emotional activity that is experienced during and at the end of the workday.”

2.1.2. Work-family Conflict

Over the past decades, researchers have strived to understand the consequences of combining work and personal/family life responsibilities. According to them, many employees consider the demands of their work and personal lives, at least, partially incompatible. Thus, causing some degree of work-family conflict (WFC) (Reynolds, 2005). Most recently, the interest to better understand the relationship of work and family lives increased due to social, economic and demographic changes, such as the increase in women presence in the labor market, leading to a decline of the family model based on the male provider, the increase in the number of dual earner couples, the decision to have fewer children and the change in the value given to quality of life and subjective well-being (Gonçalves et al., 2017).

According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), WFC is a form of inter-role conflict in which the pressures from the work and family domains are, in some extent, mutually incompatible; i.e., participation in one domain may affect participation in the other domain. Moreover, the same authors define WFC in three categories: time-based, strain-based and behavioral-based. Time-based conflict can occur in two distinct ways: first, the amount of time spent in one domain takes away from the amount of time available for the other domain; second, the preoccupation in one domain harms the ability to perform well in the other domain, despite the individual´s physical presence (Bartolome & Evans, 1979).

According to McMillan (2011), time-based conflict combines three elements: the schedule conflict, the excessive workload concept (Pleck, Staines, & Lang, 1980) and the role theory (Kahn et al, 1964).

Another interesting approach is related to scarcity theory, which considers that the total amount of time/energy available is fixed and, consequently, that the participation in multiple activities reduces the amount of time/energy available for each domain. Therefore, according to McMillan (2011), time-based conflict reflects scarcity theory. As a consequence, conflicts (Marks, 1977) and strain on individuals (Goode, 1960) may be generated.

Strain-based conflict occurs when strains developed in one domain harms the ability to perform well in the other domain. According to Pleck et al. (1980), this conflict is based on fatigue and irritability, which are consequences of the interference of one domain over the other (McMillan, 2011). Moreover, according to Jackson and Maslach (1982) and Bartolome and Evans (1980), work-related strain has been related to stress at work and even job burnout, which can lead to fatigue and depression in the family domain.

Behavioral-based conflict occurs when the expected behaviors of one domain are incompatible with the expected behaviors of the other domain. For instance, emotional sensitivity may be considered appropriate in the family domain, yet inappropriate in the work domain (Parasuraman and Greenhaus, 1997); whereas aggressiveness may be considered appropriate in the work domain, yet inappropriate in the family domain (Hammer & Thompson, 2003). This clearly exemplifies the bi-directional nature of the WFC construct, in which work can interfere with family and family can interfere with work. Therefore, conflicts that arise in the work domain are referred to as work-to-family conflict and conflicts that arise in the family domain are referred to as family-to-work conflict (Frone, 2003).

It is important to highlight how individuals “choose” in which domain should they invest more time, energy and emotion. According to the salience theory, this decision is based on the salience, i.e., importance of each role to their self-identity. Thus, considering the concept presented by scarcity theory, the decision-making process of resource allocation is a good predictor of a possible reinforcement of inter-role conflicts (Gordon and Whelan-Berry, 2006).

Another interesting approach, presented by Bagger, Li, & Gutek (2008), describes two distinct perspectives of work-life interface: depletion and facilitative. The first is related to the negative outcomes of work-family interface and is in accordance with the approach presented by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), explained above. The second is related to the positive outcomes of the work-family interface, i.e., experiences from one domain that can positively affect the performance in the other domain (Oliveira, Cavazotte and Paciello, 2013; Powell and Greenhaus, 2010; Greenhaus and Powell, 2006).

Even though many researchers use the concept of WFC and work-family/life balance interchangeably, mostly to represent the interface of employees´ work- and family-related lives (Gordon and Whelan-Berry, 2006), it is essential to point out the difference between both constructs. The first is related to incompatible pressures from work and family roles, which causes conflicts and harms the performance in, at least, one domain. The second adopts a balance perspective and refers to the extent that individuals are equally engaged in and satisfied with both roles (Beigi and Shirmohammadi, 2017).

Another important aspect is related to gender differences. Women typically do a greater share of household labor than men (Coltrane, 2000), which limits the time that women can spend at work. Moreover, inequalities in the workplace might harm women´s organizational commitment and relevance for promotions; hence, making them less likely to “choose” work as their central priority (Reynolds, 2005).

Even though most studies related to WFC focus on parents or married couples, never-married workers without children also face this inter-role conflict. According to Gordon and Whelan-Berry (2006), who performed a study of WFC with never-married women without children, women face problems related to life roles that are distinct from those faced by wives and mothers. For instance, family members (e.g. daughter, sister, aunt, etc), volunteer and religious roles (Young, 1996). The perspective presented by the authors contradicts the assumption that only people who have kids and/or are married have constrains in their lives.

Consequently, it is reasonable to say that other life roles may demand as much, or even more, time, energy and emotion than a "regular family". Moreover, even though the study focused on women, we can broaden this conclusion for never-married men without children.

Regardless of the growing interest related to work-family interface, the emotional aspect of the construct has been neglected by researchers in favor of the resource-related challenges of combining multiple roles. Even though studies related to the latter aspect are important, the understanding of the former is essential to better deal with the emotional consequences of WFC (Glavin, Shieman, &Reid, 2011).

An emotional consequence that has received more attention in the literature is work-related guilt. Also referred to as work-family guilt (WFG), the construct is an emotional reaction driven by the interference of an individual´s job activities on the family domain (Hochwarter et al. 2007; Simon, 1995) and can, additionally, impact the favorable social relationship that he/she seeks to maintain with someone (Baumeister, 1998).

According to Greenhaus et al. (2006), WFG is related to the salience of work and family that an individual stablishes and to the expected outcomes in his family role; thus, when activities from the work domain negatively impact the expected outcomes of the family domain, WFG may emerge (Glavin, Shieman, &Reid, 2011).

Another interesting approach is related to discrepancy theory, presented by Higgins (1987), which argues that divergences between beliefs and reality are the main drivers of an overtly critical and unfavorable self-evaluation. Consequently, these divergences are predictive of the level of guilt one will experience (Tangney, 1993).

It is important to highlight that individuals will react differently when feeling WFG, since they are not equally capable of moderating the dissatisfaction driven by this emotion (Hochwarter et al., 2007, Block, 2005). As a consequence, WFG may negatively impact well-being (Ferguson et al. 2000), increase psychological distress – such as anxiety and depression (Jones and Kugler, 1993), reduce family- and life-satisfaction and increase turnover intentions (Gonçalves et al., 2017; Korabik et al. 2017; Korabik 2015).

2.2. Millennials

2.2.1. Contextualization

Over the last 20 years, researchers have claimed that generational differences exist in the workplace (Kuron et al., 2015). These differences are a consequence of the distinct values and expectations of each generation.

Today´s workforce can be classified in four distinct generations, according to the individuals´ year of birth: the Silent Generation (1925-1945), the Baby Boomers (1946-1964), the Generation X (1965-1981) and the Millennials (1982-1999) (Durocher, Bujaki and Brouard, 2016). It is important to highlight that authors differ in the periods attributed to each generation, mostly driven by two factors: the different contexts of their location of study and the chosen theoretical approach. As an example, according to Foot (1998), Millennials were born in the period between 1980 and 1994; however, according to Perrone et al. (2014), individuals from this generation were born between 1984 and 2002.

Of particular interest of researchers is the current generation of workers, the Millennials (Kuron et al., 2015). Also referred to as Generation Y, Generation Nest (Weber, 2017), Generation Me (Twenge, 2006) and several other names, this generation is already present in leadership positions of big companies, hence the increasing attention they have received from scholars (Rudge et al., 2017).

As a generation, they have experienced the integration of technology since their birth, which differentiate them from every other generation. Millennials leverage the most extensive personal experience and comfort with technology, such as internet, email, cellphones and social media (Weber, 2017). As a consequence, they are more accepting of diversity and more prone to work in teams than the previous generations, are skilled with advanced communication, information technologies and multitasking and are capable of seeing problems and opportunities from different perspectives (Weber, 2017; Myers and Sadaghiani, 2010). Overall, they are considered the most well educated and technology-savvy population in the history of humankind (Philips, 2014).

Millennials are mostly criticized because of the environment they had during their growing period. According to Lipkin and Perrymore (2010), kids from this generation received “high doses of self-esteem” from their parents through the message that they could be whatever they wanted. Their parents´ aim was not only to provide support, courage and protection, but also to provide adequate conditions for growth and expression. As a consequence, kids ended up being more self-centered, with lower willingness to assume responsibilities and with unreal expectations of their performance at work. Moreover, because of the lack of experience-related errors and of adequate feedback regarding performance, an inflated view of their selves created a generation that cannot make mistakes. Overall, the productivity, relationship and general performance at work of this generation were impacted.

It is important to highlight some facts regarding the Brazilian context. First, this generation was raised in a relatively stable political and economic environment, with the economy opening to the world and inflation under control – after the introduction of a new currency, "Plano Real" (Cordeiro and Albuquerque, 2017). Yet, Millennials parents´ experienced a volatile job market, with strong competition and a focus on being employed. As a consequence, many families were only able to have one child, leading to excessive care from the progenitors' perspective (Amaral, 2004; Gomes et al., 2013). Although it may seem reasonable to conclude that the approach used to define Millennials generation is applicable to the country´s scenario, it is actually limited. Brazil faces challenges to provide adequate education and to promote digital inclusion for the population (Rocha-de-Oliveira et al., 2012); thus, the premise of the existence of a single and uniform generation would be an oversimplification of the country´s reality (Cordeiro and Albuquerque, 2017). Second, Amaral (2004) proposed the year of 1981 as the beginning of the Millennials´ period in Brazil. This decision was based on the arrival of technology in the country and its main consequences.

According to Tapscott (2008), eight features differentiate Millennials from their parents: value freedom; like to customize their goods; considered the new opinion makers; care about organizational integrity either when shopping or searching for a job position; value entertainment and leisure either in social or in work life; are cooperative and good with social relationship; value fast and real time communication; and are innovative.

2.2.2. Millennials' work values

The most accepted definition of values was presented by Kluckhohn (1951, p. 395) as "[…] a conception, explicit or implicit, distinctive of an individual or characteristic of a group, of the desirable, which influences the selection from available modes, means, and ends of action''; i.e., values represent what is important to ones´ lives (Weber, 2017). It is important to highlight that individuals may have not only a distinct set of values, but also a distinct degree of importance among them. That being said, work values (WV) can be defined as the intrinsic expressions of the needs and goals that people seek to satisfy through their work. In a simpler definition, WV indicate what individuals consider important and/or desirable in their work life (Kuron et al., 2015).

WV can be classified in four categories: intrinsic, extrinsic, social or altruistic and prestige or status. The intrinsic WV are related to the inherent psychological satisfactions of work, such as interest in the work per se and its related challenges. The extrinsic WV are related to the material aspects of work, such as compensation and benefits. The social WV, as the name implies, are related to relations with people from work, such as peers and supervisors, and with the willingness to help others. Finally, the prestige WV are related to status, influence and power (Kuron et al., 2015).

Millennials have a very specific and, most of the times, conflicting set of WV when compared to previous generations. For instance, they are looking for an adequate work-life balance (Ng et al., 2010); hence, some researchers argue that Millennials seem to prefer “making a life” over “making a living”. However, Baby Boomers have the opposite mindset (Durocher, Bujaki and Brouard, 2016). According to Petroulas et al. (2010), work is a mean that enables Millennials to do want they want.

Other researchers argue that this generation attributes a significant amount of importance to reward systems, i.e., meritocracy. Yet, these rewards are expected to be related to good salaries and also to good benefits, such as time off, paid parental leave, subsidized education, career breaks, among other benefits (EY, 2015; Petroulas et al., 2010; Southard and Lewis, 2004). Therefore, Millennials have high expectations in terms of promotions, pay raises and benefits (EY, 2015; Ng et al., 2010). Moreover, if they don´t get what they want, they are more willing to quit their jobs than previous generations (Durocher, Bujaki and Brouard, 2016).

Another contrasting WV, again when compared to previous generations, is that Millennials usually expected a meaningful work experience, i.e., they expect an opportunity to be engaged, to cause a personal impact and, consequently, to feel fulfilled. Therefore, they expect good training opportunities and the possibility to develop new skills; furthermore, they attribute significant importance to corporate social responsibility (Durocher, Bujaki and Brouard, 2016; Ng et al., 2010; Corporate Leadership Council, 2005). Overall, this generation is considered the most socially conscious until now (Martin and Tulgan, 2001).

As mentioned before, several researchers argue that the presence of technology in the Millennials´ childhood caused a necessity of immediacy that has impacted their work expectations. Thus, their need for constant feedback and continual praise (Martin and Tulgan, 2001) and also for a varied work experience (PwC, 2011) – they have low tolerance for non-challenging work (Corporate Leadership Council, 2005).

As human connections are important for them (Petroulas et al., 2010), this generation values team work, learning from colleagues and a fun environment (EY, 2015; Corporate Leadership Council, 2005; Roberts, 2005). As a consequence, they get a sense of belonging, which makes them feel fulfilled. Yet controversial, they are more prone to disrespect hierarchy and authorities than previous generations (Durocher, Bujaki and Brouard, 2016; Rentz, 2015).
To conclude, according to Ng et al. (2010), Millennials "want it all and want it now" (Durocher, Bujaki and Brouard, 2016).

2.3. Management Consulting

Management consulting is an advisory service provided to organizations by trained, qualified and independent agents who aim to assist their client´s to identify, analyze and solve management problems (Kim and Lee, 2011); moreover, if required to, consultants can also help to implement solutions (George, 1989). With a global market size forecast for 2018 of 145 billion dollars – and forecasts of 152 billion dollars for 2019 and 158 billion dollars for 2020 (Statista, 2019), management consulting is still a growing, yet recent market.
Although consulting firms came to dominate the market from the 1950s onwards, with names such as McKinsey, Booz Allen and Arthur D. Little, many originated previously to the Second World War. The first wave of management consulting was deeply rooted in engineering, which can be explained by three factors: early consultants focused on shop-floor organization; engineering was well established and highly professionalized; managers were trained as engineers (Kipping, 2011; Shenhav, 1999). This association with engineering was crucial for management consulting firms to signal trustworthiness to their clients, considering that the reputation of the business was extremely low. An interesting story was provided during an interview with a mining engineer who had joined a consulting firm at that time. According to him, "he would rather tell his mother that he was working as a pianist in the local brothel than admit that he had joined a consulting firm" (Kipping, 2011).
The second wave of management consulting, responsible for the market dominance in the 1950s, didn´t focus on shop-floor management. Rather, this wave was rooted on issues of corporate organization and strategy (Kipping, 2002). Moreover, firms that were part of this wave had diverse origins, such as management accounting, contract research and psychology; hence, they were not able to rely on the engineering background as a resource. In order to position itself in this new context, McKinsey and Company played a pioneering role in brand building under the leadership of Marvin Bower. Interestingly, this was when some of the

current industry practices were implemented. Some examples are: the idea of referring to the company as a firm; the ownership model, in which employees become partners after working for a specific period of time; the recruitment process, hiring the best graduates of elite business schools; the “up or out” system, in which either the employee is promoted or fired; and the strict dress code are all inheritances of Bower´s law background and were first implemented by McKinsey & Company. However, Bower really innovated when he chose to “leverage” the lack of experience and the young age of his potential employees (Kipping, 2011).

In order to strengthen the “elite” profile of the company, Marvin Bower leveraged the “impressionable minds” of candidates during the recruitment process (Armbrüster, 2004). Rather than only testing the intellectual ability of candidates, the company developed a cultural fit test. The main idea was to increase the perception of “toughness”, which would yield to an employee´s sense of belonging to a very exclusive and selective club. Moreover, Bower developed a different relationship with employees who left the firm, calling them alumni; which turned them into potential clients instead of available resources for competitors (Kipping, 2011; Kipping and Kirkpatrick, 2008). It is worth highlighting that this model was then copied by most companies of the sector at that time.

The third, and last, wave of management consulting was driven by companies from two distinct traditions, large accounting and audit firms, such as Ernst & Young and PricewaterhouseCoopers, and IT hardware and services providers, such as IBM. From the 1980s onwards, these companies started providing consulting services focused on the introduction of large-scale communication and information systems and, as a consequence of the other services, organizational changes. Moreover, they also offered outsourcing services. Regarding trustworthiness, accounting firms had a heritage in which clients could rely on; however, IT firms were total newcomers (Kipping, 2002; Rose and Hinings, 1999).

The presence of management consulting firms in emerging markets causes different reactions. Some researchers argue that hiring consulting firms may lead to disadvantages, such as: failure to enhance performance due to the difficulty of managing contracts; difficulty to control quality of the service; biased solutions, considering that firms have been accused of proposing what clients want instead of what they need; rigid and predefined solutions (Czerniawska, 2004: 47); misuse of their services, i.e., consulting firms would occasionally be hired to justify decisions that have already been made (Wright and Kitay, 2002); higher probability of conflicts, mostly due to control issues between employees and consultants (Ejenãs and Werr, 2011); and fragile solutions for international clients, since consultants may not have proper knowledge of the local culture, which may lead to assumptions and solutions that are not applicable (Gibson, 1998). Nevertheless, some researchers argue the opposite, i.e., hiring consulting firms may lead to advantages for emerging market companies, such as: increases R&D (innovation input) and sales portion (innovation output) of new products; provide support for innovation-related decisions, consequently reducing risk and uncertainty; improve the effectiveness of innovation process, mostly due to knowledge transfer (Back, Parboteeah and Nam, 2014).

When analyzing the importance of consulting firms in emerging economies, such as Brazil, these countries might need outside support during the decision making process (Back, Parboteeah and Nam, 2014); mostly due to scenarios of high transaction costs, operating challenges (Khanna and Palepu, 2010) and uncertainties.

In order to acquire and retain talents, consulting firms have an aggressive promotion policy. As mentioned before, the "toughness" of the recruitment process already gives a perception of belonging to a "elite" team. However, these firms have other tools to get the attention of potential candidates.

- Investment in training, ranging from national and international training to company-paid MBAs
- Attractive compensation plan, usually above the average when compared to other industries
- Exposure to C-level clients, increasing the learning curve and improving network
- Opportunity to work in different industries and, sometimes, countries
- Access to a large empirically validated and highly varied knowledge base (Creplet et al., 2001)

However, there is also the downside of working for these firms. Management consulting firms are known as stressful places to work, mostly due to pressures to excel and show full-time availability (Mühlhaus and Bouwmeester, 2016). Below, some of the stress drivers are highlighted:

- Constant travels (Sturdy, 1997b: 529)
- Heavy workload (60+ work hours per week)
- Dynamic and rapidly changing environment (Kubr, 2002)
- Up or out policy (Kipping, 2011)

As a consequence, these downsides are the main drives of the high employee turnover rate of these firms.

Based on all aspects presented in this section, it is reasonable to conclude that there is a gap in the literature concerning the perception of work-life balance of Millennials, especially when considering the management consulting industry and developing economies, such as Brazil. Therefore, in the following sections this study will further explore these topics.

3. METHOD

3.1. Type of Research

According to Goode and Hatt (1975), research methods can be classified as: qualitative or quantitative. The former is used to gather an interpretative view of a reality, trying to find the relevant topics of a specific case; while the latter, which is based on statistical procedures, is used to find and measure the relationship among two or more pre-defined variables (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000).

The qualitative research method leverages the possibility to grasp the most relevant and insightful concepts, which improves the comprehension of the cause under study (Schein, 1984); moreover, it improves the spontaneity during the data gathering process, since the flexibility of the interview questions gives more freedom for the interviewer to better analyze relevant issues that might arise (Creswell, 2009). As a consequence, the quality of the conclusions drawn upon the interviews are directly linked with the background, experience level and sensibility of the interviewer. Considering the highlights presented above and the purpose of this research, the qualitative research method was chosen.

Since the goal of an exploratory research is to better define and understand a situation that has not yet been studied (Malhotra, 2010; Creswell, 2009), it is considered the first step of the research process. Hence, considering that the purpose of this study is to further understand the Millennials´ perspectives regarding the management consulting industry and its impact on work-life balance, the exploratory research style was chosen. Furthermore, considering the limited literature related to the topic in Brazil, starting with an exploratory research is the best option to further develop the subject.

Regarding the means of investigation, a research can be classified as: field – based on applied experience and carried out where the studied phenomena is observed; laboratory – restricted by a specific and limited location; documental – based on the analysis of document found in public or private institutions or people holding its custody; bibliography – based on materials published in books, articles, websites, newspapers, etc.; finally, experimental – empirical research in which independent variables are manipulated in order to analyze the outcomes.

The bibliographic research, also referred to as bibliographic review, is useful to analyze the knowledge developed upon the subject, providing the reader with updated information. Whereas the field research, according to Vergara (2006), is an empirical study conducted outside the laboratory, if possible at the place where the phenomenon occurs, that is useful to identify the elements that build the scenario being studied. This type of research often includes interviews, routines and analysis of the interviewee. Therefore, considering the highlights presented above and the purpose of this research, the chosen mean of investigation was the field research, focused on interviews.

3.2. Universe and Interviewee Selection

The universe of a research is defined as the set of elements that holds the characteristics analyzed in the research; for example, company and employees (Vergara, 2006). Whereas the interviewee selection, or the subjects under study, considered people that would provide relevant data to be analyzed.

This study explored the universe of Millennials that work and have worked in the management consulting industry in Brazil. The subject selection was based on the availability of individuals that matched this profile and on the saturation method, which states that cases should not be added if theoretical saturation is reached (Eisenhardt, 1989). Therefore, based on these criteria, subjects were limited to 14 interviewees that have worked in different management consulting firms in the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

The list of the selected interviewees is presented below.

Identification	Age (years)	Gender	Time at the Company (years)
1	32	Male	2.8
2	29	Female	2
3	26	Female	1.8
4	26	Male	3
5	26	Male	0.4
6	26	Female	2
7	28	Male	3
8	31	Male	5.2
9	28	Male	4.8
10	27	Male	5.2
11	29	Male	3
12	31	Male	1.5
13	31	Female	3.5
14	25	Female	0.8

Table 1: Interviewees´ Information

3.3. Data Collection

The data collection was based on 14 in-depth, individual and semi-structured interviews, which were conducted personally or via videoconference.

Since semi-structured interviews usually contain open-ended questions and discussions may diverge from the main topic of the research, it is often best to record the interviews and later analyze the transcript version (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006). The interview script (Appendix 01) served as a guide; however, minor changes were performed during each interview, according to the flow of each interaction. The interviews were 90 minutes long, on average, and were conducted in the city of Rio de Janeiro during the first semester of 2019. All interviews were recorded with the consent of each respondent and then transcribed by the researcher. Interviews were previously scheduled based on the availability of the interviewees.

The questions asked during the interview were open ended, thus allowing the interviewees to discourse freely about what they think and feel. Based on this discourse, it is possible to check how respondents perceive the world, what they value and what is the meaning attributed to their actions. To sum up, interview narratives capture not only facts, but also feelings related to the interviewee.

3.4. Data Analysis

The interview transcripts were analyzed based on Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000) reflexive methodology perspective. Dooley and Levinsohn (2001) common characteristics in discourses were also taken into consideration during the analysis.

According to Alvesson and Sköldberg (2000), what establishes the value of qualitative research is not only the awareness of the various interpretative dimensions at several different levels, but also the ability to handle this reflexivity. Their ‘intellectualization of method’ in qualitative research is a function of four elements of interpretation: interaction with empirical material – occurs during interviews, observation of situation and other empirical materials; interpretation – focuses on underlying meanings, which is driven by the role of the researcher and the research subject, in order to produce interpretations; critical interpretation – focuses on ideology, power, social reproduction, the need of the researcher to seek to see structure and report interpretations in any situation under study; finally, reflection on text production and language use – focus on claims to authority and selectivity of the voices represented in the transcripts, which are driven by concerns such as: the coherence of the text and interpretations produced, questions of the role of the researcher and language as discourse.

3.5. Methodology Limitations

Among the main limitations of this study, are:

1. Regarding the interviewees, there are some limitations that must be highlighted, such as:
   - Geographic, since the interviewees were based on the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo
   - Demographic, since all interviewees have the same profile: from middle to high income class, single without children

   That being said, in order to reduce potential biases, a more diversified set of interviewees could be invited. For instance, individuals from other locations, other income levels and different ages; thus generating comparisons between diverse contexts.
2. The data collection focused on relevant factors found in the literature; which presented limitations regarding the management consulting industry in Brazil. Hence, most information of the industry was gathered from other country´s studies.
3. The data collection process may be impacted by misunderstandings and low willingness to participate of the interviewees.
4. The data analysis, even though following the methodology presented in the previous section, is impacted by the author's interpretation, which can impact the results of the study.

Despite the limitations presented above, it is reasonable to say that the method applied in this study effectively captured the reality of Millennials that have worked in the management consulting industry in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

4. RESULTS

This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected from fourteen in-depth interviews. The analysis was categorized into four topics. First, the respondents' perception of the management consulting industry. Second, their perception about work well-being, focusing on three sections: work satisfaction; engagement; fatigue; and burnout. Third, their perception of work-family conflicts. Last, their understanding of work-life balance.

The analysis will take into consideration the generation under study, Millennials, and the economic scenario of the country – Brazil – in which the study took place. Furthermore, for reasons of simplicity, "consultants" will encompass any entry level job position – that requires an undergraduate degree – of the management consulting firms.

4.1. Management Consulting – Overview

This overview comprises the following sections: expectations and goals; work conditions; leadership; and women in management consulting.

4.1.1. Expectations and goals

This section will be dedicated to the analysis of the interviewees´ expectations and goals related to the management consulting job. After a deep analysis of both subjects, a comparison between their expectations and the actual job scenario will be performed in order to determine if the former were met.

When it comes to expectations, interviewees converged in many points. A wide set of factors – steep learning curve; solid and fast career track; diversified projects/new experiences; professional projection/leverage; dynamism; job with an impact; client relationship – were quoted by them and will be discussed below.

Steep learning curve was frequently mentioned by interviewees. According to them, having the experience to work with smart and dedicated people, with complex projects and in a fast-pacing and high pressure environment gives the consultant the ability to learn faster than a regular employee in other industries. However, these are not the only factors that are relevant to have a steep learning curve, long working hours are a fundamental part of the package.

> "While most people work 8 hours per day, you are working 12 to 16 hours. That is also why you are able to develop faster" (I. 07)

The quote is an interesting insight. If we consider that regular employees work 5 days a week, which is not true for most consultants, and that the number of hours worked per day is a good proxy for the workload, which it is, consultants work from 50% to 100% more than regular workers. If we consider a part-time shift of 4 hours on Saturdays for consultants, this range is extended: from 60% to 110% more workings hours than regular workers. Taking into consideration other variables that also impact the workload, such as worker´s productivity and the difficulty of the task being performed, the overall scenario of the management consulting industry – long working hours added to high productivity and challenging tasks – justifies why consultants learn faster than regular workers from other industries.

Solid and fast career track was another expectation that many interviewees highlighted. This is true in the sense that consulting firms have a well-established career track, with an average number of years in each step of the career ladder and an up-or-out system, in which the consultant either goes up in the career or goes out of the firm. However, this career track might not be as fast as new consultants might think it would be and this is not entirely the consultants fault.

During promotional events hosted by the consulting firms, one of the highlights of the presentation is related to a solid and fast career track, in which the consultant will not only scale up fast, but will also have salary increases and more benefits (ranging from bigger bonuses to fancy cars) according to his promotions. Even though these benefits are true, the most probable career track is not as fast as some consulting firms promote. In order to deeply analyze this, the consulting firms will be categorized in two segments: BIG 3 consulting firms and other consulting firms.

The BIG 3, also known by the acronym MBB, refers to the world´s most prestigious consulting firms (Consulting, 2019). Regarding their revenues, McKinsey & Company is the biggest one ($ 8.8 billions in 2016), Boston Consulting Group (BCG) is the second biggest one ($ 6.3 billions in 2017) and, finally, Bain & Company is the third biggest one ($ 3.8-4.5 billions project to 2017). These firms were constantly referred to, by the interviewees, as “the strategic ones” (I. 03), since they are usually hired to solve bigger and more strategic problems of the biggest companies in the world and also the biggest players in the area where the regional office is located. Regarding their career track, they are indeed more solid (less flexible regarding promotion points). Moreover, these firms are more skeptical when promoting the average number of years spent in each position during promotional events, i.e., they do not promote a fast-track career in which an excellent consultant might become a partner in half of the regular time, even though it might happen. Usually, these firms show a range of time that must be spent in each position and clearly state the average time most people spend on them.

When looking at other consulting firms, they are, most of the time, more operational than strategic. I.e., they usually work either with the same companies as the BIG 3, however solving smaller projects – ranging from "less strategic" projects from part of projects developed by a BIG 3– or with smaller players solving a wide range of problems. As a consequence, these consulting firms usually work with more operational projects, justifying why interviewees that worked in these companies would refer to the BIG 3 as "the strategic ones". Regarding their career track, although there are some variations from firm to firm, in general they are more aggressive during promotional events. Most of these firms have a 12-month promotion policy, however, according to the interviewees, the companies state that it is relatively easy to be promoted every 6 months. Doing the math, considering what these companies call "accelerated growth", a career track of 12 to 16 years can be "easily" shortened to 6 to 8 years. This is what justifies the expectations of a solid and fast career track and also what justifies the lack of motivation afterwards, when the consultant finds out that there are several other variables involved in this "accelerated growth" track.

> "Your salary is low at the beginning, however, since you can be promoted every 6 months, you might have a big salary in a short period of time" (I. 02)
>
> "There was a promise of career growth every 6 months, however, right after my approval to start working, there was a change of plans. This change reduced drastically the possibility of *accelerated growth*" (I. 06)
>
> "They promoted a revolution in the career plan, with bigger salaries and, at the end, they messed everything up" (I. 04)
>
> "The changes in the career plan are much more annoying than low salaries. You create expectations of a better plan and then it gets worse"

When it comes to diversified projects and new experiences, known as classic features of the consulting industry and constantly highlighted during presentation events of all firms of the segment, consultants may experience different realities. Once again, these realities are related to the "type" of firm, BIG 3 or other consulting firms.

BIG 3 consulting firms encourage their consultants not to focus on a specific segment of industry, at least until they attain a relatively senior job position. I.e., they encourage new consultants to "rotate" between different sectors – retail, mining and pharmaceutical, to name a few – and develop a more generalist mindset. The consultant also has the – limited – opportunity to express a preference for a specific type of project, either because he would like to or because his coach – an experienced consultant that is assigned by the company to guide and be a moderator between the new consultant and the company – thinks it would be interesting to develop a specific skill related to that project.

> "I was able to participate in a wide variety of projects. Even though my influence to choose the projects was low" (I. 12)

Other consulting firms, according to the interviews, present a more diverse and less clear approach. In order to better understand these, three factors must be analyzed: decision maker´s opinion, project availability and consultant´s knowledge.

The first factor, decision maker´s opinion, seems to be the most relevant factor to determine whether the consultant will be able to rotate in different industries or not. In these firms, human resources (HR) usually do not interfere in the allocation process; instead, the decision makers – managers and partners specialized in a specific industry – usually perform this task. That being said, there are two scenarios. First, the decision makers "like" the consultant and, as a consequence, they can either allocate the consultant to their projects – which will limit the rotation – or recommend the consultant to other decision makers – which may allow the rotation. In the former scenario, although the consultant may be subjected to the subjectivity of the decision makers, he usually has more bargaining power and can better negotiate the project allocation. In the latter scenario, the decision makers do not "like" the consultant and, as a consequence, the consultant will be allocated to projects that are less interesting, usually limiting the "rotation". This scenario is critical for the consultant, since he has low bargaining power and is constantly allocated to more operational projects, frequently leading to either being made redundant or deciding to leave.

> "The managers liked my work and, as a consequence, they would constantly allocate me to their projects. Because of my good reputation, I had a say in the matter" (I. 11)
>
> "I was lucky to get the empathy of a manager in my first project; however, this manager left after a while and I ended up in terrible projects" (I. 02)

It is important to highlight that "liking" the consultant does not, necessarily, mean liking his job. Although performance is a key variable in the "liking" metric, other variables – more subjective – are also considered: personal interests, being considered cool and flattering, to name a few.

> "Interaction with the leaders is essential, otherwise you won´t grow. Managers choose people they have a better connection with; as a consequence, who doesn't network properly end up without projects, in spite of being a good performer" (I. 05)

The second factor, project availability, is another very relevant factor to determine the possibility to rotate. There is a positive correlation between economic growth and project availability, i.e., in good economic scenarios, in which the country´s economy is growing in a good pace, companies have more money and reasons to invest; as a consequence, the quantity and variety of projects for consulting firms tend to increase, i.e., project availability increases. However, the opposite scenario is also true. During periods of slow economic growth, companies tend to invest less and hire consulting firms for more specific types of projects – cost reduction, for instance; i.e., there is not only a reduction in the quantity of projects, but also in their variety. Hence, project availability decreases.

> "The years of 2016 and 2017 were complicated. The crisis led to contract cancelations, which severely restricted not only the amount of projects, but also their nature" (I. 10)
>
> "During the crisis, many contracts were cancelled. Therefore, I chose to stay there to protect my job, since many people were being fired" (I. 08)

Moreover, there is an interesting interaction between the "project availability" factor and the "decision maker´s opinion" factor, with the latter having a stronger influence in the overall context. In other words, the economic scenario is not the only variable that influences the availability of projects, the decision maker has the final saying during project allocation. Therefore, if the decision makers do not like the consultant, the latter will still have a limited access to projects and, as a consequence, a limited rotation.

> "They lacked vision to motivate the consultant. It was common to see good performers not being allocated to the project they wanted" (I. 06)

It is important to highlight that some interviewees have only worked during a period of economic crisis in Brazil, which may influence the project availability factor. Nevertheless, some of them were able to rotate in this scenario; hence, it is reasonable to conclude that the economic situation was only one of the factors that influenced the consultant´s rotation process.

Finally, the third factor, consultant´s knowledge, is another interesting factor to determine the possibility to rotate. In this case, knowledge can be categorized as: background knowledge and consulting knowledge. The first is related to the consultant´s learning processes before joining the consulting firm, i.e., knowledge acquired through educational institutions – universities, most of the times. The second is related to what the consultant learned inside the consulting firm, i.e., knowledge acquired during projects.

During the allocation process, consulting firms – except the BIG 3 – may look at the background knowledge of the newly hired consultant to leverage it in his first project. However, this is less common. These consulting firms tend to link the consulting knowledge with the scope of the forthcoming project. Thus, if a consultant has already performed something similar to the tasks described in the scope of the forthcoming project, it is highly probable that he will be allocated to it. This happens mainly because of cost reductions. In other words, if the consultant has already performed similar tasks, he/she will be able to finish faster and with less effort/help from the project leader. Since the project budget is calculated based on man-hours, this situation reduces money expenditures. Although it is the perfect scenario for the consulting firm, for the consultant this generates an "infinite loop", in which the constant knowledge feedback leads to more experience in a specific sector and, as a consequence, to a limitation of his possibility to rotate.

> "I didn´t choose to go to a specific client, I was allocated there because of a post-graduation in project management" (I. 08)
>
> "After the crisis, I ended up being stuck in this client" (I. 08)
>
> "If you have a good relationship with the partner, he will always allocate you to his projects. As a consequence, the consultant gets more specialized in the type of client that this partner is focused on" (I. 04)

> "It was difficult to change projects. I was allocated to projects of the same industry and end up becoming a specialist. As a consequence, you get stuck in this industry" (I. 06)

It is important to highlight that there is also an overlap between the "consultant´s knowledge" factor and the "project availability" factor. When the availability of projects is high, usually there is more money being invested by the firm, as an outcome of more investments coming from the client´s side; therefore, there is less commitment to cost reduction – lower margins are compensated by volume of projects – and more latitude from the leader´s perspective – mostly due to lower pressure to deliver results – to allow for the consultant´s rotation. The reciprocal is also true. Furthermore, there is a clear convergence between the "consultant´s knowledge" factor and the "decision maker´s opinion" factor, since it is up to their willingness – subjective, in some extent – to allow for consultant´s rotation or not.

Another constantly quoted expectation of newly hired consultants is the professional projection, also referred to as "professional leverage", that working in a consulting firm gives. There are basically two possibilities when starting a new job, the person either wants to stay in the company and possibly pursue the career-growth path; or wants to stay in the company for a specific period of time and then move on to another company. Even though the latter is less usual in other industries – people usually join a company willing to stay there, in management consulting this is very common. This is a singularity of the industry and is well understood by leader consultants – sometimes, applicants deliberately mention this wish during the selection process interviews and, theoretically, it doesn't have any impact on their acceptance.

> "A friend of mine, who was recently approved for a job position in a consulting firm, clearly stated at the interview that he was planning to stay there for a period and then leave" (I. 12)
>
> "Consulting firms must naturally deal with people leaving and entering the firm [turnover] in order to preserve the good environment. Moreover, former consultants usually become clients of the consulting firm" (I. 13)

Although this pattern may seem a bit counterintuitive, the previously mentioned "steep learning curve" expectation attracts a lot of talents who want to stay for a "season" at these firms, learn as much as they can and leave to join another company in a different industry.

However, this career leverage is not only driven by the consultant´s willingness to learn more in less time, it is also driven by the perceived value that other companies give to experience obtained in consulting firms.

In most cases, having experience with management consulting improves the résumé, since the market considers that the constant exposure to diversified and stressful tasks help the development of hard and soft skills. In other words, having the stamp of a consulting firm on the résumé usually leads to a competitive advantage during reallocation processes. Moreover, since consultants tend to have a fast learning curve, they are able to apply for job positions that are way above the regular career track of the prospective company, considering working years. For instance, while an undergraduate joining a certain company may need 6 years to become a manager, an undergraduate after two or three years of experience in management consulting can be hired for the same position.

> "I became more resilient and ready to deal with heavy work and high pressure in the job environment" (I. 09)
>
> "We usually say that consulting years are like dog years, i.e., one year in consulting is equivalent to three years in other industries. This is undeniable" (I. 12)
>
> "Consulting years are like dog years. If you are working on a three-months project that has a bad environment, it will seem like a one-year project. Everything is very intense" (I. 13)

Several interviewees stated that their main objective in consulting was to leverage their careers, i.e., stay for a specific period of time in management consulting and then, as they said, "Go back to the industry", referring to companies other than consulting firms.

In terms of career leverage, an interesting point is: Why do consulting firms not care if applicants are mainly interested in staying for only two or three years? In fact, the time range most people stay in consulting industries is between two and five years (Quora, 2016). Some might argue that the high turnover is designed or helps to easily remove the ones that do not fit in the system. This assumption may be supported by the interviewees answer to the question: "Would you change something to increase the satisfaction and the engagement of the consultants?":

> “No, I would not change anything. Consulting firms have worked like this for ages and are profitable” (I. 12)

Yet a true fact, the argument misses the point of whether past data is representative of the future – also implying that Millennials and future generations will behave like baby boomers, for example did in the past. Additionally, it does tackle the point of whether the ones that stay in the firms are actually the best employees. Another reasonable assumption is that the high turnover is not good for these firms, since the best employees may have easier access to other job opportunities, generating potential problems of talent retention that would impact the firms´ performance in the future. Therefore, it is not clear what is the net impact of the high employee turnover.

Dynamism is an expectation constantly quoted by the interviewees that is harder to analyze because of its subjectivity – much higher when compared to the expectations analyzed until this point. Dynamism overlaps with steep learning curve and diversified projects/new experiences, which have already been analyzed. It is also affected by two other key factors, namely: variety of tasks and lack of routine.

The first, variety of tasks, is actually self-explanatory. Some of the tasks highlighted during the interviews were: meetings with clients, data analysis, presentations, teamwork and studying a specific subject. The interviewees constantly stated the association between this factor and job motivation, ranging from interviewees that were more motivated because they were performing multiple and varied tasks to interviewees who were not motivated because they considered their tasks the less interesting.

> “The biggest pros of consulting are the dynamism and the excellent learning opportunities” (I. 06)
>
> “I had the opportunity not only to work on different projects and in different industries, but also to perform different task. This was very valuable” (I. 12)
>
> “The entire team feels like this. Tasks are varied, but repetitive. There is no motivation, no more learning and everybody is searching for new job opportunities” (I. 08)

The second factor, lack of routine, is related to the diversity of the daily tasks. I.e, interviewees correlated the lack of routine to the lack of predefined and recurrent tasks at work. However, this may vary according to the type of firm and to the type of project/client.

> "One day in consulting is always different from the other. Every day you have a different task to be performed. You don´t have nothing predefined. These factors lead to a more dynamic day." (I. 06)
>
> "If you are working on the same client or on the same industry for almost one year, for instance, the partners will make an effort to allocate you to different types of projects in order to diversify your learning and develop both your qualitative and quantitative skills" (I. 15)

Travels also contribute to a lack of routine. Frequent, for most consultants, they can vary according to the type of firm and the type of project that the consultant is allocated to. When analyzing their perception towards travelling, although all of them agreed that travelling, was initially considered a job advantage, they presented different opinions when the novelty faded.

> "At first, travelling was amazing. Good hotels and restaurants, miles accumulated from the flights and different cultures were some of the advantages of travelling." (I. 07).
>
> "It is excellent to have international experiences, that´s why I´ve already worked in projects in the United States, Spain, Peru and Colombia" (I. 09)
>
> "Travelling was always an advantage, in my opinion. Extra budget for meals and transportation and miles accumulated from the flights were some of the advantages of travelling" (I. 11)
>
> "At first, you are very excited. Travels to different places, fancy hotels and restaurants and accumulated miles from the flights were huge pros" (I. 12)

However, after having more experience with consulting projects, some interviewees changed their perception vis-à-vis traveling. Therefore, in order to better understand the context, four main variables must be considered: availability of projects that required traveling; location of the project; frequency of travels; and consultant´s profile.

The first, availability of projects, is again related to the type of firm. Consulting firms in general require frequent travels; however, BIG 3 firms tend to require more travelling than other consulting firms. BIG 3 are usually hired by big national and multinational players to perform complex projects, which usually require analysis of multiple sites of the client. Thus, consultants are usually required to travel with more frequency. As a consequence, the availability of projects that require traveling tends to be higher in these firms. When analyzing the interviews, this pattern was clearly perceived. Interviewees from BIG 3 firms highlighted their preference for projects in the location of their office of origin. Meanwhile, most interviewees from other consulting firms stated the opposite, i.e., a preference for projects not in the location of their original office.

> "I had very little chance to travel" (I. 05)
> "I had two international experiences working at the firm; however, since I´m specialized in a certain type of client, my current travelling opportunities are very little" (I. 08)
> "I´d rather do projects in my office of origin than in other offices, since the probability to travel would be lower" (I. 12)
> "Travelling is very frequent; however, it varies according to the type of project you are allocated to. I was able to stay in my office of origin most of the times, which I consider better than the frequent flights" (I. 13)

The second and third variables, location of the project and frequency of travels, are strongly correlated to the type of project. For instance, if the firm needs to analyze the production line of a client´s site located in the Northeast of Brazil, the team of consultants will need to be there to better understand every process. Still, the team will usually fly back home every Friday. Therefore, the type of project will, most of the times, dictate whether the consultants will have to travel, the location they will need to go to and the frequency.

It is interesting to mention that some of these travels can be required by the firm for reasons that are not project-related; for instance, meetings with leaders and HR, social events and training.

> "There was a policy at the firm that consultants should work at a specific office every Friday; therefore, I had to travel at least once a week" (I. 12)
> "Our firm has a policy that consultants must work at a specific office on Fridays; therefore, consultants usually fly back every week" (I. 13)
> "Travelling was not only related to projects; for instance, I already went to the United States for a training session" (I. 11)

Still considering travel opportunities, it is worth mentioning the mobility program proposed by BIG 3 firms – rare in other consulting firms. In this program, the consultant has the possibility of working at an international office of the firm for a specific period of time.

Finally, the consultant´s profile is a key variable to determine his willingness to travel and, as a consequence, his satisfaction level towards this situation. Prospective consultants are aware of the necessity to travel, since this is clearly stated in the job description and repeatedly quoted during the training process. Therefore, the newly hired should not only be available, but also want to travel. However, this is not necessarily perceived in reality.

Several interviewees stated that their willingness to travel significantly decreased over time. According to them, at first, travelling was very interesting and, therefore, not a problem. However, as time went by, being away from home and always "stuck in flights" started to bother some of them.

> "For most people, travels are a burden; moreover, this situation is even worse for the ones who have family and kids" (I. 07)
>
> "I´m currently travelling every week, going to the client´s city on Monday mornings and coming back on Friday evenings. It is very demanding" (I. 04)
>
> "When I was allocated to a project that required constant travelling, I felt really stressed and physically exhausted" (I. 06)

However, these interviewees stated that other consultants didn´t have this problem. According to them, there were mainly two explanations: their peers either didn´t have family or had a different profile – such as not being close to their families. Although it may seem reasonable, the interviewees that enjoyed travelling stated that the most difficult part of travelling was being away from their relatives and friends. Therefore, it is clear that the consultant´s profile is what determines his/her strength to deal with tough situations in order to achieve goals.

> "Travelling is a pro and a con in consulting; it is a pro because of the learning opportunities and a con because of the distance from home and family" (I. 09)
>
> "I don't have relatives nearby my work location. Therefore, I don´t get to see them during the week. Nevertheless, I always travel on weekends to visit them" (I. 13)

> "What reduces the sadness of being away from family and friends is the good environment created by the team" (I. 04)

To sum up, "dynamism" is highly subjective and must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis, focusing on the factors highlighted above.

Another expectation frequently quoted by the interviewees, job with an impact, is again highly subjective and greatly driven by the interviewee´s mindset. Initially, it is important to understand what is a job with an impact. Interestingly, opinions converged to a specific point. Most of the interviewees, when quoting this expectation, related it to a meaningful impact on the client, i.e., to deliver what the client expected – or even more.

> "The analysis delivered significant value for the client. Moreover, it was satisfying to see the impact on his company" (I. 07)
>
> "Satisfaction is related to the impact you have, i.e., satisfaction is the ability to work and see the results in the client" (I. 03)

An interesting point is that some interviewees evaluated their impact based on the client´s reaction, i.e., based on the client´s physical expressions during meetings and presentations.

> "The main reward was to see the client´s reaction" (I. 01)
>
> "Based on the client´s reaction during the presentation, I could see that I was delivering value for him" (I. 07)

This "evaluation method" is highly subjective and can directly impact – either positively or negatively – the consultant´s expectations of the job. Therefore, when evaluating their impact based on the client´s reaction, consultants may be biased and, as a consequence, do not perceive their actual impact. This situation may be further complicated when considering the relationship between the team of consultants and the client during the projects, since it is not necessarily good and easy.

> "It can be exhaustive both for us and for the client. In a specific project, I´ve already heard *here comes the team of consultants again*, which made me feel that I was actually disturbing more than helping" (I. 03)

> “I already heard a story of a client who gave incorrect information for the consultants because he was afraid of losing his job” (I. 11)

Moreover, some consultants discussed their real impact on the client. According to them, some peers believe that their impact on the clients was – in general – very little; meanwhile, others had the opposite perception. For the latter, every project had an impact on the client and it was their responsibility to implement it and see the results.

> “Some people think that the job is ‘blah blah blah’ and doesn´t generate any value. This is not my case” (I. 04)
>
> “I believe that most projects deliver value for the clients; however, some of them are only pro forma” (I. 01)
>
> “The project must deliver value, otherwise the client wouldn´t hire us” (I. 13)
>
> “I believe that we are constantly delivering value to our clients” (I. 14)

Also, regarding the “impact” expectation of prospective and newly hired consultants is what will be referred to as “belonging”. This factor is related to the perception of attachment and affinity that consultants have towards their firms. The parallel between sense of belonging and perception of job impact may seem unclear; however, a high sense of belonging is how consultants must feel to engage in their jobs and develop a mindset that will increase their perception of impact. When belonging to a firm, the consultant feels as a part of it, agrees with its values and develops a sense of ownership. As a consequence, he feels that he is growing and learning, which directly enhances his perception of impact. In the same line of thought, when the sense of belonging is low, the consultant feels like an easily-replaceable part of the system. As a consequence, his perception of impact decreases significantly.

> “Being an important part of the process is essential to perceive you have an impact” (I. 08)
>
> “I felt worthless there. I felt that I could be easily replaced at any time” (I. 06)

Finally, the last expectation highlighted by the interviewees was “client relationship”. According to them, this relationship was highly valuable, since they were able to access people with a lot of experience in a specific industry and learn from them. Moreover, it was possible to be around people from the C-level of the client company, such as CEOs and

CFOs, which was also a good opportunity to acquire more knowledge. Therefore, there are mainly two variables that influence how much this relationship can create value for the consultants: contact with the client and client´s seniority. The former is related to the frequency of contact that consultants have with the client and to their level of interaction – ranging from negative to positive. The latter is related to the hierarchical level of the person with whom the consultants have contact, ranging from a regular worker from the production line to the CEO of the client company.

According to the interviewees, a good relationship with the client is valuable for both parties, since the exchange of information will then be easier. Furthermore, the contact with people from the top management of the client was important because it was possible to leverage their expertise not only for the project, but also for the consultant´s professional and personal lives – which includes visibility for job opportunities out of the consulting industry. Finally, the relationship with the client was considered a positive factor of the job.

> "Clients tend to value our job and cooperate with us, creating a good environment to work" (I. 09)
>
> "My friends were allocated to projects in which the interaction with clients was good. Unfortunately, this was not my case" (I. 02)
>
> "The opportunity to have meetings with people from the top management of the client company encourages me to acquire more knowledge" (I. 10)
>
> "Contact with the client gives visibility, which can provide you different job opportunities or information to negotiate a promotion or a salary raise" (I. 11)

All factors presented above help to segment and, consequently, understand how interviewees expectations emerged. However, one factor that must be further explored are the promotional strategies chosen by consulting firms. During promotional events – and even on their websites – consulting firms constantly mention all expectations presented by the interviewees. Hence, it is possible to conclude that the promotional strategy is effective. However, the main problems appear when consultants, after working for a short period of time, have a better understanding of the real consulting world. At this point, they start to rethink their careers in the industry, mainly comparing their career goals with the actual job scenario. Therefore, in order to generate a better comprehension of the interviewees´ objectives when applying to consulting firms, their main goals will be further analyzed.

When asked about their goals, interviewees mentioned that this factor varied according to their experience level as consultants; nevertheless, interviewees presented only two goals: career leverage and career-growth inside the firm. The former is definitely the most common goal and there are some explanations for this phenomenon. As previously mentioned, the consulting industry develops good professionals and “provides” a valuable stamp on the consultants´ résumé; hence, people apply for job positions at these firms already planning to work for a specific period of time and then move on to another company in a different industry or to open their own business. The decision to leverage a career in management consulting is usually based on three different scenarios. First, the prospective consultant is not sure about which career path he should take; hence, since consulting can provide an exposure to a wide variety of industries, it may be useful in the decision making process. Second, the prospective consultant has the will to become an entrepreneur, but does not have either the required knowledge or the required money – or both – to do so. Hence, management consulting becomes an interesting opportunity to learn more about management per se, different industries and good market practices in order to start a new business. Not to mention the financial return of the job, that can also help during the initial phase of the new business. Finally, the third reason is not related to prospective consultants; instead, it is related to consultants that once thought about pursuing a career-track inside the firm, but then changed their minds.

> “My goal was to get more experience and leave the firm to work in another industry with a better salary. I never wanted to become a partner” (I. 03)
> “My initial goal was to acquired knowledge in a fast pace” (I. 04)
> “My initial goal was to be in the market, get more experience and then leave the firm to work on company from a different industry” (I. 08)
> “You can leverage the management consulting career to learn more about different industries and choose which one you prefer to work at” (I. 12)
> “My final goal was always to open my own business. Nevertheless, I chose consulting because I knew that I would gather valuable information from the market and would also be able to save some money to invest later” (I. 11)

The second goal quoted by interviewees was to pursue their career-growth-path inside the firm. In other words, the initial goal of those consultants was to become a partner. However, although some interviewees highlighted an initial interest to pursue this career track, all of them changed their minds after a short period of time. This phenomenon happens mainly due to two factors. First – and most common – the scarce work-life balance (WLB) in the consulting industry. After an initial phase of “romance” and excitement, consultants notice that their WLB is not good and can lead to negative consequences, such as: detachment from family – including difficulties in having their own – and friends; negative impacts on health; and lack of time for personal activities. Therefore, since these consequences tend to gain relevance as their experience level increases, consultants shift their goals from the “career-growth inside the firm” to the “career leverage”.

> “I applied with the goal of becoming a partner; however, after working there for six months, I changed my mind. I didn´t have a life and I wasn´t willing to stay there for several years to reach my initial goal” (I. 01)
>
> “I don´t see a problem in becoming a partner; however, since my final goal is to have a part-time career and do other things besides consulting, I don´t think it would be possible” (I. 13)

Second, the type of work performed by consultants and partners is significantly different. The former are more focused on the project per se, i.e., have the task to analyze the client´s current situation and determine how it will reach a specific goal – proposed at the scope of the project. While the latter, the partners, are more focused on client acquisition and retention and on project management, i.e., they are more focused on the commercial side of the business, performing both the sales and post-sale activities. Hence, consultants that are not interested in this type of work, tend to look for other paths inside – when possible – or outside the firm.

> “Initially, even though I had a clear focus on using consulting as a career leverage, the glamour made me think that I could stay there for a longer period and maybe even become a partner. However, after a short period of time working, I decided to go back to my original plan” (I. 12)

It is important to highlight an interesting and very common goal-shift in management consulting. In this case, the newly hired has a clear goal, “career leverage”; however, due to factors such as the challenging work and the status related to the job, some consultants change their goal to the “career-growth path inside the firm”. Nevertheless, after a few more months working, the same consultants shift back to the “career leverage” goal, after having a clearer view of the job.

To sum up, when analyzing the interviewees´ expectations it is possible to understand why most consultants choose to use management consulting as an opportunity to leverage their careers. For most interviewees, even those who had initially thought that consulting would be a short-term experience, expectations were not met. As a consequence, the ones that had initially imagined growing inside the firm changed their minds and decided to limit their experience to a certain period of time; meanwhile, the ones who had initially imagined working as consultants for a specific period of time anticipated their departure.

4.1.2. Work Conditions

The management consulting industry is well-known by its bad work conditions – with long working hours, high pressure and frequent unexpected demands. Therefore, this subject will be further analyzed in this section. However, one factor must be considered before hands: subjectivity. Subjectivity is always present in analysis that involves individual´s opinion regarding a subject; in this case, work conditions. Since each individual presents a different interpretation of the former, this analysis has a high subjectivity level. Nevertheless, in order to develop a more robust evaluation of the subject, a brief benchmark study – between the management consulting firms and companies from “the rest of the industry” – will be presented at the end of this section. That being said, it is possible to start the analysis of the interviewees´ perception concerning work conditions on the management consulting industry.

Based on the interviews, five variables were considered key to analyze work conditions: working hours; predictability; travels; type of work; and relationships. Working hours, one of the most polemic points regarding the industry, was frequently quoted by interviewees. According to them, this variable was significantly impacted by the type of project and the leader´s style. Nevertheless, the overall amount of working hours – considering the longest amount of hours worked on a project during a minimum period of one week – ranged from eight to eighteen working hours per day. If outliers are removed, the amount of working hours ranged from ten to sixteen hours per day. Meanwhile, the median in the latter scenario was twelve hours per day, which seems to be the most common in the industry.

> “Overall, working hours range between twelve and thirteen hours per day” (I. 06)

> "I´ve never worked only eight hours per day, the average is between ten and twelve hours" (I. 09)
>
> "The average of the firm is sixty-five hours per week" (I. 12)
>
> "In the firm I used to work for, the average was sixty to seventy hours per week" (I. 13)
>
> "I usually arrive at 9am and leave between 7pm and 9 pm" (I. 14)

It is worth to highlight an interesting point when considering the type of firm – BIG 3 and other consulting firms – and the number of hours worked. While in BIG 3 consulting firms the average number of hours worked ranged from twelve to fourteen hours per day – or sixty to seventy hours per week; in other consulting firms this range was wider, ranging from eight to fourteen hours per day. This difference in the lower limit is explained by some types of projects that only the latter firms accept, such as outsourcing staff.

> "I work according to the client schedule, i.e., I arrive at 8:30am and leave at 5:30pm" (I. 08)

Predictability was another variable mentioned by interviewees, whom explained that lack of predictability can be worse than high number of hours at work. The former is usually related to: working during inconvenient hours (from 00am to 6am, for instance); working during inconvenient days (weekends, holidays and vacations); and vacation cancelations. Moreover, other factors increased the lack of predictability, such as: unexpected travels and demands that impacted attending to events – even those that had been previously scheduled and warned by the consultant to the leaders.

> "What bothered me was that the seventy hours were distributed along the week, including night-time hours and weekends" (I. 13)
>
> "I didn´t own my life. During the time I worked there, I lost several flights and event tickets because of the urgent demands. I was paid for my availability" (I. 01)
>
> "I´m currently in Colombia and I can be allocated to the Northeast afterwards. I don´t own my life" (I. 09)
>
> "If they *ask* you to cancel your vacation, they will refund any expenditure you might have had to schedule it. Money is not an issue. Nevertheless, other

things, such as not being able to have vacations with your girlfriend, are not *refundable*" (I. 12)

Interviewees that considered having a low level of predictability highlighted an impact not only on their personal lives, but also on their willingness to stay in the consulting firms. Moreover, some interviewees considered the lack of predictability a lack of respect with the employee.

> "I used to work during my vacations and in several moments that I had already warned them of an event. It was disrespectful. As a consequence, I decided to leave the firm" (I. 13)
>
> "I don´t mind working twelve hours per day; however, the lack of predictability is an issue. You never know if your vacation will be cancelled. As a matter of fact, if it was, I wouldn´t be so upset. It is something very common" (I. 14)

Frequent travels were another variable frequently quoted by interviewees. As previously mentioned in the "expectations and goals" section, this variable presented different opinions across the interviewees. Nevertheless, the overall perception is that travels are – most of the times – interesting, yet disturbing. Moreover, it seems that the interviewees´ interest in travelling had decreased over time.

> "Travelling at first is an interesting part of the job; however, after a while it becomes really annoying" (I. 01)

Type of work was an interesting and frequently quoted variable. According to interviewees, the work prompted the development of their soft and hard skills. In other words, while team work and presentations to clients induced the development of the former skill, analysis via different software induced the development of the latter.

> "After the experience of working as a consultant, I can say that I´m tougher and that I can handle high pressure environments easier than before. Moreover, the analytical development was meaningful, mainly on Excel" (I. 12)
>
> "My improvements in communication and hard skills, mainly on Excel and programing, were definitely a pro of the management consulting job" (I. 03)

Besides that, the type of work was considered by many interviewees one of the biggest advantages of the consulting industry. When asked why, they mentioned several reasons, such as: challenging tasks; lack of routine; cooperation; autonomy; diversity of projects and clients; and dynamism.

> "Learning opportunity and team work were definitely advantages of the firm" (I. 04)
>
> "Quoting some advantages of the consulting job, I would say the lack of routine, learning opportunity and dynamism" (I. 06)
>
> "Diversified projects in a broad range of companies provided excellent learning opportunities" (I. 07)
>
> "An advantage of the firm was the autonomy. I had the opportunity to study a specific theme and apply concepts related to it during the projects" (I. 10)
>
> "I still wanted a challenge at work; however, in other industries this was limited. Hence, I came back to consulting" (I. 13)

Nevertheless, interviewees presented an association between the type of work performed during projects and their work condition perceptions. Based on their statements, there are mainly two classifications for projects: operational and strategic. In projects that are "more operational", as quoted by them, the challenge is usually limited to analytical analysis. Moreover, these projects usually have a limited learning curve, since the algorithm development is the most challenging and less time-consuming part; while its application to analyze several databases is the most time-consuming and repetitive part of the job. On the other hand, projects that are "more strategic" are more open to discussions, creativity and autonomy. As a consequence, consultants tend to have a better perception regarding their work conditions when expose to these projects.

> "In more *operational* projects, there is a limitation to innovate and create more value" (I. 02)
>
> "I was expecting more exposure to financial analysis and less *operational* tasks. As a consequence, I got unsatisfied and left the firm" (I. 05)
>
> "My satisfaction was impacted by the type of work, since *operational* tasks were less interesting" (I. 13)

"I was not happy with the nature of the job. It was too analytical and little interactive" (I. 13)

"*Strategic* consulting firms provide better learning opportunities, since they are hired for more *strategic* projects and have staff of a higher level" (I. 03)

"My firm was hired for less *strategic* projects, when compared to the ones of BIG 3 consulting firms. As a consequence, my learning opportunities were limited. (I. 11)

Although the type of firm may influence the type of project that consultants are allocated to, since BIG 3 consulting firms tend to be hired for more strategic projects, the consultants´ satisfaction was similarly impacted by the nature of the tasks being performed. Therefore, the type of firm does not influence the consultants´ interest level regarding their tasks; however, it may influence the availability of projects – operational and strategic – for consultants.

Finally, relationship was another frequently quoted variable. Considering the meritocracy model and the typical work environment of the management consulting industry, it wouldn´t be surprising if the relationship between peers was highly competitive. However, a different scenario was presented by interviewees. According to them, relationship was one of the biggest advantages of the consulting industry.

When asked about the relationship with their peers, interviewees mentioned several advantages and considered that, in general, it was great. They highlighted that the team interaction and the level of cooperation was excellent and that their peers were like their second family. Moreover, interviewees mentioned that the profile of their peers was very similar to theirs – similar backgrounds, social conditions and even sexual orientation; which was classified as good by some, since interaction became easier, and bad by others, since it limited the diversity of the group.

"You create another family at the firm" (I. 05)

"I learned a lot with my peers. Moreover, there was a lot of cooperation" (I. 02)

"When you are out of your office of origin, the team is always together. When you leave the client, everyone eats and, when necessary, works together from the hotel" (I. 07)

"The relationship with peers was excellent, there was a lot of cooperation and no competition. The coexistence is easier, since everybody is in a similar stage of life" (I. 10)

> “Not only the age of my peers was very similar, but also their profile. As a consequence, relationship was good” (I. 06)
>
> “The relationship was excellent. Very similar people, when considering age, social condition and educational level; which simplifies the coexistence. However, similar profiles are not necessarily good, since it reduces the diversity of the team” (I. 09)

Nevertheless, when asked about a potential competition between peers, interviewees clearly stated that it didn´t exist; instead, a highly cooperative environment in which everyone was willing to help was mentioned by them. However, an interesting factor must be highlighted. A self-induced pressure to excel and deliver the best work possible was mentioned by some interviewees. Frequently related to the intellectual level of their peers, this environment pressure splits opinions. While some classified it as positive, since it increased their willingness to learn, others classified it as negative, stating that it increased the pressure of an environment that is already high. Yet, although based in comparisons between peers, the perception of pressure was not considered as competition. To sum up, the overall evaluation of the relationship with peers was classified as either good or excellent.

> “Since everyone there was very smart, the bar was raised. As a consequence, there was a subjective pressure for everyone to perform perfectly. *Everybody is smart and delivers excellent results, thus I have to be at their level*” (I. 12)
>
> “There is a pressure from the environment that raises the bar; however, I don´t see it as a competition or a bad pressure, I see it as a way of continuous improvement” (I. 14)
>
> “There is a pressure from the environment generated by differences in the consultants´ profiles. In other words, people who like to work more than the average raise the bar. As a consequence, there is a higher pressure from the environment to over-perform and over-deliver” (I. 07)

After carefully analyzing the work conditions of the consulting industry, according to the interviewees´ perspective, it is important to also analyze and provide an overview of the work conditions of other industries. In order to develop this benchmark, it is worth highlighting that the information concerning other industries are based on averages and that outliers may exist. Moreover, since consultants usually refer to industries other than the management consulting one as “the industry”, this jargon will be used until the end of this section. Finally, all information presented in the following benchmark study were acquired on the web sites “Na Prática” (2019) and were also based on conventional wisdom.

In order to develop a more robust benchmark study, historical data may help to create a parallel between both industries in two distinct scenarios. In the first scenario, from the 1960´s to 1990´s, consulting firms were increasing their presence in Brazil and were always associated with terrible work conditions. Reviews from former- and current-employees frequently mentioned twelve to sixteen hours of work per day, not to mention the frequent flights, high pressure of the job and the meritocracy and “up-or-out” systems – both not very common in Brazil at that time. Considering the same period, the industry in Brazil was frequently associated with better work conditions. Eight hours of work per day and stability were the main features of the Brazilian industry – mostly due to the closed economy and the high number of state-controlled companies. Therefore, consulting developed a reputation of being highly aggressive, with salaries higher than the industry´s (around 100% bigger), benefits better than the industry´s (nice cars for employees, five-star hotels during travels, etc) and work more demanding than the industry´s. In the second scenario, the first two decades of the years 2000, a different political-economic context emerged in Brazil, added to the technological boom from this era. As a consequence, the market was more open to foreign investments, increasing the competition in the national market, technology increased the information exchange and generation differences changed the perception of employees towards work. The industry had to implement meritocracy models – which increased its average salary – and to increase the number of working hours to positively impact the productivity. Meanwhile, even though the consulting industry didn´t change its salaries and benefits, it had to deal with higher competition – ranging from firms with similar business models to more disruptive ones – and with the new generation´s expectations vis-à-vis their professional lives. Finally, comparing both industries, it is reasonable to say that: the salaries of management consulting firms are still higher (around 40-50%); the average number of hours worked remained unchanged in consulting and increased for the industry – currently ranging from ten to twelve hours; and that the stability factor only changed in the industry – significantly reduced due to the privatization of some state-controlled companies and the entrance of new private companies. To sum up, the gap between both industries was significantly reduced between these two periods.

4.1.3. Leadership

Leadership can be defined as “the action of leading a group or an organization” or even as “the state or position of being a leader” (Lexico, 2019). Both definitions converge to the following points: leadership must be performed by someone who either was entitled as a leader or has a leadership position; although encompassing the most well-established leadership positions in organizations, the one performed by employees in less powerful positions is neglected. That being said, leadership could also be defined as “the act of, based on one´s mindset and actions, indirectly lead an organization”. In other words, an employee can be considered as an indirect leader when he thinks and acts like one – taking into account his autonomy level. This is what most people call “owner´s mindset” – or “ownership mindset”. Therefore, when employees have this mindset, they might not directly impact the organization; yet, if these individual micro-impacts scale, they have the potential to generate bigger ones. Hence, this is why the labor market considers leadership a valuable skill.

> “When I have the ownership mindset, I do not accept to deliver a task that was not done properly. I feel that I have to deliver a well-done and robust analysis” (I. 09)
>
> “In order to develop the ownership mindset, employees have to feel that they actually own the business. Otherwise, it will not work” (I. 07)
>
> “In my opinion, there is a correlation between ownership mindset and work engagement, i.e., if the employee has this mindset, he will be engaged with work” (I. 12)

When employees from consulting firms – not only consultants, but also leaders, managers and directors – act like they have their share of the company ownership, a win-win scenario is highly expected. From the employees´ point of view, bigger chances of promotion, bonuses and learning opportunities; from the firms´ point of view, performance increase. At the end of the day, the ownership mindset is good for everyone involved.

Furthermore, leadership in management consulting is also related to the state of being a leader. In other words, leadership positions exist and have a significant amount of power in these firms – a subject that will be furthered analyzed during this section. In general, these job positions are (from the bottom to the top of the hierarchical structure): leaders, managers, directors and partners. Considering that the leaders are the ones that have more interaction with the consultants, they will be benchmark to evaluate the consultants´ perception regarding the leadership in management consulting.

Furthermore, before analyzing leadership in management consulting, it is important to highlight how this factor varies according to the type of firm. At the BIG 3 consulting firms, “leader” – also known as “Case Team Leader”, “Engagement Manager” and “Project Leader” – is a job position. Placed above the consultant in the hierarchical structure, considering the regular career path, the leader has responsibilities that are different from those of consultants. While the latter focuses on the development of specialized knowledge and is responsible for a component of a specific project, the former is not only responsible for the entire project, but also manages more than one at the same time. Consequently, leaders are responsible for different teams of consultants. That being said, it is not surprising that these three firms not only have individuals in specific job positions to perform these tasks, but also provide training in order to better prepare them. However, most of the other consulting firms present a different scenario regarding their leadership. Although tasks are very similar, there is not a position called “leader”; instead, leader is how senior consultants – allocated to lead a team of less senior consultants during a project – are called. As a consequence, there is not a preparation for these consultants to become actual leaders. Even though some might argue that leadership skills are learned while working as a regular consultant and that a manager is available for guidance, assuming that this is enough to develop a good leader is similar to assuming that a good consultant will also be a good leader. In other words, this is a highly risky strategy that presents several flaws, according to the interviewees.

To sum up, the creation of the “leader” job position is interesting not only to teach senior consultants how to lead teams, but also to evaluate whether the senior consultant has the required skills to become a good leader.

> “When the consultant becomes a senior consultant, he is – eventually – allocated to be a leader. There is not training” (I. 06)
>
> “Leaders didn´t have any previous preparation to lead. The consultant was technically excellent, but was terrible on tasks such as: splitting and delegating activities and teaching how to use tools or to perform analysis” (I. 07)

When analyzing the leaders in management consulting firms, it is interesting to further understand their responsibilities. Even though briefly exposed in the first paragraph of this section, two other responsibilities must be mentioned: staffing process and feedbacks. The former, which is basically the process to allocate consultants to projects, is a non-formalized responsibility of the leaders. During promotional events of consulting firms, it is common to hear that the HR is the responsible for the staffing process; however, interviewees described a different reality. According to them, the HR was responsible for the bureaucratic part of the staffing process, while the actual staffing was performed by the leaders. The leaders have the responsibility for feedbacks concerning the evaluation of the consultants´ performance. Although with different formats, the performance evaluation of the consultants is always done by leaders. However, the performance evaluation of the leaders is not necessarily done by consultants. Hence, considering that leaders choose, lead and evaluate the teams, they acquire a significant amount of power. In addition, the HR becomes merely bureaucratic. As a consequence, consultants have limited access to channels in which they may complain, propose or request something. Even though, in some firms, consultants have a coach – or tutor – that should guide them through their career path and provide an open channel to talk about any subject, it is also inefficient. Due to the excessive power that leaders have, consultants are not willing to "open themselves" to their coaches, since they are not sure how safe and trustworthy this channel actually is. At the end of the day, this potential way to improve the communication between the firm and consultants becomes almost useless and the excessive power that leaders have becomes an extra pressure for consultants.

> "Although the HR was officially the responsible for the staffing process, the leader was the reference. As a consequence, consultants became his *hostages*. In addition, performance evaluation was not good, as it was also centered in the leader" (I. 06)
>
> "HR was merely operational" (I. 10)
>
> "The firm could have a better communication channel, an easier system to access the HR" (I. 03)

When asked about the relationship with their leaders, interviewees highlighted that – in general – "it was more professional"; i.e., the relationship between the consultants and their leaders was more focused on the job per se. Furthermore, the consultants´ way of speaking varied according to the interlocutor, i.e., they spoke in a more formal way to their leaders and in a more casual way to their peers.

> "I tried to keep a good relationship; yet, more professional" (I. 04)
>
> "The relationship was more professional. Hence, limited to evaluations and project changes" (I. 08)

> "The relationship was more professional, more distant" (I. 12)
> "I usually filter what I say" (I. 14)

In addition, during the analysis of the interviews, the empathy level was a clearly impacting the relationship between consultants and leaders. In order to better understand it, empathy must be split in two branches: leaders vis-à-vis consultants and consultants vis-à-vis leaders. When analyzing the former, it is important to mention that it considers the consultants´ point of view regarding the leaders´ empathy level towards the former, since no leader was interviewed. As a consequence, it was measured by the leaders´ willingness to repeatedly allocate the same consultant to their projects. Thus, even though performance was mentioned as an important factor, social interaction was considered a key factor when evaluating the leaders´ empathy level towards consultants. To better describe what "social interaction" means, a very famous – and frequently used during selection processes of consulting firms – test can be used as an example. Called "The Airplane Test", it is used to analyze whether the leader would be comfortable to spend two or three hours in the airport with the consultant during a flight connection or delay. Hence, the same idea can be applied to understand social interaction, i.e., if the leader would be comfortable to not only work with the consultant, but also have him around during non-work-related activities. Therefore, if the leader is comfortable having the consultant around and likes his work, the former will probably repeatedly allocate him to projects. As a consequence, the empathy level of the leader vis-à-vis the consultant can be considered good.

> "Social interaction with leaders was essential, otherwise you wouldn´t *move on*. Leaders choose consultants with whom they have more closeness; hence, even good performer consultants that didn´t interact, wouldn´t be allocated to projects" (I. 05)
> "The HR officially allocates consultants to projects; however, leaders have a strong influence in this process. As a consequence, social interaction with leaders becomes very important" (I. 06)

When analyzing the empathy level of consultants vis-à-vis leaders, based on the interviews, there are mainly two factors that should be considered: leader´s style and consultant´s admiration level. The first factor considers that there is not a specific type of leader in each firm; in fact, there is a wide variety of them and each one has a different way to deal with consultants. Hence, the so-called leader´s style directly impacts the empathy level a consultant will have towards his leader. For instance, a talkative consultant will probably have a good empathy level vis-à-vis a leader that encourages the former to talk and expose his point of view during meetings. The second factor is related to the perception that consultants have vis-à-vis their leaders – including their professional career track, leadership style and even personal lives. Hence, the admiration level directly impacts the empathy level a consultant will have towards his leader. For instance, if the consultant admires the leader´s career track, he might become a role model, which increases the consultant´s empathy level vis-à-vis the leader. It is important to highlight that the admiration level is not necessarily related to a wish to "copy" the leader´s career track; instead, it is related to an inspiration for the consultant´s professional – and sometimes personal – life. To sum up, yet considered more formal, the relationship was described by most interviewees as good.

> "Excellent relationship. The firm had a strong culture of knowledge transfer. As a consequence, assistance was frequent and very helpful" (I. 05)
> "They were leaders, not bosses" (I. 07)
> "They were role models" (I. 03)
> "Leaders were people with more experience and competency. Still, they were very nice and not only provided learning opportunities, but also gave us autonomy" (I. 11)
> "Leaders are interesting people that you want to be around to learn more and more. This is a very standard perception in consulting" (I. 13)
> "After a period working together, it is possible to understand how the leader works, thinks and interacts with the consultants. Consequently, you can tailor your communication and try to have a more intimate relationship" (I. 14)

Nevertheless, due to differences in opinions and life experiences, the relationship with leaders was also considered as difficult and troublesome. Several interviewees highlighted a lack of personal – or intimate – relationship with the leader, which directly impacted their interaction. Even though consultants had a good autonomy level and a good openness to propose or discuss about a task-related solution, they lacked the openness to discuss or complain about other issues, such as excessive demands, deviations from the project scope – as a request from the client – or personal issues. According to the interviewees, the relationship lacked a human touch. In addition, a biased – and most of the times not present – HR also didn´t help to reduce the problem.

> "The firm should value more the human side of the business. It should focus more on the dialog between leaders and teams, making it more open and frequent" (I. 09)
>
> "I missed a more personal and humanized treatment. My perception is that every interaction, including feedbacks and coaching, was more procedural than real; moreover, it seemed that these interactions had a *political* orientation, which didn´t encourage me to be honest and discuss my actual concerns with my coach or the HR" (I. 12)

Another frequently quoted issue was related to the following topics: project type and leadership style. Mostly impacted by the latter, they basically determine the demand level of the projects, which is impacted by factors such as: project scope; time and resource – human and capital – availability; leader´s flexibility – regarding client and team; and leader´s mindset. Further analyzing the two latter factors, since the others are more self-explanatories, it is important to bear in mind that the first – flexibility level of the leader – is impacted by two key variables: level of rigidity of the schedule and additional tasks required by the client. In other words, leaders have different preferences regarding the work pace – that usually varies according to the stage of the project – and have different opinions regarding additional tasks required by the clients – that can significantly impact the demands of a project. For instance, leaders might prefer a faster pace at the beginning of the project and slow it down as it progresses; however, if the leader constantly accepts additional demands of the client, the expected pace reduction may not happen. Thus, impacting the consultants´ demand and pressure. The second factor, leader´s mindset, is related to the leader´s life and work experiences. There is a common trend in consulting firms – that several leaders deliberately choose to maintain – that is summed up by the two following sentences: "When I was in your place [job position], I worked a lot. Now is your turn" and "When I was in your place [job position], I did the same things and didn´t complain". As a consequence, leader´s with this mindset might elaborate client´s proposals already programming a demand that is not necessarily in line with the average.

> "Despite the leader´s interest in retaining [or acquiring] clients, the leader should eventually say *no* to them. Their frequent out-of-the-scope demands create extra work for the consultants, which adds more pressure to the environment" (I. 09)
>
> "One of the advantages of consulting is to learn how to establish limits for the client, otherwise they will constantly request analysis that were not in the project scope" (I. 02)
>
> "In the current firm I work at, we limit our analysis to what is necessary to deliver what the client expects. We do not perform extra analysis that might never be seen. Otherwise, it would be unnecessary demand for consultants" (I. 13)
>
> "Demand varies according to the type of project and job position. Nevertheless, the consulting job is made of picks and valleys. Moreover, the demands in the beginning and end of a project are usually different from the demand in its intermediary phase" (I. 10)
>
> "The client was usually an aggressive negotiator and the leader´s solution was to decreased the proposal price via reduction of allocated staff. I´ve never been in a project with the ideal staff size" (I. 06)
>
> "It was common to hear when I was a consultant, *I went through the same things*" (I. 12)
>
> "Their thoughts were disconnected from the current reality. Their mindset is: *I struggled to get where I am, so you have to struggle as well*" (I. 06)

An interesting point observed during the interviews analysis is related to the age difference between leaders and consultants. At first, the – expected – mindset discrepancy was associated to generation divergences, i.e., leaders are from a different generation; hence, a different mindset should be expected. However, during the interviews, this hypothesis proved to be wrong – to some extent. In general, the age gap between leaders and consultants ranges between five and fifteen years, according to interviewees. Considering that consultants usually are in the twenty-five- and thirty-year-old range, leaders should be in the thirty- and forty-five-year-old range. Contrasting this age range with the one of Millennials´ proposed by the literature – between twenty and thirty-seven years old (Durocher, Bujaki and Brouard, 2016) – it is reasonable to suggest that the age gap between leaders and consultants is not big enough to justify the mindset discrepancy. Therefore, the mindset discrepancy between these two hierarchical levels is not caused by a potential generation divergence; instead, it is caused by a more subjective factor: personality. Moreover, also according to the interviewees, this mindset discrepancy is also noticeable among consultants; which strengthens the proposed correlation between mindset and personality. Finally, it is important to highlight a divergence between the information provided by interviewees and the information found in the literature, since the latter determines that the conflicting set of work values is due to generation differences (Durocher, Bujaki and Brouard, 2016; Ng et al., 2010; Petroulas et al., 2010).

> "It was not an age issue; instead, it was a self-perception issue" (I. 02)
> "Differences in mindset are not necessarily related to age. Most of my leaders were, on average, ten years older than me" (I. 05)
> "Consultants and leaders were from the same generation" (I. 07)
> "Consultants are usually on their high twenty´s and leaders are usually on their mid thirty´s" (I. 09)"
> "This difference is not related to age; instead, it is related to personality" (I. 13)

Lastly, it is important to point out that some of the negative factors of the relationship with leaders in consulting firms – mainly the communication issue – seems to be institutionalized. In other words, it seems to be an industry practice that has been neglected by upper managers. Some may not understand why do firms neglect these problems; however, the answer is very straightforward. As previously quoted, consulting firms are still profitable and growing; hence, the ones that do not agree with the system, may leave.

4.1.4. Women in Management Consulting

This section will be dedicated to women´s perception towards their participation in the management consulting industry, which includes potential limitations and difficulties experienced or perceived by women interviewees.

Before deeply analyzing the subject, it is interesting to take one step back and understand the process of applying to management consulting firms. According to interviewees, a restricted number of women is present in consulting firms´ promotional events – where the percentage of men is considerably higher. The main reason for this is the well-known work conditions of the industry. These conditions already limit the number of men that are interested in management consulting; however, for women it tends to be even worse.

> “During the selection process you can perceive the unbalance between genders. As a consequence, it is natural that more men than women will be working at the firm. For instance, it is very common to have a team made of three men and one woman” (I. 14)
>
> “Management consulting must have a heterogeneous staff. It is valuable to have diversity” (I. 13)

Even considering an increase in women presence in the labor market, there is still an inter-role conflict in which pressures from the work and the personal life domains are, to some extent, incompatible (Gonçalves et al., 2017; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). This phenomenon is a consequence of a patriarchal society format, in which women, although able to work, are usually still perceived as main home keepers (Coltrane, 2000).

Interestingly, the constructs proposed by McMillan (2011) – whom analyzed time-, strain- and behavioral-based conflicts – can be perceived in women´s decision making process before applying for a job position in the industry. In other words, those that are not willing to eventually face conflicts while working, may not even attend to promotional events. At the same time, those that are willing to work in the industry, usually choose one of the two following options. First, use consulting as a career leverage, i.e., work in a firm and, when they are programming to have a baby, leave it and go work with something else – usually open their own business or go work in an industry that provides better work conditions. Second, postpone or eliminate their personal life plans. In other words, work in a firm, pursue career-growth and postpone – or eliminate – the possibility of having a baby, for example. Both possibilities are very common and do not necessarily satisfy women´s main professional and personal goals. As a consequence, several firms are developing different solutions in order to attract more women to the consulting industry. To begin, firms are focusing on exclusive promotional events; in which a different approach is used for the specific audience. Furthermore, for women that aspire to have kids, firms are developing new solutions to improve the work-life balance (WLB), such as: leaves of absence, possibility to do part-time job and longer maternity leaves. Lastly, some new firms are trying to change the culture of the industry by delivering a better WLB for all employees, including men. Based on predictability management, firms are proposing, for instance, not working on weekends and respecting previously scheduled appointments.

> "Since women *have* several family-related obligations that men don´t, the former are perceived as bad mothers when they are not able to provide adequate attention to their kids, while the latter are perceived as hard workers and *poor him*. A clear example is that, in the last consulting firm that I worked for, there was no moms; when women got pregnant, they left the firm" (I. 13)
>
> "I only know one female consultant that has a kid; moreover, I have witnessed an interesting fact. Since our firm has a different culture, when the leader perceived that this woman was travelling too much, he stated *I want you to travel less* and tried to figure out a solution for her case. It was very nice to see that" (I. 14)
>
> "I plan to have two or three kids and when I saw some women crying because they weren´t able to see their kids in the last six months, it was heart breaking" (I. 03)

Further analyzing the main purpose of this sub-section, potential limitations and difficulties must be highlighted. According to female interviewees, there are two major limitations. First, their current responsibilities. A study performed by Gordon and Whelan-Berry (2006) states that women face problems related to life roles that are distinct from those faced by wives and mothers; for instance, taking care of an elderly family member. Second, their future responsibilities. Interviewees presented a concern regarding their ability not only to have a family, but also to provide adequate attention to it. Moreover, they may face inequality during promotions opportunities and criticism due to a – potential – lack of organizational commitment, since they are less likely to "choose" work as their central priority (Reynolds, 2005).

Regarding the work environment, one interviewee described an extremely unpleasant situation. She was a victim of moral and sexual harassment inside the firm. The same leader was involved in both occasions and, according to her, she was not his only victim. She highlighted that this person was backed up by another employee of a higher hierarchical level and that, even if she reported the occasion for the HR, nothing would happen. Furthermore, there was an additional fear of professional impact. Hence, she only reported the situations when she left the firm. Even though the other female interviewees didn´t refer to similar unpleasant situations, they are extremely common.

> “I have never perceived gender-related prejudice; however, I´ve been in situation in which I was the only woman in a room with ten other men” (I. 14)
>
> “I believe that the gender-related prejudice is worse in other industries than in the management consulting one. For instance, during the selection process of financial institutions, they demonstrated a lot of concern with my plans to get married or have kids in the short term” (I. 13)
>
> “I was a victim of moral and sexual harassment inside the firm´s office. The same leader was involved in both situations. It was complicated to report the situation, since another person, that had the same problem, did it and people were extremely judgmental with her; hence, I chose not to report until the moment I left the firm” (I. 02)

These incremental changes in the management consulting industry are very important to change the still present – not only in consulting – male chauvinist mindset. Yet, there are a lot of improvements that must be performed – not only by firms, but also by society – in order to women have the same treatment as men.

4.2. Work Well-being Perception

In this section, work well-being (WWB) will be discussed according to the perception presented by each interviewee. In order to better analyze it, four key elements were considered as representatives of WWB: work satisfaction; work engagement; work fatigue; and burnout. Hence, each element will be separately analyzed and discussed; however, since the two latter elements are intrinsically related, they will be analyzed together.

4.2.1. Work satisfaction

During the interviews´ analysis, work satisfaction (WS) presented an extensive – and not necessarily convergent – understanding among interviewees. Although expected, since satisfaction is a very subjective theme, this pattern was surprisingly varied considering the interviewees´ similar profiles. According to them, the main drivers of WS are: purpose; learning opportunities; recognition; impact and compensation plan; and work environment. These drivers will be further analyzed in this section; however, it is interesting to, first, recall the multidimensional approach proposed by Ryff & Keyes (1995) and present a parallel with the interviewees´ opinions. The authors wanted to assess the concept of psychological well-being; hence, six elements were determined: autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery, and positive relatedness. Interestingly, there are similarities among the drivers presented by the interviewees and the elements proposed by the authors.

Purpose is mainly related to the work purpose perceived by the interviewee. However, it is not directly related to the purpose of the firm; instead, it is related to the interviewee´s personal goals and his tasks at the firm. According to interviewees, the relevance of the work for their professional ambition was essential to impact WS. In other words, even though they didn´t aspire to pursue growth at the firms, the skills learned while on it should contribute to achieve their final goals. Hence, explaining the "career leverage" factors highlight in the previous section.

> "Satisfaction at work is related to a match between the tasks and personal goals" (I. 02)
> "Satisfaction at work concerns how meaningful the job is to you" (I. 11)
> "Satisfaction is mainly related to your bigger goals and how the tasks you are performing are helping you to achieve the former" (I. 01)
> "Satisfaction is also related to how your current job is helping you to achieve your main goal" (I. 08)
> "Satisfaction is liking what you do, matching your purpose to the firm´s and believing that you have a reason to be there" (I. 12)

Learning opportunities was another factor mentioned when determining the level of WS. Also referred to as "personal and professional development", "feeling challenged" and "non-operational work" by the interviewees, learning opportunities encompass a job environment that frequently encourages employees to seek and acquire more knowledge. Furthermore, as a consequence, employees might feel an increase on his perception of work impact and recognition – an interesting convergence with two previously explained factors. As a consequence, WS also increases.

> "Learning opportunity is what I consider the most important factor to determine work satisfaction" (I. 04)
> "In order to feel satisfied, you must feel that you are learning while working" (I. 08)
> "Work in a place that I can learn is essential for my satisfaction" (I. 09)

> "One of the factors that I value the most at work is feeling challenged. Under this situations, I feel very satisfied" (I. 10)
> "In consulting the challenges and learning opportunities were always present. That´s the main reason why I decided to go back to consulting" (I. 13)
> "Work satisfaction is related to the tasks you perform and how much you learn from them" (I. 14)

A third factor mentioned to define WS was recognition. As the name suggests, it is related to the level of recognition that consultants perceive towards the firm – and its leaders. As previously mentioned in this research, the interaction between leaders and consultants might present some problems and the lack of recognition is one of them.

> "I know how to not feel recognized is; hence, I can assure that recognition impacts work satisfaction" (I. 01)
> "In order to feel satisfied at work, recognition is essential" (I. 04)
> "Recognition is essential for a sustainable work environment" (I. 06)
> "Recognition is key to maintain the employee satisfied and engaged" (I. 08)
> "The lack of recognition, added to other factors, generates a negative feedback to your satisfaction" (I. 12)

Another factor highlighted by interviewees was impact. According to them, as already mentioned in other sections of this research, the perception that their work delivers a positive impact – to the client and to the firm – is also crucial to determine their levels of WS. Moreover, there is an interesting overlap between the recognition and the impact factors. When the perception of the former is low, a situation that generates a high perception of the latter might generate a self-induced recognition. Thus, positively impacting the WS.

> "The impact of what you do is essential for your satisfaction" (I. 03)
> "When generating value to the client, you can perceive your impact and that´s key to satisfaction at work" (I. 07)
> "Satisfaction and impact on the organization are directly related" (I. 05)

Compensation plan – which comprises the salary, bonuses and benefits – was also considered an important factor when analyzing the WS. In order to better understand why – and to which interviewees – this factor was considered important, it is important to highlight the gap between the compensation plan of the BIG 3 consulting firms and the other consulting firms, which is – in most cases – significantly better for the former. Interestingly, the interviewees that mentioned the positive correlation between compensation plan and WS worked for consulting firms that paid salaries considerably lower than the ones of BIG 3 firms. Although it isn´t possible to prove a causal relation, a clear correlation between the previous compensation plan and the level of importance given to it, in order to determine the WS, exists.

> “A good salary is essential for work satisfaction” (I. 01)
> “Salary is also important for satisfaction. At least an amount that could provide the employee´s financial independency” (I. 05)
> “Even though professional development is essential; salary is definitely important to feel satisfied” (I. 08)
> “Even though good bonuses impact the work satisfaction; a good salary also has a significant impact on it” (I. 11)

Finally, work environment was also highlighted when considering WS. In line with studies developed by Mourão, Monteiro and Viana (2014) and Martins and Santos (2006), which presented a positive correlation between WS and non-work-related activities at the work place (work breaks, informal peer group meeting, etc), interviewees mentioned that working in a pleasant environment and having a good relationship with peers and leaders are relevant aspects. In other words, a work environment in which people collaborate and have a good relationship and in which a good balance between professionalism and pleasure is delivered.

> “The work environment is a major element when analyzing my work satisfaction” (I. 13)
> “Work satisfaction is related not only to what you deliver, but also to the people that are around you” (I. 14)
> “Although not the most important factor, the team interaction also impacts my work satisfaction” (I. 04)

An interesting fact was noticed while analyzing the interviewees´ answer regarding WS. Since most interviewees considered their experience working in the management consultant industry a turning point for their personal and professional lives, their answers to the questions are heavily based on this specific experience. Even when asked to consider an ideal situation, different from the management consulting reality, interviewees presented difficulties to break this link. Thus, factors as the ones previously analyzed were mentioned. At the same time, two other factors were not mentioned as frequently as expected: growth/career track and autonomy. The interesting fact is that these two factors were frequently mentioned, by interviewees, when asked why they chose to work in management consulting. Although it is not possible to determine why interviewees didn´t mention them more frequently when asked about WS, since it could be related to several factors, it is still worth mentioning. Some potential explanations could be: attribute more value to other factors; when answering why they chose management consulting, interviewees gave the default answer; mismatch between their perceived and their actual values; etc.

When asked to evaluate the overall WS of the period working for consulting firms, interviewees were fairly split between both extremes – satisfied and not satisfied. An interesting fact is that most of them presented a clear reaction of approval or disapproval of the time spent in consulting; thus, most interviewees were polarized. When analyzing the ones that were satisfied with the job, the main reasons highlighted were: learning opportunities; successful career leverage; team work; team capability; value delivered to the client; autonomy; and challenge.

> "I learned a lot, had a good recognition and the teams were also good. My overall evaluation is that I´m satisfied" (I. 04)
>
> "I was satisfied mainly because I could see that our analysis delivered great value for the client" (I. 07)
>
> "I consider myself satisfied at work. I have learning opportunities and autonomy to propose solutions and I work with a subject that I consider interesting" (I. 09)
>
> "Absolutely. If I feel challenged at work, it is a huge step towards satisfaction" (I. 10)
>
> "I was satisfied because I was gathering knowledge to my final goal, which was not related to consulting" (I. 11)

When focusing on the interviewees who were clearly unsatisfied with the job, the main reasons were: work environment (high pressure, long hours and low recognition); compensation plan; and type of work (too operational and with little interactions).

> "I wasn´t satisfied. The stress levels were incredibly high" (I. 01)
> "I wasn´t satisfied at all. In my first week I already thought *what am I doing here*" (I. 03)
> "I wasn´t satisfied. The compensation plan and the nature of the job, too operational, reduced my satisfaction and made me leave the firm" (I. 05)
> "I didn´t like the nature of the tasks. Hence, I got frustrated" (I. 12)

Interestingly, some studies have found positive correlations between WS and relevant aspects of an organization (Lai Wan, 2007) – employee retention, for example. Hence, it is expected that satisfied employees work for longer periods in the same firm. When analyzing the group of satisfied and unsatisfied interviewees, this correlation is confirmed. Satisfied interviewees worked – on average – for 3.8 years at the same firm (ranging from 3 to 5.2 years), while unsatisfied interviewees worked – on average – for 1.6 years (ranging from 0.4 to 2.8 years).
When questioned about the oscillation of their WS over time, most interviewees understood that it presented a declining trend. According to them, this trend is highly correlated to expectations that were not satisfied. In other words, the scenario presented during consulting firm events and selection process interviews is not entirely true; hence, the newly hired consultant starts working highly motivated and satisfied – mostly due to the approval after a long selection process – and, after a certain period of time, the satisfaction and motivation decrease – mostly due to experiencing the "real" job. Additionally, a negative impact on the interviewees willingness to over-deliver must be highlighted; thus, impacting their overall performance.

> "When I started working, my expectations were very high; however, when I saw the reality, my satisfaction decreased" (I. 06)
> "There was too much stress. I had problems to sleep, I was struggling to finish my graduation and my personal life was terrible. I didn´t see this scenario coming" (I. 02)
> "I didn´t have a life" (I. 01)
> "My satisfaction declined because I wasn´t expecting that type of work" (I. 05)

Moreover, most interviewees highlighted that their WS oscillated over time and, according to them, there is a triad that directly influences the consultants´ WS: type of project, team interaction and client interaction. According to interviewees, these three variables "determine your life" during the project. First, type of project, determines what is the project per se, i.e., which type of work will be performed (due diligence, merger, acquisition, cost reduction, etc). Based on their individual interests and preferences, consultants will have more affinity – or not – with the theme. Second, team interaction, encompasses every person involved in the project, from peers to leaders. Hence, the type of leader will influence the work pace and the type of peers will influence the level of interaction during the project. Lastly, client interaction, also has a high influence on the project. Considering that the clients´ willingness to help may vary, even though this may sound counterintuitive, the interaction between the team and the client will also influence the project. That being said, it is important to point out that this triad is vastly responsible for the consultants WS and that a scenario in which all three pillars will match the consultant´s expectation – interesting project, great team and great client interactions – is highly unlikely.

> "My satisfaction oscillated due to three essential variables: client, team and project. Moreover, an ideal scenario is never reached" (I. 06)
> "The type of project, the team and the client determine your satisfaction" (I. 09)
> "I´d say that the type of project and the team determine your satisfaction" (I. 04)
> "Satisfaction was definitely impacted by the nature of the project and the team interaction" (I. 11)
> "My satisfaction decreased during projects that I considered less interesting or that I wouldn´t learn or deliver something meaningful. However, these were minor oscillations" (I. 10)

Finally, another factor highlighted by some interviewees as an influencer on WS was their personal life. Even though most interviewees stated that they were able to "forget" personal problems while working, a few stated that this is not possible and that it clearly impacts not only their performance, but also their interaction with the team.

> "Personal life definitely impacts not only the satisfaction at work, but also the productivity" (I. 10)
>
> "When I broke up with my girlfriend I already knew that it would impact my professional life. That´s why I shared this situation with the team and asked them to give me some support in the first days. (I. 12)

Before finishing this section, it is important to briefly comment how aligned the study findings are vis-à-vis the literature, starting from studies developed in Brazil. The work satisfaction scale proposed by Siqueira (2008), later validated in the country (Beuren et al., 2017), considers five dimensions: satisfaction with work per se, with supervisors, with peers, with salary and with promotions. Another model developed in the country, by Siqueira and Padovam (2008), assesses work well-being according to three dimension: work satisfaction, work involvement and affective organizational behavior.

When considering studies performed in countries other than Brazil, the variety of models is significant. The most well-known is the Job Descriptive Index (JDI), initially proposed by Smith, Kendall and Hulin (1969), which measures work satisfaction based on five criteria: supervision, type of work, coworker relationship, pay and opportunities to promotion. As a final reference, a study performed by Martins and Santos (2006) presents a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the WS concept and, like the models presented above, all others neglect a key factor: the impact of personal life satisfaction on work satisfaction. Based on the study findings presented in this section, this is a major aspect that must be considered in order to comprehensively assess WS.

Finally, there is an increasing debate over the behavior and expectations of Millennials in the work place. Some authors argue that people from this generation received high doses of self-esteem from their parents in order to provide support, courage, protection and, consequently, adequate conditions for growth. However, as a consequence, kids ended up being more self-centered, with lower willingness to take responsibilities and with unreal expectations of their performance at work. According to various studies, this generation expects rewards that are not only related to good salaries, promotions and pay raises, but also related to good benefits, such as time off, paid parental leave and other benefits (EY, 2015; Ng et al., 2010; Petroulas et al., 2010; Southard and Lewis, 2004). Furthermore, they have a necessity of immediacy that also impacts their expectations, leading to a need of constant feedback and praise (Martin and Tulgan, 2001). Even though one might argue that the Brazilian reality cannot be compared to the one of developed economies (Rocha-de-Oliveira et al., 2012), where most of the quoted studies were undertaken, it is important to highlight that – due to requirements of the selection process – the socioeconomic profile of Millennials that work in the management consulting industry is not represented by the one of the regular Brazilian. Since the latter usually faces severe daily life limitations, ranging from hunger to access to technology. Therefore, it is reasonable to state that the expected behavior of Brazilian Millennials from this specific group is similar to the one presented by Millennials from developed countries. Finally, after all the considerations, it is possible to perceive a trend between the information provided by the quoted authors and the answers provided by some interviewees.

4.2.2. Work engagement

Work engagement (WE) was not an easy subject for interviewees to define. Nevertheless, their interpretation converged to three definitions: Commitment; Motivation; and Owner´s mindset. The first, commitment, is defined as a strong willingness to pursue improvements and over-deliver and the feeling of affection and connection towards the job. Hence, if the employee is committed, it is an indication that WE is high. The second, motivation, which provides a willingness to engage with the job and do whatever it takes to deliver the best analysis. Hence, providing value both to the client and to their selves. Lastly, owner´s mindset, which is considered an important factor because the employee takes true responsibility of his tasks. Moreover, this mindset also generates a positive side effect: leadership. When the employee feels in charge, he is willing not only to deliver the best analysis, but also to develop new, improved and out-of-the-box methods to get to a conclusion. Thus, bringing innovation to the organization.

It is worth highlighting the convergence between the interviewees´ perceptions of WE and the definitions found in the literature. According to Moura and Ramos (2015), the construct can be defined as an affective-cognitive-motivational state of achievement that reflects the employee´s state of mind in a specific moment. Moreover, according to Schaufeli et al. (2006), WE can be defined by three work-referred components: vigor, dedication and absorption. Therefore, the interviewees´ definitions are in line with the ones proposed by the above mentioned authors.

> "Engagement is to have commitment and to have a connection with the job. You are engaged when you own the problem" (I. 02)
>
> "Engagement is basically being motivated at work" (I. 04)
>
> "Motivation and enthusiasm to deliver value are what define engagement" (I. 05)
>
> "Engagement is related not only to motivation and satisfaction, but also to a connection between the job and your personal and professional ambitions" (I. 10)

> “When I think about engagement, the two correlations that pop into my head are: motivation and owner´s mindset” (I. 12)
>
> “Engagement is to have an owner´s mindset. It´s to deliver something well done and complete” (I. 08)

Results show that there is a clear overlap among these three definitions; yet, their combination is the best approximation to the interviewees´ opinion regarding WE.

An interesting – and not expected – fact was noticed when interviewees were asked if they considered their selves engaged while working for management consulting firms. According to most of them, they were – or are, for the ones that still work with management consulting – engaged at work. Moreover, and this is the interesting part, they described that their level of WE oscillates; however, it can never decrease too much, otherwise they wouldn´t continue working there. In other words, there might be a variation on the WE level caused by the same variables that impact WS (type of project, team interaction, client interaction and personal life); yet, if the WE level decreases too much, the consultant may be fired or ask to leave the firm. This context helps to explain why interviewees highlighted that their performance was less impacted by WE than by WS.

> “When you are allocated to projects that are not interesting, your engagement level decreases” (I. 02)
>
> “At the beginning I was willing to over-deliver and at the end I was delivering only the necessary. My priorities had changed” (I. 06)
>
> “Due to the lack of recognition, my engagement decreased a lot” (I. 06)
>
> “Engagement is more stable than satisfaction. Sometimes you are not so excited and delivers the minimum required and sometimes you are very excited and over-deliver” (I. 09)
>
> “Engagement level varies for the same reasons that impact satisfaction level” (I. 10)
>
> “Engagement varies less than satisfaction. You must be engaged to work in consulting” (I. 14)

When analyzing the definition of personal engagement and disengagement proposed by Kahn (1990) and the perceptions of the former construct presented by the interviewees, there is an interesting convergence of ideas. According to the author, personal engagement is “[…] the harnessing of organization members' selves to their work roles; in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, and emotionally during role performances.". Additionally, disengagement is "[…] the uncoupling of selves from work roles; in disengagement, people withdraw and defend themselves physically, cognitively, or emotionally during role performances.". Therefore, based on the information gathered during the interviews, it is clear why interviewees mentioned that WE could oscillate but not decline too much. Engagement is directly related to personal expressions at the work place; hence, if the employees´ engagement declines too much, they are not able to perceive their selves as part of the team. Moreover, considering a disengagement situation, employees withdraw and defend themselves. In other words, they completely change their behavior vis-à-vis work, leading to layoffs.

4.2.3. Work Fatigue and Burnout

When asked to describe what do they understand about work fatigue (WF), interviewees presented a very convergent definition: physical and mental tiredness or exhaustion. Which are definitions in line with the ones, proposed by

> "Fatigue is feeling physically and emotionally tired" (I. 03)
> "Fatigue is related to tiredness and exhaustion" (I. 06)
> "Fatigue is feeling excessively tired" (I. 10)
> "Fatigue is related to mental tiredness and it can be identified when performance decreases" (I. 14)

An interesting fact is that, although interviewees were asked to describe what is WF, some of them, instead, described its main causes. According to them, there is a strong association between WF and two factors: excessive demand and dissatisfaction with the job. Further analyzing the former, interviewees highlighted that the main stressors were: working hours, work intensity, work pressure and respect towards personal life. Meanwhile, when further analyzing the latter, dissatisfaction with the job, the main stressors were: work impact and work nature. Once again, even though not asked to, interviewees used their experience in management consulting to describe what generates WF.

> "Fatigue is related to excessive demand at work" (I. 02)

> "Fatigue is related to working long hours and during weekends" (I. 04)
> "Fatigue is related to excessive tasks and work intensity" (I. 09)
> "Fatigue is everything that is connect to hours sleeping and happiness" (I. 13)

Although diverting a little from the initial point, the definition of WF, it is worth to go along with the interviewees line of thought in order to better understand how they perceived the stressors and which impact they had on WF. In order to perform a more accurate analysis, it is necessary to split it according to the type of firm.

In consulting firms except for the BIG 3, the most frequently quoted stressors were: work impact and working hours. Hence, in order to better understand the interviewees´ perception, it is necessary to further analyze them. Work impact and working hours are per se highly subjective, since every person will have a different perception of ideal work impact and working hours. Nevertheless, most interviewees highlighted that their main issue was not necessarily working for long hours; instead, it was working for long hours in projects that they didn´t perceive an impact nor in their personal lives, nor in their client´s company. As a consequence, in addition to other stressors, their WS decreased and their WF increased.

> "Fatigue is not necessarily related to the number of hours worked; instead, it is related to your work satisfaction. When your satisfaction level is high, you work 12-14h per day and get home with the feeling of *job well done*. However, when you are not satisfied, you will don´t have that same feeling" (I. 05)
> "Besides the long working hours and, as a consequence, the lack of time for your personal life, the projects´ actual impact on the client will also affect your motivation. Hence, affecting your WF" (I. 01)
> "I´ve been in both situations, projects that I considered and projects that I didn´t considered meaningful to the client. The former situation makes you want to work more, while the latter doesn´t" (I. 07)

In BIG 3 consulting firms, a different scenario emerges. In this specific case, the perception of low impact on the client was not mentioned by any interviewee; instead, they highlighted that the impact of the projects was always significant to the client. However, the long working hours, the high work intensity and pressure and the constant disrespect towards their personal lives were the main stressors. As a consequence, their WS decreased and their WF increased.

> "I would say that my fatigue was related to the excessive demand and pressure from the work environment and the constant disrespect towards my personal appointments. Nevertheless, although a common feeling, I knew some people that didn´t feel fatigue in management consulting. They were satisfied with the job and just felt the expected tiredness of working long hours" (I. 12)
>
> "Things happen really fast during projects. As a consequence, the pressure and the work pace is very high. Moreover, there was no respect concerning my personal appointments. Thus, leading me to constantly feel fatigued" (. 13)
>
> "I friend of mine works for a BIG 3 consulting firm and she constantly mention feeling WF. The demand is usually very high" (I. 14)

As expected, all interviewees mentioned that they have already felt WF while working for management consulting firms. In addition, this issue was not limited to them. According to the interviewees, most people that they had contact inside the firm – peers and leaders – presented signals – expressions of tiredness and recent crying, body pains, irritation and etc. – or reported WF.

> "For instance, it was common to see people with tired expressions on Mondays due to excessive work during the weekend" (I. 02)
>
> "I know cases in which people cried because of the excessive demand and pressure" (I. 10)
>
> "I know a case in which a girl went to the hospital because of the job and continue working there" (I. 13)

Furthermore, as a consequence of the WF, interviewees presented negative impacts on their bodies. Surprisingly, these impacts ranged from minor – back pain, weight gain and weak immunity system – to major ones – anxiety crisis and depression.

> "Weight gain is something already expected" (I. 04)
>
> "I had some physical consequences, such as: weight increase, back pains and repetitive strain injury (RSI) on my arms" (I. 10)
>
> "Due to the excessive stress, I had labyrinthitis for the first time in my life" (I. 03)

> "I ended up in the hospital and had to take anxiolytics to control the excessive anxiety that I developed" (I. 02)
> "After the second year working as a consultant, I ended up having depression" (I. 01)

When analyzing the definitions of WF found in the literature and the ones presented by the interviewees, there were some convergences. According to Frone and Tidwell (2015), the construct can be defined as a state of both extreme tiredness and reduced functional capacity and can impact three types of energetic resources – physical, mental and emotional. However, interviewees only highlighted impacts on two of these resources – mental and emotional. Nevertheless, when specifically asked about physical symptoms, other events were mentioned.

Furthermore, it is interesting to analyze the correlation between WF and work well-being via a concept proposed by Ostrom (1969) and further analyzed by Souza, Bertolini and Ribeiro (2014). The concept of cognitive dimension associated with the subjective well-being refers to a broader view of life satisfaction and encompasses components such as physical and mental capacity and social relationships. Therefore, in a state of WF, one's life satisfaction – not only limited to work – tends to decrease due to a reduction in the previously mentioned components. Based on the information provided by interviewees, that was the case for the ones who suffered from WF.

When asked about feelings of mental or physical exhaustion, in order to assess potential burnout symptoms, some interviewees highlighted that they were relatively frequent. Moreover, once again, these symptoms were not limited to them. Although some might argue that one´s feeling of exhaustion is subjective and not necessarily related to burnout, it is important to highlight that the diagnosis of this disease is also subjective. In other words, it must be analyzed on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, the interviewee´s perception of exhaustion is an important – although preliminary – analysis to diagnose the Burnout Syndrome.

> "I´m sure that my depression was caused by a constant feeling of exhaustion" (I. 01)
> "As a consequence of a panic disorder, a peer had to take a leave of absence" (I. 03)

> "I have never felt physical exhaustion; however, mental exhaustion was not rare. My head didn´t work properly during these episodes" (I. 05)
>
> "During a project that I was working from 7am to 11pm, I had a problem with a peer that I was working with. As a consequence, a felt constantly exhausted" (I. 07)
>
> "You are exhausted and not sleeping well, but you are demanded to deliver high-quality analysis in a short period of time. It is the limit of emotional and physical exhaustion. Still, I was not the only one. For instance, I´ve never heard of a woman that has never cried on the firm" (I. 12)

At this point, an interesting parallel can be made with the literature. With a variety of definitions, work engagement can also be defined as energy, involvement and professional efficacy (Maslach; Leiter, 2008), which are the opposite dimension of burnout (Porto-Martins, Basso-Machado, &Benevides-Pereira, 2013). Considering that this statement is correct and taking into account the interviewees´ declaration that engagement cannot decrease below a specific – imaginary – lower limit, how do people that had JB were able to continue working after the crisis? Although their energy and professional efficacy were low, they were still involved – though not necessarily happy – with their jobs. Therefore, it is important to define two additional information to the interviewees´ comments. First, how low is the lower limit and how can it be measured. Second, if one crosses this threshold, for how long is the person able/allowed to stay underperforming before leaving the firm.

Finally, according to Frone and Tidwell (2015), one of the three features related to WF – and consequently to JB – is that the construct is temporarily tied to the workday, i.e., other non-work factors can influence it. For instance, dealing with family problems at work. This depletion of energetic resources, caused by demands originated outside the workplace, was mentioned by interviewees and will be further discussed in the following sections.

4.3. Work-family Conflict

Work-family conflict (WFC) was perceived by most interviewees as one of the biggest downturns of their experience with management consulting. During the interviews, the main purpose was to analyze this construct in two steps. First, understand the family context of each interviewee, focusing on the interaction level between both parties and potential responsibilities that interviewees might have towards their family – financial and social assistance, for instance. Second, understand if work has impacted the relationship between both parties.

When interviewees were asked about the relationship with their families – which includes not only relatives, but also life partners – and how important it was for them, the answers were very similar. All of them highlighted that the relationship was very important and valuable for them. An interesting fact is that most of them presented facts to explain why they considered important to be around and keep this contact. Some reasons mentioned were: relatives with diseases, such as Alzheimer and depression; old relatives that tend to die in the short term; and attention to life partners and family. Still, none of them had a significant responsibility towards their families.

> "My presence is very important, since my grandmother has Alzheimer. Hence, I always like to be around to help. Moreover, at the time that I worked with management consulting, my parents were not living in Brazil. As a consequence, I was one of the few people that could provide this support for her" (I. 02)
>
> "I actually didn´t know that my family was so important to me. Being away from them during the period I worked with management consulting helped me to realize this" (I. 03)
>
> "It is really important to be around my family. My brother has depression and he misses me when I am away for a long period of time. My parents and my girlfriend feel the same" (I. 04)
>
> "The most difficult part for me is being away from home" (I. 09)

When analyzing if working with management consulting impacted the relationship with their families, i.e., increased the WFC, interviewees were unanimous. Although in different levels, all of them considered that their jobs have negatively impacted their presence in the familiar environment. Therefore, in order to better understand this situation, the main factors that influenced the relationship between interviewees and their families must be analyzed. However, before diving into this analysis, one fact must be highlighted. All interviewees already disconsidered any possibility of being present during the week, i.e., they were aware that from Monday to Friday their main focus was on the job and that the only possibility to meet with family, partners and friends was on weekends. Hence, the previously mentioned impact level on the relationship is mainly based on the job impact on their weekends.

There are three key factors that influence the level of impact mentioned by the interviewees: type of project, leadership and location of the project. The first, type of project, is essential to determine its scope. In other words, the work pace and the project schedule are initially based on the type of project. The second factor, leadership, as previously explained in another section of this research, has great influence on the project as a whole. Thus, although the type of project determines its initial structure, the leaders have the freedom to change it according to their personal preferences. Consequently, the work pace, the project schedule and the demand level can be impacted. The third factor, location of the project, as the name suggests, determines where the project takes place. When teams are away from their office of origin, the frequency of fly backs vary according to the project demand – the team may be requested by the leader to work on the weekend and do not fly back home – and to the distance between both locations – when the distance is too big, fly backs may occur on a biweekly basis, instead of a weekly basis. Therefore, these three factors together determine the consultant´s schedule and, as a consequence, his availability on weekends. For instance, more severe projects, located in places far from the office of origin and with leaders that are more "workaholics" tend to be the worst-case scenario for WFC.

> "I went through a situation in which I had programmed myself to fly back home to be with my family and friends during a weekend. However, a few days before this weekend, my leader told me that I would need to work on it in another state. As a consequence, I not only had to cancel all bookings and pay the cancellation fees, but I also didn´t meet my family and friends" (I. 01)
>
> "Relationship for consultants is not an easy task, mainly due to the long working hours and the constant travels. I´m in my second relationship since I started working as a consultant and I still face difficulties" (I. 09)
>
> "Work has severely impacted my relationship with my family and my partner. In some projects, I used to leave my house at 5am and come back at 9pm from Monday to Saturday. As a consequence, I lost contact with everybody" (I. 10)
>
> "My partner used to say *the firm delivers me a rag on Friday, I take care of it during the weekend and on the next Friday it sends it back to me*. Moreover, I remember two emblematic situations: I almost lost my niece´s birthday party, even though I had warned my leader that I had an appointment that Sunday, and I worked until 8pm on a Saturday December 24th" (I. 12)

> “My job has already impacted my relationship with my family and my partner; however, these impacts were generally in events that happened during the week. Nevertheless, although my weekends were usually free, I already lost a cousin´s wedding because of my job” (I. 06)
>
> “When my aunt passed away, I was able to go to the funeral; however, I was not able to provide the adequate support for my family because of my job” (I. 08)
>
> “The main impact for me is during the week. That´s why everyone is already warned and tries to understand” (I. 14)

In order to evaluate their actual concern towards family, interviewees were asked how they would react if an emergency occurred with someone from their family and they could not help because of work. The main idea of this question was to assess potential work-family guilt, which is an emotional reaction driven by the interference of one´s job activities on the family domain (Hochwarter et al. 2007; Simon, 1995) and can, additionally, impact his/her favorable social relationships (Baumeister, 1998). Interestingly, the reactions were main split between interviewees that stick to the question asked and interviewees that didn´t. The former, as the question proposed, answered how they would feel and what would be their way to solve the problem considering a scenario in which their actions were limited the job.

> “I would feel really bad in a situation like that” (I. 02)
>
> “It would be terrible. I don´t know what I would do” (I. 06)
>
> “It would be terrible. However, I would ask to leave to help” (I. 07)
>
> “I would definitely feel really bad. This has never happened before, so I don´t know how open the firm would be to let me go. Nevertheless, I would try to explain the situation and leave” (I. 09)
>
> “It is an awful situation, even though the firm would be ok to let the person leave to help” (I. 10)

The latter, instead, deviated from the original question and considered that they would never let work limit their action in a real emergency case. Even when the interviewer asked the interviewee to imagine a severe situation in which this might happen (a meeting with the CEO of the client or a geographical obstacle), some of them had difficulties to imagine this scenario and stuck with the previous answer.

> "In a real emergency case, I would just leave. No firm is worth a life" (I. 03)
> "I would just leave" (I. 04)
> "In a family emergency case, I would just leave" (I. 05)
> "It would never happen. I would do whatever it takes to help" (I. 11)

An interesting answer was provided by some interviewees. According to them, in this situation they would leave to help and the firm wouldn´t – directly – limit or judge them; however, they were very clear that they would need to work from the place they were as soon as possible. Furthermore, they highlighted that this scenario is usual and that people already take this procedure.

> "I would be able to leave to help; however, I would probably need to call the office as soon as possible to check how I could help the team from the hospital. Nevertheless, if this situation happens in a critical moment of the project, I believe that there will be an indirect judgment. Comments such as *so-and-so didn´t help the team on these analysis, but of course he had problems with his dad in this occasion*" (I. 12)
> "I cannot imagine a situation in which a relative would need me and I would say *no* because I was working. I would leave to help and probably continue working from the hospital" (I. 13)

When analyzing the leaders´ position vis-à-vis emergency situations, based on the interviewees' perception, since no leader was interviewed, it was not possible to establish a standard response according to a specific factor (type of firm, type of project, etc.). Nevertheless, it is important to highlight two facts. First, it seems that the leader´s perception vis-à-vis these situations vary according to their style, since they have the "power" to control the team. In other words, it seems that the leader´s mindset will determine whether they will consider ok the consultants leave to help or not. Second, the last solution – leave and work from the hospital, for instance – was only proposed by interviewees from BIG 3 consulting firms. Yet, it is not possible to determine whether this solution was based on an institutionalized procedure or not.

When analyzing the data gathered from the literature and the perception of interviewees regarding the WFC, there is a clear convergence of ideas. Although the construct´s definition is not as subjective as the ones presented in previous sections, it is reasonable to state that Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) introduced a comprehensive explanation when defined WFC as a form of inter-role conflict in which the pressures from the work and family domains are, to some extent, mutually incompatible. Furthermore, from the three categories proposed by the same authors to define WFC – time-, strain- and behavioral-based – only two were clear when analyzing the interviews, time- and strain-based WFC.

4.4. Work-life Balance

Work-life Balance (WLB) – the main focus of this study – was already indirectly analyzed via other constructs, such as work-family conflict, and will be directly analyzed in this section. The analysis will begin with the interviewees´ understanding of the construct and how they would describe their ideal WLB. Afterwards, a second analysis will focus on the perception of impact that their jobs in management consulting had in their personal lives. Then, both analyses will be examined together in order to compare actual experience in management consulting with previous expectations. Lastly, in order to understand how interviewees considered that their personal lives have impacted their jobs, a final analysis will also be presented.

WLB was already quoted by interviewees when answering other question – not only due to their previous knowledge of the main focus of this study, but also due to an actual perception of conflict between their personal lives and work; however, when directly asked to explain what is WLB, the answers were considerably varied.

> "WLB is having flexibility and freedom to make your own scheduled based on deadlines and deliverables" (I. 02)
> "WLB is not living with constant pressure and having the time to do things besides work. I don´t see myself working 12-13 hours per day" (I. 03)
> "The key point for me is to have time to, at least, go to the gym and read a book when you get home" (I. 05)
> "WLB for me is not related to the amount of working hours; instead, it is related to the flexibility of balancing the demand for extra work with the provision of extra rest" (I. 06)

> “WLB is having a job in which you can perceive your impact and, at the same time, does not limit your time to go to the gym, cinema or restaurant with friends.” (I. 08)
>
> “WLB can be summed up by three key factors: time to take care of your health; time to give attention to the people that you want to; and time to perform things that you enjoy, playing soccer, for instance” (I. 10)
>
> “I don´t mind working 12 hours per day during the week, as far as I don´t need to work on weekends. WLB is being satisfied both inside and outside the work environment” (I. 14)

When analyzing the interviewees´ answers, it is possible to identify two key factors that, according to them, would help to reach an ideal WLB: schedule flexibility and out-of-work time. The former is mainly related to the possibility to manage out-of-work and work responsibilities based on work deliverables and deadlines. The latter is related to the availability for activities that are not related to work, such as sports, study and meeting friends.

When asked about an ideal workload per day, an interesting fact was noticed. Although most interviewees highlighted that an ideal amount of hours worked per day is not necessarily how they would measure their WLB, some went on the opposite direction and mentioned that it would be ideal to work 8 hours per day. Furthermore, these interviewees also considered the possibility of working in the public sector; in the belief that it entails a different scenario when compared to the private sector in Brazil.

> “My goal is to work 8 hours per day. I believe that in the public sector it is possible to have a good salary and don´t have too much demand” (I. 03)
>
> “Although utopic, my goal would be to work 8 hours per day” (I. 04)
>
> “Still, I´m currently focused on public-sector opportunities, since it provides not only a good salary, but also job stability” (I. 08)

When taking into consideration the interviewees´ understanding of WLB and how they have defined its ideal scenario, the variety of opinions was an interesting fact. Although an expected outcome, since the construct is indeed highly subjective, the variety of perceptions was still surprising because it encompasses a wide range of profiles that do not match the one that “fits” into consulting – a common expression mentioned by the interviewees. Moreover, this situation also diminishes the long and exhaustive hiring process – that prospective consultants are submitted to – that is structured to supposedly help to find people with “the right fit". Nevertheless, it is also important to mention that their perception of WLB was based on an analysis performed after working in the management consulting industry; hence, it is not possible to determine how this experience has impacted their previous perception.

When analyzing the interviewees´ perception regarding the impact that their jobs in management consulting had in their personal lives, the opinion was unanimous. All interviewees mentioned a significant and frequent impact in their personal lives, ranging from small impacts during the week, such as not being able to do sports or meet friends, to big impacts during the weekend, such as missing important family events. Moreover, some interviewees highlighted postponement of their vacation, which generated not only an impact on the interviewee, but also a secondary impact on the person with whom the interviewee had programmed to travel with – since this person wouldn´t be able to reschedule his vacation.

> “I was not able to work out during the week and on the weekend, when I didn´t have to work, I was too tired to do something” (I. 02)
>
> “This impact on daily activities generates a discomfort mostly because you lose that moment to release your stress. Moreover, missing events is a fairly frequent situation” (I. 04)
>
> “I didn´t have time to do anything besides eat and sleep. I missed those moments to release the stress” (I. 05)
>
> “I didn´t have any predictability. One day I could be in Rio and in the next day I could be in the Northeast of Brazil. Hence, the impact on my personal activities was huge and frequent” (I. 01)
>
> “The impacts were very frequent and I wasn´t able to do anything but accept the situation.” (I. 09)
>
> “I wouldn´t be surprised if my vacation was postponed. That´s very common in the firm and you can´t say much” (I. 14)

This impact in personal life mentioned by interviewees can be correlated with the work-life conflict construct, proposed by Greenhaus & Beutell (1985). According to them, it is defined as tensions one might experience between his/her roles at and off work. Furthermore, an interesting perception was presented by the interviewees when asked about productivity and performance. Most interviewees considered that this constant conflict with their personal lives impacted their satisfaction at work. As a consequence, the productivity level decreased significantly. Interestingly, this perception is in line with various studies that found positive correlations between work satisfaction and other relevant aspects of an organization, such as productivity, profitability and employee retention (Lai Wan, 2007).

> "If you are not satisfied, your performance decreases" (I. 08)
> "A sound mind in a sound body" (I. 04)
> "I believe that my performance decreases when the impacts on my personal activities become too frequent" (I. 09)

However, other interviewees presented a different understanding of this situation. According to them, the productivity cannot decrease and, if it does, there are only two options: the employee is fired or chooses to leave.

> "I don´t believe that the productivity level decreased. When people are not satisfied, they usually leave the company or are fired" (I. 05)
> "The productivity level cannot decrease" (I. 13)

Even though a few smaller firms are being created with a different culture, such as not working on weekends and giving the option to do home office, and bigger firms are trying to develop solutions to diminish the impact of work on their employee´s personal lives, the management consulting industry is – in general – old fashion. In other words, it hasn´t considerably evolved in the past years when concerning their employee´s lifestyle. Hence, prospective consultants should be aware of what to expect of the career. However, it seems that it was not the case for most interviewees.

When comparing the interviewees' current expectations towards WLB – i.e., after their experience with management consulting – with their reality while working at these firms, there is a clear mismatch in several cases. This mismatch can be noticed by two main facts: idealization of schedule flexibility and expectations of less working hours. Most management consulting firms have a very strict policy regarding schedule flexibility; in other words, in general, there is no flexibility. Consultants don´t have the freedom to choose the place in which they will work – office or home, for instance – and which time to arrive and leave, nor the possibility to leave during the day to solve problems that are not related to the job. In fact, this rigidity is not caused by "the leaders will"; instead, it is a consequence of highly demanding deliverables and very short deadlines. Hence, they might have the freedom to leave the office during the day to solve a problem; however, they will probably not be able to sleep in order to compensate for the wasted working hours. Moreover, during rare moments of stand-by, usually waiting for the client to deliver a document or have a meeting, consultants must be around to start working as soon as possible. The same line of thought can be applied to the second fact – amount of working hours. As one interviewee mentioned "management consulting must not only bring value, but also deliver it fast". Taking this quote as a reference, management consulting is related to delivering good results in a small period of time, otherwise the client wouldn´t be paying a significantly high amount of money and would ask for their employees to develop something similar. That being said, added to the fact of increased competition in the industry, it is clear that the average amount of working hours will hardly be reduced in the short term.

The expectations highlighted by the consultants are in line with the expectations of Millennials found in the literature. This generation values not only impact and meaning at work, but also flexibility and a good WLB. Considering that work satisfaction results from a match between the needs of the individual and what the workplace supplies (Higgins, 1987), the mismatch between consultants´ expectations and actual work environment is negative for both parties. For the consultants, it may reduce their willingness to continue working at the firm. For the firms, it may create difficulties to retain human capital. Hence, the question that arises is: "Why consulting firms don´t adapt their culture?". The answer is fairly simple and was already mentioned in this study "Because it works".

Most interviewees highlighted that their main goal when applying for job positions at consulting firms were to leverage their careers. Even though some may change their goals if the consulting firms proposed a different culture, in the current scenario both parties are satisfying their needs. The consultants' learning curve is positively correlated to their willingness to stay in the firms; thus, if they are willing to stay for longer periods, they will proportionally leverage more their careers. The firms need good quality and low-cost employees – compared to other job positions inside the firm – to perform analysis during the project and, at the end of the day, the number of "available seats" at promotion points is smaller than the number of employees available. Hence, the high turnover helps to screen employees – in this cases, consultants. However, considering the ascension of smaller consulting firms proposing different cultures and the disruptive generation exchange happening in the job market, it is unclear if the old culture of bigger firms will be sustained in the long term.

Finally, interviewees were asked about their perception towards the impact of their personal lives in the job satisfaction. As expected, most of them considered that the correlation between these environments was positive; in other words, – ceteris paribus – when satisfaction towards their personal lives was good, their work satisfaction (WS) was also good and vice-versa. Which is in line with the affective events concept (Gross et al., 2011; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996, p. 31).

An interesting fact is that interviewees interpreted the question in two distinct – yet complementary – ways. Some correlated personal lives with the overall life, which includes not only the possibility to enjoy it, but also eventual problems – such as personal-, family- and partner-related issues. Others restricted their interpretation of personal lives to the possibility to be at home and perform their usual activities, such as sports and meet friends and family.

> "The satisfaction at work and in the personal life go on the same direction. It is a two-way street" (I. 05)
> "When I had a private problem, I was worried and couldn´t engage 100% in the job" (I. 07)
> "You cannot expect the same creativity and the same performance if your head is not good because of a private problem" (I. 11)
> "It is essential to feel supported at home. If your relatives don´t support your job choice, that´s already a problem in your personal life" (I. 14)
> "When your social life is good, i.e., you are able to do sport, meet friends and be around your partner, you arrive at work feeling good" (I. 04)
> "When I was able to stay home, it was a possibility to recharge my energies. It was excellent and positively impacted my job" (I. 07)

Regardless of the interpretation, all interviewees considered that their personal lives significantly impacted their ability to perform at work. This association can be proved by the constant and bidirectional feedback between both environments. For instance, when one is satisfied at work, there is a positive feedback not only to his/her WS, but also to his/her perception towards personal life; which also generates a positive feedback to WS. Nevertheless, when one is not satisfied with his/her personal life, there is a negative feedback to his/her perception towards WS; which also generates a negative feedback to the former. Interestingly, this notion is partly in line with the subjective well-being concept, which analyses pleasure and pain through three elements: life satisfaction, presence of a positive mood and absence of a negative mood (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Diener & Lucas, 1999). Therefore, considering that the concept´s analysis was limited to non-work factors by the authors, the interviewees´ perception presented above is essential to prove that these three elements can also be applied to analyze subjective well-being at work.

5. CONCLUSION

This chapter is split into three sections. The first, a brief summary, intends to present an overview of the study. The second, main findings and conclusion, presents findings and conclusions. Finally, the third section presents recommendations for future research.

5.1 Brief Summary

This study analyzed the perception of Millennials who work or have worked in the management consulting industry in two states of Brazil, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The basis for the study was established by one key construct: Work-life balance. This construct, added to the information related to Millennials and management consulting industry, structured the understanding of the human behavior in the context under study. Furthermore, this analysis has a significant impact for – prospective, current and former – consultants and management consulting firms. For the former, valuable insights concerning an important industry are presented by people of the same generation and – theoretically – with similar work values. For the latter, relevant information is presented concerning the Millennials, a generation that is becoming increasingly present in the work force and that is considerably different from previous ones.

The main goal of this study was to analyze the perception of work-life balance of Millennials who work or have worked for management consulting firms. This analysis was driven by three key elements: work well-being, work-family conflict and Millennials work expectations and values. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with 14 people who work or have worked at the management consulting industry and were in the proposed age range in order to increase the knowledge concerning the given subject. Furthermore, in order to match the age range, all interviewees were from entry-level positions. The interviews were conducted personally or via videoconference between March and May of the year 2019.

The results present a mismatch between the consultants´ expectations and values and the management consulting environment. Nevertheless, due to a high perceived value from the job market and the prospective consultants, the former are still willing to work in these firms for a specific period of time in order to leverage their careers.

5.2 Main Findings and Conclusions

The following section describes, as its name suggests, the main findings and conclusion that readers may come to from the present study. Based on the topics presented in section four, four key drivers were selected: Management Consulting Industry; Work Well-being Perception; Work-Family Conflict; and Work-Life Balance.

The management consulting industry is well-known by its severe work conditions; however, based on the interviews, it was possible to gather updated information of an industry that has a high degree of mystique. Thus, based on the interviewees´ perception, it was possible to conclude that the environment of the biggest management consulting firms hasn´t significantly evolved in the last years – concerning the employee´s life style. Even though some solutions were implemented in order to increase employees´ work satisfaction, such as possibility to take leaves of absence and tools to reduce frequent conflicts vis-à-vis employees´ personal lives, the regular life style hasn´t changed much. Long working hours (ranging from twelve to seventeen hours a day), high pressure environment, lack of predictability and frequent flights are factors that can be expected from a job in the industry. Even though some studies characterized this life style as a generation trace from baby boomers, it is actually related to the employees´ mindset and personality. Furthermore, women encompass a low percentage of the management consulting staff; according to them, mainly due to the industry´s work conditions and their "role" vis-à-vis family. Finally, there were two clear mismatches when analyzing the interviews. First, a mismatch between interviewees´ expectations and the actual job at management consulting firms. Considering that information concerning the firms – and the industry in general – is easily found through search engines online, this mismatch is not led by a lack of information. Second, a mismatch between their perceived and actual values, when justifying why they chose to work in the industry and what drives their work satisfaction. Hence, in order to potentially justify these mismatches, another factor seems to be implicitly influencing these situations. A reasonable explanation would be that some people who apply for job positions in management consulting firms intend to acquire knowledge in a fast and intensive way in order to take a "short-cut" to their predetermined and proposed goals. However, an implicit factor is yet to be determined and will be further analyzed at the end of this section.

An interesting fact when considering the management consulting industry and the various mismatches found during this study is the correlation between the latter and the socioeconomic scenario of the country in which the research was undertaken. With a sluggish economy, Brazil presented an unemployment rate of 11.6% in 2019 (which has remained above 10% since 2016), with informality representing 41.2% of the economy (IBGE, 2019). Hence, young people experience difficulties to find their first job. Not surprisingly, finding the “dream job” is even harder. Alternatively, people with a robust educational background see in management consulting an opportunity not only to learn and have a good compensation, but also to leverage their careers and, eventually, get their “dream jobs”. In other words, people that do not have the profile to work in the industry might apply as a way to achieve their actual professional goals. Even though one might say it is a win-win situation, since employees leverage their careers and firms get relatively cheap labor, this adds more complexity to the system and creates a non-optimized path to pursue career goals. Moreover, firms might have difficulties to retain human capital in the long term. The understanding of this situation is essential to capture the dynamics of the industry in developing countries. Additionally, since most studies related to the management consulting industry were undertaken in developed economies, where usually unemployment is less systematic, the acknowledgement of this situation is not found in the literature.

Work well-being perception was analyzed based on three key variables: work satisfaction (WS); work engagement (WE); and work fatigue (WF) and burnout. The first, WS, presented a fairly even opinion when analyzing the interviews. Nevertheless, most interviewees highlighted that it not only decreased over time, but also oscillated. The reduction is related to a lack of empathy with the job, while the oscillation is related to the triad: type of project, team interaction and client interaction – although there might be overlaps between the empathy level and these three factors. Interviewees also mentioned the impact that their personal lives had in their WS, both positively and negatively. However, there is no study in the literature that encompasses the life-related satisfaction in the analysis or measure of work satisfaction, which is a major factor according to interviewees. Most interviewees perceived the second, WE, in a different way. According to them, WE can only have minor oscillations, i.e., it cannot reduce significantly; otherwise the impact on the performance will be too detrimental – leading to resignation. Moreover, WE oscillations are generated by the same three factors that impact WS: type of project, team interaction and client interaction. Finally, WF and burnout were considered common in the management consulting industry. According to interviewees, WF was mainly caused by the perception of work impact and amount of working hours. The first is related to the perceived impact of the project on the client; in other words, the consultant´s interpretation regarding the impact on the client contributed to his/her perception of WF. For instance, a meaningful project contributes to reduce the perception of

WF. The second, as the name suggest, concerns the actual amount of hours worked by consultants. Hence, an increase in the number of working hours would generally increase the consultant´s perception of WF. Furthermore, interviewees highlighted that several people with whom they had contact with inside the firm have presented signals or have reported WF, which includes severe health impacts – such as anxiety crisis and depression. Even though interviewees were not clearly questioned about burnout, since this would require previous knowledge about the theme, it is possible to conclude that the management consulting industry generates a favorable environment to the development of the syndrome. Mostly as a consequence of the high pressure, high amount of working hours and lack of solutions to significantly reduce the WF.

As a consequence of the work conditions of the industry, all interviewees acknowledged WFC. According to them, the negative impact of the job on the family environment was frequent. Moreover, this impact was not only limited to the week, it was also present during the weekend – since working on Saturdays and Sundays is not uncommon in the industry. Finally, it is possible to conclude that the WFC is highly present in the management consulting industry and that it will not change unless firms are willing to significantly change employees´ lifestyle.

Finally, when analyzing the interviewees´ perception of WLB, three main factors must be taken into consideration: schedule flexibility, out-of-work time and amount of working hours. According to the interviewees, their main issue regarding WLB is not related to the working hours; instead, it is related to the possibility to work with deliverables and deadlines and being able to reconcile work and personal-life activities. However, the most significant problem is the demand of the job, i.e., the level of dedication to develop the deliverables is responsible for the impact on WLB. Therefore, based on the information gathered during the interviews, it is possible to conclude that the only way to significantly improve the WLB of the industry is increasing the “rate of delivery” of the team. However, this is – again – related to the willingness of management consulting firms to satisfied the demands of Millennials by either developing new solutions to increase productivity – through technologies such as data science and AI – or by increasing the size of the team – reducing their profit margins.

Based on a thorough analyzes of the interviews, an interesting trend was perceived. Even though interviewees had a relatively similar set of work values, since most presented convergent reasons not to work again with management consulting, there was an underlying aspect – or implicit factor, as previously mentioned – strongly influencing their decision: the economy.

The economy determines – actually reflects – parameters of the society that directly impact the job market. In a strong economy – i.e., sustainable growth, low interest rates and on target inflation – there is a trust sentiment among businesses that leads to higher investments. As a consequence, unemployment rate tends to be low. On the other hand, in a weak economy – low growth, high interest rates and high inflation – businesses tend to postpone potential investments until trust is reestablished. As a consequence of the underinvestment, unemployment rate tends to be high.

The Brazilian economy was relatively strong until 2013, with quarterly GDP growth spiking to 7.5% in the third and fourth quarters of 2010. However, a major recession period in the beginning of 2014 led GDP growth to negative 4.6% in the second quarter of 2016. After this downturn, the economy slowly recovered and growth became positive again in the third quarter of 2017 – currently flat at around 1% a year (IBGE, 2020). These oscillations are relatively common in Brazil, which, as previously explained, negatively impacts the country´s job market.

Interestingly, most interviewees were searching for job opportunities between 2014 and 2016, i.e., during the downturn (Filho, 2015). Hence, available positions were scarce in number and low in quality (Silveira, 2016). As a response, alternative ways were developed to achieve their desirable outcomes. An option to earn a good salary and, at the same time, have access to a diverse set of industries, management consulting was one of the solutions.

That being said, it is clear that the economic situation of the country significantly influences the job market. However, demographic aspects of the society – such as age, education level and income class – also play a major role for prospective employees and consulting firms. Since the latter need skilled workers, social aspects of the country will determine who has access to education and, consequently, who they are. Considering the Brazilian scenario, where high inequality – GINI index of 53.3 in 2017 (World Bank, 2018) – is a recurrent issue, individuals from higher income classes are more likely to have better opportunities than those from lower income classes. Moreover, a situation in which there is relatively high demand for and short supply of skilled workers might create synergies that incentivize the development of alternative solutions, such as those presented during the interviews. To conclude, demographic aspects of the country are also highly influential in the job market.

Acknowledging the importance of understanding individuals´ rationale when searching for job positions, a model was developed to illustrate this decision making process. Two elements were established as key to understand the process: values and socioeconomic context. As proposed by Kuron et al. (2015), values can be classified in intrinsic, extrinsic, social and prestige. Moreover, individuals may not only have a distinct set of values, but also present a distinct degree of importance among them.

Simultaneously, there is another relevant element influencing the process: the socioeconomic context. This factor may prompt changes in an individual´s decision making process, since socioeconomic factors – such as unemployment rate and educational level – will determine if he/she is able to pursue the intended career path. As a consequence, the weights given to each of the four values may change according to the socioeconomic context of both the country and the individual. In other words, there is an interaction between one´s values and the overall socioeconomic context, which may experience tensions – especially in countries in which the latter is not good.

That being said, the following model is proposed:

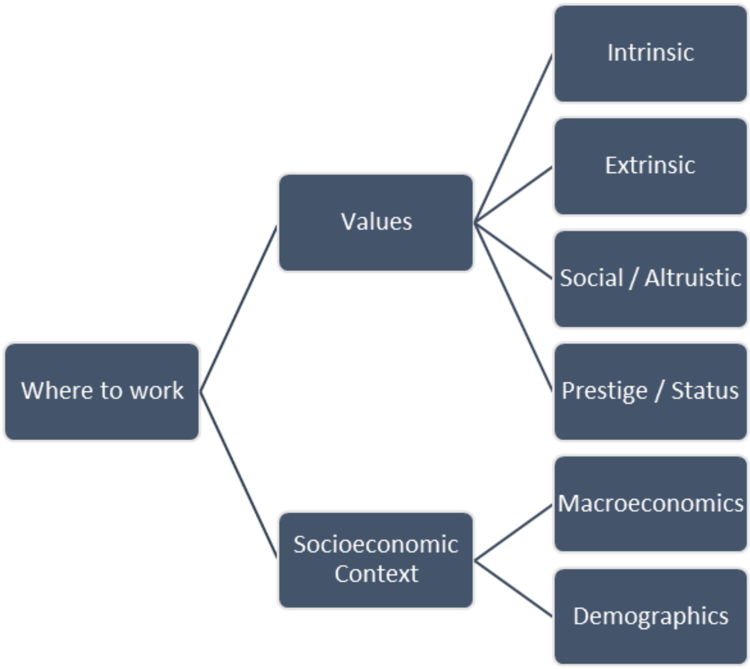

Figure 1: Proposed Model

5.3 Recommendations for Future Research

This research was based on the most relevant data found in the literature; however, there are aspects that could be tackled in future studies. A major contribution to the work well-being literature, specifically concerning work satisfaction, would be to understand and measure how one´s personal life satisfaction impacts his/her work satisfaction. This is a relevant analysis that has yet to be performed. Another major contribution to the literature would be to develop future studies in other states of Brazil and other developing countries in order to further understand how different socioeconomic contexts and demographics affect the behavior of Millennials.

Based on the available literature, constructs were selected in order to understand the interviewees´ perception of work-life conflict. Nevertheless, other constructs could be used as a basis for future studies.

Finally, regarding the participants´ selection, a bigger and more diversified group of interviewees would be interesting to develop a more comprehensive study. For instance, increasing the number of women and BIG 3 consultants in the group.

APPENDIX

Appendix 01 – Script

Informações gerais

1. Qual é o seu nome? Idade?
2. Qual é a sua formação acadêmica?
3. Referente à sua experiência de trabalho com consultoria, esta foi sua primeira experiência em período integral?
4. Qual era o nome da empresa e por quanto tempo você trabalhou lá?
5. Nesta fase, qual era seu estado civil? Morava com quem? Possuía filhos?
6. Referente ao seu cargo, qual era o nome e quais eram suas principais responsabilidades?

Consultoria de gestão

7. Porque você escolheu consultoria de gestão? Quais eram suas expectativas?
8. Ao escolher esta carreira, quais eram seus objetivos?
9. Você poderia descrever as condições de trabalho (ambiente, quantidade de horas, viagens, hora extra, finais de semana e feriados, etc)?
10. Você estava ciente das condições de trabalho antes de entrar na empresa? Se sim, como você obteve estas informações? Exemplifique.
11. Como você descreveria a cultura da empresa? Você recebeu algum treinamento referente a ela? Se sim, explique como foi.
12. Como era o clima na empresa?
13. Como a empresa motivava os funcionários? Você concorda com este método? Faria algo diferente?
14. As pessoas eram “mal vistas” quando saíam mais cedo da empresa? Porque? Exemplifique.
15. Você já sentiu um excesso de demanda? Você tinha abertura para reportar isso? Como a empresa lidava com isso?
16. Quais eram as vantagens e desvantagens do trabalho?
17. Quão flexível era a empresa quando consideramos a estrutura hierárquica, condições de trabalho, autonomia e a participação/opinião do colaborador?
18. Porque você saiu da empresa?
19. Você recomendaria este trabalho/empresa para um amigo? Se sim, quais conselhos você daria para esta pessoa?

Bem-estar no trabalho

20. O que você entende por satisfação no trabalho?
21. Você se considerava satisfeito com seu trabalho? Porque?
22. Você diria que a sua satisfação com o trabalho foi mudando com o passar do tempo? Se sim, porque?
23. O que você entende por envolvimento / engajamento com o trabalho?
24. Você se considerava envolvido / engajado com seu trabalho? Se sim, porque?
25. Você diria que esse envolvimento foi mudando com o passar do tempo? Se sim, porque?

Caso o entrevistado estivesse insatisfeito ou desengajado

26. Você percebeu algum impacto em sua performance? Se sim, descreva-o (s).
27. Como você fazia para minimizar o impacto destes sentimentos (insatisfação ou desengajamento) em sua performance no trabalho? Havia algum fator específico que te motivava (família, dinheiro, prestígio, etc)?

28. Você diria que as pessoas que trabalhavam na empresa eram, de modo geral, satisfeitas e engajadas? Porque?
29. O que você acredita que é importante para manter a satisfação e o engajamento no trabalho?
30. Se pudesse, quais iniciativas você tomaria para melhorar estes aspectos?

31. O que você entende por fadiga no ambiente de trabalho?
32. Você considera ter passado por alguma experiência na qual tenha sentido fadiga nesta empresa? Se sim, descreva-a.
33. Como você notou isto? Houve uma queda em seu desempenho? Exemplifique.
34. Você teve algum feedback negativo referente à sua performance neste período? Exemplifique. Como foi a reação de seus superiores?
35. Você diria que grande parte das pessoas que trabalhavam na empresa sentiam, em algum grau, fadiga? Porque?
36. Você notou alguma consequência da fadiga em seu corpo? Se sim, descreve-a. Houve algum impacto em sua saúde?
37. Você já se sentiu fisicamente ou emocionalmente exausto ao sair do trabalho? Como lidou com isso?

38. Se você pudesse mudar algo na empresa, o que faria para, pelo menos, minimizar a sensação de fadiga ou exaustão do trabalho?

Conflito trabalho-família

39. Quão importante para você é sua presença / participação no ambiente familiar? Exemplifique e ou contextualize.
40. Você possui algum tipo de responsabilidade com sua família (parentes idosos ou com deficiência que necessitem de sua ajuda, por exemplo)? Quais?
41. Você considera que seu trabalho impactou, positiva ou negativamente, sua presença no ambiente familiar? Se sim, você poderia descrever um episódio onde isto tenha ocorrido? Como você se sentiu e como lidou com isso? Caso este episódio ocorresse novamente, você agiria da mesma forma?
42. Considerando uma situação onde um familiar próximo esteja passando mal e você não consiga ajudar por conta do trabalho. Como você se sentiria? Qual seria sua atitude em relação a este sentimento?

Equilíbrio trabalho-vida

43. O que você entende por equilíbrio entre vida pessoal e trabalho? Idealmente, como descreveria este equilíbrio? Existe algum tipo de profissão que você acredite que vá te proporcionar isto?
44. O que você costuma fazer em seus momentos fora do trabalho? Exemplifique.

45. Você considera que seu trabalho impactou estas atividades? Se sim, você poderia descrever um episódio onde isto tenha ocorrido? Como você se sentiu e como lidou com isso?
46. Quão recorrentes eram estes episódios durante o período no qual você esteve na empresa? Isto gerava algum tipo de desconforto nas equipes? Porque?
47. Em sua opinião, isto gerava um impacto negativo na produtividade da equipe? Porque?
48. Considerando uma situação onde uma demanda urgente no trabalho surja e você não possa comparecer a um evento importante que já havia confirmado. Como você se sentiria? Como lidaria com isso?
49. Como sua vida pessoal influencia sua satisfação no trabalho? Exemplifique e/ou contextualize.
50. Você considera ter passado por alguma experiência na qual sua vida pessoal tenha impactado, de alguma forma, seu trabalho? Se sim, descreva-a.

Millennials

51. Como era sua relação com seus pares? Quais eram as maiores vantagens e desvantagens de trabalhar com essas pessoas?
52. Como era sua relação com seus supervisores e pessoas de níveis hierárquicos acima do seu? Quais eram as maiores vantagens e desvantagens de trabalhar com essas pessoas?
53. Você acredita que exista uma diferença cultural dentro desta empresa, onde alguns “trabalham para viver” e outros “vivem para trabalhar”? Porque?
54. Você considera ter passado por alguma experiência de conflito/diferença de percepção que, em sua opinião, foi causado por uma diferença entre gerações? Exemplifique.

55. Existe algo que eu não perguntei que você gostaria de me contar? Se sim, conte-me.

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