

**WORK-LIFE INTERACTION OF SETSWANA SPEAKING
POLICE OFFICERS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY**

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COMMENTS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The editorial style as well as the references referred to in this mini-dissertation follow the format prescribed by the Publication Manual (5th edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA). This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the North-West University (Potchefstroom) to use APA style in all scientific documents as from January 1999.
- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article. The editorial style specified by the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology (which agrees largely with the APA style) is used, but the APA guidelines were followed in constructing tables.

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DECLARATION

I, Nando Tlou, hereby declare that “A phenomenological study on work-personal life interaction among Setswana speaking police officials in the North West Province” is my own work and that the views and opinions expressed in this work are those of the author and relevant literature references as shown in the references.

I further declare that the content of this research will not be handed in for any other qualification at any other tertiary institution.

NANDO TLOU

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ABSTRACT

Title: Work-life interaction of Setswana speaking police officers: A phenomenological study

Keywords: Work-personal life interaction, experiences, domains in life, antecedents, consequences, strategies, Setswana-speaking police officials.

Work and family constitutes the dominant life roles for most adults in contemporary society. In that, work may be interrupted by family and family may be interrupted by work. Work often generates ambivalent feelings; it can create both positive feelings (e.g. gives energy, enables development) and negative feelings (e.g. lack of freedom). Therefore, most people accept the overall life experiences including the various dimensions or domains that play a role in work-personal life interaction, such as, time spent on one domain, pressures experienced, responsibilities carried, sense of loyalty with work and family, as common and conflicting aspects. Recent developments in boundary theory highlighted the fact that integrating, or rather interaction means bordering between the two domains of work and personal life is permeable.

The main objective of this study was to investigate work-personal life interaction (WPLI) experiences of Setswana speaking police officials. This study also concentrated on the existence of work-personal life interaction, aspects involved, consequences thereof and coping mechanisms employed by the police officers. A non-probability purposive voluntary sample ($n = 12$) was taken of Setswana speaking police officials from the Mafikeng area in the North West Province. Data collection was done through a phenomenological method of semi-structured in-depth interviews. Content analysis was used to analyse, quantify and interpret the research data systematically and objectively. Results from the content analysis based on the experiences were recorded as reported.

The results indicated that there was a definite interaction between work and personal life. However, some police officials experienced interaction more than others. Furthermore, they also experienced the interaction to be more negative than positive due to organisational stressors and the management style of the organisation. Consequently the participants experienced high levels

of strain and difficulty when managing their time and dealing with the interaction between their work and personal lives. The time and strain difficulties induced a lot of conflict in their homes as well as their social lives. However, there were some police officials who experienced positive aspects in their lives regardless of the difficulties of being a police official. In addition, it was identified that they made use of coping mechanisms that acted as a buffer against negative experiences of WPLI.

Recommendations were made for both the organisation and for future practice.

OPSOMMING

Titel: 'n Fenomenologiese studie oor werk-persoonlike lewe interaksie onder Setswanasprekende polisie-offisiere in die Noordwes Provinsie.

Sleuteltermes: Werk-persoonlike lewe interaksie, ondervindinge, domeine in lewe, oorsake, gevolge, strategieë, Setswanasprekende polisie-offisiere.

Hedendaags is werk en familie die dominante lewensrolle vir die meeste volwassenes in die gemeenskap. Dit beteken ook dat werk beïnvloed kan word deur familie, en familie beïnvloed kan word deur werk. Werk veroorsaak dikwels ambivalente gevoelens; dit kan beide positiewe (bv. gee energie, help met ontwikkeling) en negatiewe gevoelens veroorsaak (bv. gebrek aan vryheid). Daarom aanvaar die meeste mense die algehele lewensondervindinge en die verskeie dimensies of domeine wat 'n rol speel in werk-persoonlike lewe interaksie soos bv. tyd spandeer in een domein, druk ondervind, dra van verantwoordelikhede, gevoel van lojaliteit teenoor familie en werk as algemene en konflikterende aspekte. Onlangse ontwikkelinge in die grensteorie het beklemtoon dat integrasie, of eerder interaksie beteken dat die grens tussen die twee domeine van werk- en persoonlike lewe deurdringbaar is.

Die doelwit van hierdie navorsing was om te ondersoek hoe Setswanasprekende polisie-offisiere werk-persoonlike lewe interaksie (WPLI) ervaar. Hierdie studie het ook gefokus op die bestaan van werk-persoonlike lewe interaksie, aspekte daarby betrokke, gevolge daarvan en hanteringsmeganismes gebruik deur polisie-offisiere. 'n Doelgerigte vrywillige nieraarskynlikheid-steekproef ($n = 12$) is geneem van Setswanasprekende polisie-offisiere van die Mafikeng area in die Noordwes Provinsie. Datainsameling op grond van 'n fenomenologiese metode van semi-gestruktureerde in diepte onderhoude is gedoen. Inhoud-analise is gebruik om data sistematief en objektief te analiseer, kwantifiseer en te analiseer. Resultate afkomstig van die inhoud-analise wat gebaseer was op die ondervindinge is opgeneem soos gerapporteer.

Die resultate het aangedui dat daar 'n definitiewe interaksie is tussen werk- en persoonlike lewe. Nietemin, sommige polisie-offisiere het meer interaksie as ander ervaar. Boonop, as gevolg van

organisasoriese stressors en bestuurstyle van die organisasie het hulle die interaksie meer negatief as positief ervaar. Gevolglik het die deelnemers hoë vlakke van spanning en tydspeperkinge ervaar wanneer hulle probeer het om die interaksie tussen hulle werk- en persoonlike lewe te hanteer. As gevolg hiervan het konflik in beide hul huis en sosiale lewe ontstaan. Nietemin, was daar sommige polisie-offisiere wat positiewe aspekte in hulle lewens ervaar het ten spyte daarvan dat hul polisie-offisiere is. Boonop, is dit geïdentifiseer dat hulle gebruik gemaak het van sekere strategieë wat opgetree het as 'n buffer teen die negatiewe ondervindinge van WPLI.

Aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing en praktyke is aan die hand gedoen.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This research (mini-dissertation) aims to explore work-life interaction (WPLI) and how Setswana speaking police officers in the North West Province experience this. This chapter presents the problem statement and a discussion of the research objectives, in which the general objective and specific objectives are set out. The research method is explained and a division of chapters is given.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Work and personal life are the two most important aspects of the lives of all employees. With that in mind, work-life interaction is a growing concern in many individuals' lives, where employed men and women are increasingly concerned about managing the conflicts that could be experienced in fulfilling the dual demands and responsibilities of work and family roles (Montgomery, Peeters, Schaufeli, & De Ouden, 2003). Working adults are likely to find particular periods in their lives difficult due to the roles that they have to play. This depends to a large degree on their unique circumstances and the ready dosage of role acquisition, especially when two complex roles must be mastered simultaneously (Bee, 1998). Furthermore, research suggests that most of the stress in a typical person's life is derived from work. However, according to Rothmann (2003), work often generates ambivalent feelings; it can create both positive feelings (e.g. gives energy, enables development) and negative feelings (e.g. lack of freedom). Also, the work front interferes with the home front uniformly more than the home front interferes with work (O'Driscoll, Brough, & Kalliath, 2004; Pacelli, 2005). In this study, work-life interaction is explained as an interactive process in which workers' functioning in one domain (e.g. home) is influenced by load effects (negative or positive) that have built up in the other domain (e.g. work) (Geurts et al., 2005). In other words, work may be interrupted by family and family may be interrupted by work.

The level of acceptance regarding work and family dimensions that affects a person's overall life balance has contributed towards the growing interest in the work-family interface. This has produced a strong emphasis on integrating work and family research. As a result, new

questions are being asked regarding the relative impact of work and family stressors on the overall well-being of employees (Frone, Russel, & Cooper, 1992). Although some researchers believe that both work needs and personal needs can be met, work-life expectations and the surrounding family responsibilities have a profound effect on the ability to perform on both sides (Bailyn & Harrington, 2004). Thus, participation in family is complicated by virtue of participation in work (Demerouti, Bakker, & Bulters, 2004; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). These theories and researchers support the important point that work and family life influence each other. Therefore, employees, societies and individuals alike cannot ignore one sphere without potentially endangering the other (Clark, 2000; Stoner, Robin, & Russell-Chaplin, 2005).

Currently, we are in the midst of the most revolutionary transformation in the nature of work and family since the industrial revolution (Hill, Ferris, & Martinson, 2003). For instance, locally and internationally there are attempts to initiate contemporary changes in the workplace (Sardiwalla, 2003). Therefore, organisations and institutes alike are beginning to emphasise a healthy work environment and work arrangements that promote a work-life balance (Bankal, Pappa, Smith, & Stein, 2003). However, workplace surveys still register high levels of police official stress stemming from work-life concerns (Hansen, 2002). Law enforcement has an abundance of stressors. The law enforcement professions in particular are faced with stressors on a continuous base, and therefore sustained imbalances may be of greater concern to the police profession.

To date, police work has been identified as a very stressful occupation (Burke, 1994; Rothmann & Van Rensburg, 2002; Swanepoel, 2003; Wiese, Rothmann, & Storm, 2003). According to Howard, Donofrio, and Boles (2004), the stress that police officers experience is compared to a process of stress-building experienced in the extreme. The police force also reflects a broader South African society with a range of social and other problems, and it is furthermore expected of them to manage and mirror the community's attitudes, values and behaviours (Swanepoel, 2003). In addition, South African police officials have to deal with inherent stressors such as a dangerous job, witnessing traumatic scenes and violent citizens that they have to protect. Moreover, they have to deal with organisational stressors which include organisational inefficiency, time pressures, work overload, inadequate resources and overall lack of support from management teams (Rothmann & Van Rensburg, 2002;

Swanepoel, 2003; Wiese et al., 2003). These dynamics can influence the police official's physical well-being, social life, as well as his or her quality of life (Moller & Peter, 2002).

According to Hurrell (1995), the kind of stressors faced by police officials are, by and large, beyond individual control. The members may cope with the same situation by using different strategies at different times. Research suggests that applying active strategies leads to high levels of personal accomplishments, whereas passive mechanisms lead to exhaustion and negative feelings. With that in mind, it has been indicated that police officials tend to use passive mechanisms such as avoidance. On the other hand, they also cope by using strategies such as social support, dealing with problems immediately as they occur, effective time management and the use of selective attention (Kirkcaldy, Cooper, & Ruffalo, 1995). Clearly, the nature of work requires effective coping mechanisms which, in turn, lead to optimal mental health. However, when they are compromised, a police official can lose touch and experience work-personal life interaction (WPLI) as difficult and very negative (Kelley, 2004).

It is no simple task for police officials to adapt to everything that affects their work and personal life, while also having to ensure stability and law and order within a transforming society (Van der Merwe, 2004). The industry most often simply creates a set of demands and pressures on individuals in the police (Howard et al., 2004). Consequently, one's ability to perform satisfactorily will either be stimulated (positive) or inhibited (negative), whether personally or professionally (Swanepoel, 2003). The consequences of poor integration between work and personal life (e.g. burnout, alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, suicide, anger and withdrawal) emerge as a major concern for police officials, their families, the organisation and society they serve (Burke, Burgers, & Obenlaid, 2004). Furthermore, exposure to stressors from one domain and the spillover to the other may result in an overall reduction of quality of life.

The environment in which employees in South Africa and elsewhere in the world currently function demands more of employment relationships than it did previously (Rothmann, 2003). As a result, the emphasis is being placed on cultural change and work re-design; changing the way work is done and the culture in which work is performed in. This includes the growing interest in researching the police environment and the dynamics that have been researched and explored (such as diversity issues). However, South Africa has not

investigated these issues adequately as compared to countries like those in Europe. Furthermore, South Africa has its own research limitations in the WPLI research field, including poorly designed studies, a lack of sophisticated statistical analysis, poorly controlled studies and a lack of validation for different demographical groups, influencing accurate and in-depth understanding of diversity (cultural) issues, more specifically issues pertaining to WPLI (Mostert, 2006).

The South African Police Service transition in 1993 brought about change where future prosperity depends on developments such as economic growth and securing and maintaining order (Kleyn, Rothmann, & Jackson, 2004). According to Leggett (2003), South Africa had also undergone a major transformation following the 'miraculous' transition to democracy in 1994, bringing a better life for all South Africans; for example socio-economic and political change, which culminated in a long process of socio-economic development. This means that the face of work as it was, has changed along with the country. The uniqueness of South Africa also includes a culturally diverse country which, in turn, influences WPLI as compared to other countries (Morrison, 2004). Therefore, recent trends in policing have tended to emphasise the critical importance of political, economic and social forces on the formation and development of police institutions and practices, contributing to work-family interaction issues (Barlow & Barlow, 1997). As a result, the need arises for South Africa to attend to those concerns that other countries are in the process of dealing with, as well as those more specific to our country.

The South African Police service is a multicultural organisation that employs individuals of diverse backgrounds. In addition, an organisational culture developed as a result of this diversity, with potential consequences associated with work-life interaction. Given that stress behaviours are a function of an environmental context, the main focus of the current study is on researching police officials' work environment, personal life experiences and the interaction between these domains (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). Socio-cultural norms constitute the meaning of work, the workers' obligations to society and the rights of the working class. Therefore, the cultural relativity of values is connected to the quality of work and family life (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). This could not be more true for the Setswana speaking sub-group and the dominant cultural group in the North West. The meaning they attach to work is deeply connected to their way of life. Thus, the focus of this study is on Setswana speaking police officials and what work means to this cultural group.

The Setswana speaking sub-group is unique in that their families play a very dominant role in their lives, and other aspects are thus always secondary. Furthermore, their settlement patterns, being intensely pluralistic, differ considerably in size from other ethnic groups in South Africa. In addition, their social system is communal in nature, which influences how they interact within their homes - for instance, having a tendency to congregate in separate family units, and even having sub-tribal units gathered. As a result, they tend to have communal endeavours, as opposed to the individual endeavours of many other cultural groups.

This study aims to determine the meaning that Setswana speaking people attach to everyday life experiences, as well as the subjective reality of being a Setswana speaking police official. The participants' beliefs and values that underlie rather than explain the empirical observations will further be explored. In essence, the police officials' world and their relationships in reference to WPLI will be studied. Dynamics such as diversity come into play - for example, ethnicity, gender, age and cultural factors such as language (Mostert, 2006). Since the workforce is diverse, it is only appropriate to research cultural groups as a factor that can influence WPLI.

The following research questions can be formulated based on the above-mentioned description of the research problem:

- How do Setswana speaking police officers experience WPLI?
- What are the main dimensions in the lives of Setswana speaking police officials that interact with each other?
- What are the major antecedents and consequences of WPLI for Setswana speaking police officers?
- Which strategies do Setswana speaking police officers use to deal with WPLI issues?

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are divided into general and specific objectives.

1.2.1 General objective

The general objective is to investigate the experience of WPLI among Setswana speaking police officers in the SAPS.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To determine how Setswana speaking police officers experience WPLI.
- To determine the main dimensions in the lives of Setswana speaking police officers which interact with each other.
- To determine the major antecedents and consequences of WPLI for Setswana speaking police officers.
- To determine which strategies Setswana speaking police officers use to deal with WPLI issues.

1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study is qualitative in nature and investigates the research questions from a phenomenological approach. In this approach, the researcher is interested in the meaning that a person attributes to his or her relationships (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, Poggenpoel, & Schurink, 1998). The person's cognitive experience must be understood and defined, because it is only through this that the true essence of the person can be realised. The objective of this research is to investigate the experiences that Setswana speaking members of the South African Police Service have in Mafikeng, Mmabatho and Lomanyaneng areas, to gain insights into how they perceive the dimensions, antecedents and consequences of aspects of WPLI, as well as the strategies they use regarding WPLI aspects. A qualitative research design is therefore suitable to reach this objective.

1.4. RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology involves a literature review and an empirical study. The results are presented in the form of a research article.

1.4.1 Literature review

The literature review focuses on WPLI in a broad sense. The focus is on a brief history of WPLI, why it is important to investigate this phenomenon, and major limitations in the field - specifically in the South African context.

1.4.2 Empirical study

The empirical study comprises the participants and procedure, data collection, data analysis and ethical aspects that are considered.

1.4.3 Participants and procedure

A non-probability purposive voluntary sample ($n = 12$) is used to reach the research objectives. The participants for this empirical investigation are Setswana speaking police officers in different positions (ranking order) within the SAPS in Mafikeng stations and surrounding units. Interviews will be conducted with participants with the possibility of returning for more information and clarity. The information will then be transcribed. These interviews will be continued until the data gathered has reached a point of saturation.

A letter requesting permission to conduct the research will be sent to the Area Commissioner of Molopo Area, under whom the stations and units operate in the SAPS. This letter requests permission to conduct the research in the police stations based in Mafikeng town and surrounding areas. The identified stations' management will be then provided with the letter of authorisation from the Area Commissioner. Then station commissioners will give each shift commander (line managers) a copy of the letter. This enabled the researcher to liaise with members who volunteered to participate. The line managers will be identified as intermediators, because they will be in a better position to communicate to the members during

the morning parade session. The role of the inter-mediator will be to identify employees who will be willing to participate in the research, as well as provision of the names, contact details, language preference for conducting the interviews and the race of such participants. The following specifications will be identified as selection criteria for employees willing to participate:

- Employees living in the North-West Province (Mafikeng, Lomanyaneng and Mmabatho).
- Employees working in the SAPS.
- Employees who are Setswana speaking.
- Employees who have been working within the SAPS for at least two or more years.
- Employees willing to participate in the research (and who have given written informed consent, after having been informed about the purpose and procedure of the research).
- Employees who are able to understand and communicate in Setswana and are prepared to have a tape-recorded interview with the researcher.

1.4.4. Data collection

1.4.4.1 Interviews

The measuring instrument used in this research will be a semi-structured interview, providing the participants with an opportunity to speak and construct their realities (Mahlomaholo & Nkoane, 2001). The participant shares more closely in the direction that the interview takes and he or she can introduce an issue that the researcher may not have thought of.

All participants will be asked three standard questions, namely 1) “You have a work life and a personal life. Can you please tell me how you experience the interaction between your work, and all facets of your personal life?”; 2) “What are the causes and consequences of the interaction between your work and personal life?”; and 3) “What strategies do you use to deal with the interaction between your work and personal life?”.

The interviews will be tape recorded (where the use of the tape recorder will be included in the consent form and verbally explained to the participants prior to the commencement of the interview), and field notes will be taken with each of the participants during the interview.

For the interviews, the non-verbal response technique (SOLER) will be used, that is: S- face squarely, O- open body posture, L- lean slightly forward, E- eye contact, R- relatively relaxed. The following non-directive dialogue techniques will be used to assist the participants to share their experiences:

Paraphrasing. This involves a verbal response in which the researcher enhances meaning by stating the participant's words in another form with the same meaning.

Minimal verbal response. A verbal response that correlates with occasional nodding, e.g., "mm- mm, yes, I see", which shows the participant that the researcher is listening.

Summarising. Involves summarising the participant's ideas, thoughts and feelings verbalised during the interview, to show that the researcher has understood what the participant is saying, which in turn will stimulate the participant to provide more information.

Probing. It involves deepening the response to a question posed by the researcher to the participant, which will increase the richness of the data being obtained; and to give cues to the participant about the level of response that is desired (e.g. "Tell me more about what you said...").

Reflecting. Reflecting back on something important that the person has just said in order to get him or her to expand on that idea, e.g. "So, you feel ... In that ...".

Clarification. This refers to the technique used to obtain clarity on unclear statements, e.g. "Could you tell me more about ...", "You seem to be saying ...".

- The location will be chosen by the participants to make them feel most comfortable, although they will be advised on what constitutes an appropriate location. Attention will be given to the climate and atmosphere of the room. To make sure that there will not be any distractions, an in-session poster will be created and used in counselling sessions.

A short biographical questionnaire will be provided after the interview, which includes information on gender, qualification, race, marital status, parental status and working experience.

1.4.4.2 Pilot study

A pilot study will be conducted prior to the initial interviews in the research. With the pilot study, interview schedules will be evaluated by experts (with expertise in qualitative

research) for appropriateness. Questions which are not clear will be redefined and adjusted accordingly with the help of experts. The pilot study will be conducted with willing participants within the SAPS. The goal and the procedure of the research and interview will be verbally explained to the participants during information sessions arranged by researcher, as well as prior to the interviews, also for purposes of clarity. A letter of the procedure of the interview and a consent form will be given to the participants prior to the interview.

1.4.4.3 Field notes

Field notes will be completed after each interview. Field notes will be used as a tool to record information on what unfolded in the interview sessions (what, how it happened, the detailed experiences of the researcher which include both one's personal interpretation or what will be actually observed). Other notes will be recorded of what the participants said during the interview, in order to compensate for the researcher's listening skills when reflecting, summarising, and clarifying on what the participant said (Mahlomaholo & Nkoane, 2002).

1.4.4.3 Trustworthiness

There is a growing opinion among researchers that qualitative research does not yield the desired results and is not trustworthy (Van Niekerk, 2002). As a result, transcriptions, second researcher- and independent coders will be used to address the issue of trustworthiness. However, not any good writing is trustworthy; there are, therefore, clear rules and criteria to comply with (Van Niekerk, 2002). Attention will be given to the principles of credibility (checking the truth value of the findings), by means of field notes, triangulation, peer examination and independent coding; transferability (ensuring the applicability of the findings) through a comparison of sufficient descriptive data, as well as dense description of the data; dependability (ensuring consistency of the findings) by means of an audit, keeping the raw material, giving a full description of the research method, applying the same procedure throughout, triangulation, peer examination and the code-recode procedure; conformability (which will be accomplished by using the criterion of neutrality or freedom from bias) by keeping an appropriate distance in order not to influence the research, as well as triangulation and the code-recode procedure.

1.4.4.4 Data analysis

The interviews will be transcribed verbatim and checked by two independent researchers. Content analysis will be used to analyse, quantify and interpret the research data systematically and objectively. The interviewer and an expert in qualitative research will conduct the content analysis separately and extracted themes will be compared afterwards. The content analysis involves the following five steps:

- The first step is to define the universe of content that is analysed and to categorise the content. The researcher reads the entire description to obtain a sense of the whole.
- The researcher then identifies individual units (themes). A theme is a sentence (i.e. a proposition about something).
- The researcher follows procedure by eliminating redundancy in the units and to clarify the meaning of the remaining units by relating them to each other and to the whole.
- The researcher then reflects on the given units, and transforms the meaning from concrete language into the language or concept of science. The units are quantified by assigning numbers to the objects of the content analysis. The numbers of participants who mentioned each specific theme are then counted. Then the themes are ranked, based on the frequency by which they will be mentioned by different participants.
- The researcher finally integrates the knowledge gained into a descriptive structure. The exact words of the participants are used as proof, and the themes are confirmed with these quotations.
- Literature references. These themes are checked and verified by a WPLI expert and two industrial psychologists.

1.4.4.5 Ethical aspects

Ethical aspects that will be considered on the part of the researcher in terms of the code of ethics include the following: first and foremost are the researcher's qualifications and competence to undertake a particular research project, followed by the researchers' integrity in terms of honesty, fairness and respect towards others. It is also important to ensure that the researcher upholds the standards of his/her profession and accept responsibility for his/her actions. Finally, it is important to ensure that the welfare of others is the major concern of the

researcher. In addition, ethical aspects that will be considered on the part of the researcher include the following:

- **Informed consent.** The researcher will ensure that participants voluntarily agree to take part in the research. The participants will then be informed accordingly that the researcher does not represent the SAPS, but is in the capacity of a researcher regardless of being employed by the SAPS. Therefore, they are free to decline participation and could withdraw at any point in the research process to avoid any possible conflicts. The participants will be also informed in advance regarding any discomforts and embarrassments that might be involved in the research. In such instances, contact details of a referral person (psychologists) would be made available to participants.
- **Confidentiality.** Confidentiality (privacy) of the participants involved in the research will be highly respected. The anonymity of their participation in the research will be well communicated and explained to them prior to the interviews. The participants will be also informed that the information they provided would be destroyed after the tapes have been transcribed.
- **Deception.** Participants will be not provided with erroneous information and information will be not to be withheld from them. They will be fully informed about the goal of the research and interviews, the procedure thereof, the use of tape recorder and field notes.

1.5 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

In Chapter 2, the work-personal life experiences of Setswana speaking police officials are discussed in the form of a research article. Chapter 3 deals with the conclusion, limitations and recommendations of this research.

1.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the problem statement and research objectives of this study, as well as the research method that was used and the research procedure that was followed. This was followed by a brief layout of the chapters that follow.

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CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH ARTICLE

WORK-LIFE INTERACTION OF SETWANA SPEAKING POLICE OFFICERS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to investigate work-personal life interaction (WPLI) experiences of Setswana speaking police officials. A non-probability purposive voluntary sample ($n = 12$) was taken of Setswana speaking police officials from the Mafikeng, Mmabatho and Lomanyaneng areas in the North-West Province. Data collection was done through a phenomenological method of semi-structured in-depth interviews. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. The results indicated that there was a definite interaction between work and personal life. Furthermore, they also experienced the interaction to be more negative than positive due to organisational stressors and the management style of the organisation. Consequently, the participants experienced high levels of strain and difficulty when managing their time and dealing with the interaction between their work and personal lives. The time and strain difficulties induced a lot of conflict in their homes as well as their social lives. However, there were some police officials who also experienced positive aspects in their lives. In addition, it was identified that they made use of coping mechanisms that acted as a buffer against negative experiences of WPLI.

OPSOMMING

Die doelwit van hierdie navorsing was om te ondersoek hoe Setswanasprekende polisie-offisiere werk-persoonlike lewe interaksie (WPLI) ervaar. 'n Doelgerigte vrywillige niewaarskynlikheidssteekproef ($n = 12$) is geneem van Setswanasprekende polisie offisiere van die Mafikeng-, Mmabatho- en Lomanyaneng- areas in die Noordwes Provinsie. Datainsameling op grond van 'n fenomenologiese metode van semi-gestruktureerde in diepte onderhoude is gedoen. Inhoud-analise is gebruik om data te analiseer. Die resultate het aangedui dat daar 'n definitiewe interaksie is tussen werk- en persoonlike lewe. Nietemin, sommige polisie-offisiere het meer interaksie as ander ervaar. Boonop, as gevolg van organisatoriese stressors en bestuursstyle van die organisasie, het hulle die interaksie meer negatief as positief ervaar. Gevolglik het die deelnemers hoë vlakke van spanning en tydspeperkinge ervaar wanneer hulle probeer het om die interaksie tussen hulle werk- en persoonlike lewe te hanteer. As gevolg hiervan het konflik in beide hul huis en sosiale lewe ontstaan. Nietemin, was daar sommige polisie offisiere wat positiewe aspekte in hulle lewens ervaar het ten spyte daarvan dat hul polisie-offisiere is. Boonop, is dit geïdentifiseer dat hulle gebruik gemaak het van sekere strategieë wat opgetree het as 'n buffer teen die negatiewe ondervindinge van WPLI.

Work and personal life are the two most important aspects of the lives of all employees. With that in mind, work-life interaction is a growing concern in many individuals' lives, where employed men and women are increasingly concerned about managing the conflicts that could be experienced in fulfilling the dual demands and responsibilities of work and family roles (Montgomery, Peeters, Schaufeli, & De Ouden, 2003). Working adults are likely to find particular periods in their lives difficult due to the roles that they have to play. This depends to a large degree on their unique circumstances and the ready dosage of role acquisition, especially when two complex roles must be mastered simultaneously (Bee, 1998). Furthermore, research suggests that most of the stress in a typical person's life is derived from work. However, according to Rothmann (2003), work often generates ambivalent feelings; it can create both positive feelings (e.g. gives energy, enables development) and negative feelings (e.g. lack of freedom). Also, the work front interferes with the home front uniformly more than the home front interferes with work (O'Driscoll, Brough, & Kalliath, 2004; Pacelli, 2005). In this study, work-life interaction is explained as an interactive process in which workers' functioning in one domain (e.g. home) is influenced by load effects (negative or positive) that have built up in the other domain (e.g. work) (Geurts et al., 2005). In other words, work may be interrupted by family and family may be interrupted by work.

The level of acceptance regarding work and family dimensions that affects a person's overall life balance has contributed towards the growing interest in the work-family interface. This has produced a strong emphasis on integrating work and family research. As a result, new questions are being asked regarding the relative impact of work and family stressors on the overall well-being of employees (Frone, Russel, & Cooper, 1992). Although some researchers believe that both work needs and personal needs can be met, work-life expectations and the surrounding family responsibilities have a profound effect on the ability to perform on both sides (Bailyn & Harrington, 2004). Thus, participation in family is complicated by virtue of participation in work (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Demerouti, Bakker, & Bulters, 2004). These theories and researchers support the important point that work and family life influence each other. Therefore, employees, societies and individuals alike cannot ignore one sphere without potentially endangering the other (Clark, 2000; Stoner, Robin, & Russell-Chaplin, 2005).

Currently, we are in the midst of the most revolutionary transformation in the nature of work and family since the industrial revolution (Hill, Ferris, & Martinson, 2003). For instance,

locally and internationally there are attempts to initiate contemporary changes in the workplace (Sardiwalla, 2003). Therefore, organisations and institutes alike are beginning to emphasise a healthy work environment and work arrangements that promote a work-life balance (Bankal, Pappa, Smith, & Stein, 2003). However, workplace surveys still register high levels of police official stress stemming from work-life concerns (Hansen, 2002). Law enforcement has an abundance of stressors. The law enforcement professions in particular are faced with stressors on a continuous base, and therefore sustained imbalances may be of greater concern to the police profession.

To date, police work has been identified as a very stressful occupation (Burke, 1994; Rothmann & Van Rensburg, 2002; Swanepoel, 2003; Wiese, Rothmann, & Storm, 2003). According to Howard et al. (2004), the stress that police officers experience is compared to a process of stress-building experienced in the extreme. The police force also reflects a broader South African society with a range of social and other problems, and it is furthermore expected of them to manage and mirror the community's attitudes, values and behaviours (Swanepoel, 2003). In addition, South African police officials have to deal with inherent stressors such as a dangerous job, witnessing traumatic scenes and violent citizens that they have to protect. Moreover, they have to deal with organisational stressors which include organisational inefficiency, time pressures, work overload, inadequate resources and overall lack of support from management teams (Rothmann & Van Rensburg, 2002; Swanepoel, 2003; Wiese et al., 2003). These dynamics can influence the police official's physical well-being, social life, as well as his or her quality of life (Moller & Peter, 2002).

According to Hurrell (1995), the kind of stressors faced by police officials are, by and large, beyond individual control. The members may cope with the same situation by using different strategies at different times. Research suggests that applying active strategies leads to high levels of personal accomplishments, whereas passive mechanisms lead to exhaustion and negative feelings. With that in mind, it has been indicated that police officials tend to use passive mechanisms such as avoidance. On the other hand, they also cope by using strategies such as social support, dealing with problems immediately as they occur, effective time management and the use of selective attention (Kirkcaldy, Cooper, & Ruffalo, 1995). Clearly, the nature of work requires effective coping mechanisms which, in turn, lead to optimal mental health. However, when they are compromised, a police official can lose touch and

experience work-personal life interaction (WPLI) as difficult and very negative (Kelley, 2004).

It is no simple task for police officials to adapt to everything that affects their work and personal life, while also having to ensure stability and law and order within a transforming society (Van der Merwe, 2004). The industry most often simply creates a set of demands and pressures on individuals in the police (Howard et al., 2004). Consequently, one's ability to perform satisfactorily will either be stimulated (positive) or inhibited (negative), whether personally or professionally (Swanepoel, 2003). The consequences of poor integration between work and personal life (e.g. burnout, alcohol and drug abuse, family violence, suicide, anger and withdrawal) emerge as a major concern for police officials, their families, the organisation and society they serve (Burke, Burgers, & Obenlaid, 2004). Furthermore, exposure to stressors from one domain and the spillover to the other may result in an overall reduction of quality of life.

From the above-mentioned problem statement the objectives of this study were 1) To determine how Setswana speaking police officers experience WPLI; 2) To determine the main dimensions in the lives of Setswana speaking police officers which interact with each other; 3) To determine the major antecedents and consequences of WPLI for Setswana speaking police officers; and 4) To determine which strategies Setswana speaking police officers use to deal with WPLI issues.

METHOD

Research design

This study is qualitative in nature and investigates the research questions from a phenomenological approach. In this approach, the researcher is interested in the meaning that a person attributes to his or her relationships (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, Poggenpoel, & Schurink, 1998).

Participants and procedure

A non-probability purposive voluntary sample ($n = 12$) was used to reach the objectives of this research. The participants were Setswana speaking police officers in different positions within the SAPS in Mafikeng stations and surrounding units. Interviews were conducted until the data extracted reached a point of saturation. Characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Characteristics of the Participants (n = 12)

| Item | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------|------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 9 | 75,00 |
| | Female | 3 | 25,00 |
| Age | 30-39 years | 5 | 41,67 |
| | 40-49 years | 6 | 50,00 |
| | 50-59 years | 1 | 8,33 |
| Qualification | Grade 12 | 5 | 41,67 |
| | Technical Diploma | 1 | 8,33 |
| | Technical College | 3 | 25,00 |
| | Degree | 2 | 16,67 |
| | Postgraduate Degree | 1 | 8,33 |
| Position | Constable | 1 | 8,33 |
| | Sergeant | 1 | 8,33 |
| | Inspector | 6 | 50,00 |
| | Captain | 2 | 16,67 |
| | Superintendent | 1 | 8,33 |
| | Administration officer | 1 | 8,33 |
| Marital status | Married | 6 | 50,00 |
| | Single | 5 | 41,67 |
| | Divorced | 1 | 8,33 |
| Experience | 2-9 years | 1 | 8,33 |
| | 10-19 years | 7 | 58,33 |
| | 20-29 years | 4 | 33,33 |

The entire population consisted of Setswana speaking police officers of which nine (75%) were male and three (25%) were female. Half of the participants were aged between 40 and 49 years (50%), while seven (58,33%) had work experience of between 10 to 19 years. With regard to marital status, half of the participants (50%) were married, five (41,67%) were

single, while one (8,33%) participant was divorced. A total of five (41,67%) participants had obtained a secondary educational qualification (Grade 12), whereas only one had obtained a postgraduate degree. Six (50%) of the participants were inspectors, two (16,67%) were captains, one (8,33%) was a constable, one (8,33%) was a sergeant, one (8,33%) was a superintendent, and one (8,33%) was an administration officer.

Research procedure

The provincial head of SAPS psychological services wrote a letter requesting permission to conduct the research. This letter was then submitted to the Molopo Area Commissioner under which the stations and units of the SAPS operate. This letter clearly requested permission to conduct the research in the surrounding stations and units based in Mafikeng. Thereafter, the letter was presented to the Mafikeng Station Commissioner and other unit heads, specifically those in Ikageng, Mafikeng, Mmabatho and Lomanyaneng police stations as well as to specialised units such as Human Resources, the Child Protection Unit, the Crime Intelligence Unit, the Inspectorate Unit and Chaplain Services. This enabled the researcher to liaise with members who volunteered to participate. However, only the employees from Mafikeng responded on time and supervisors from that area were identified accordingly.

The role of the inter-mediator (supervisors) was to identify employees who were willing to participate in the research and to provide the names, contact details, preferred language and the ethnicity of such participants. The following specifications were used as selection criteria for employees willing to participate: 1) employees who resided in the Mafikeng area; 2) employees who were working in the SAPS; 3) employees who were Setswana speaking; 4) employees who had at least two years' experience within the SAPS; 5) employees willing to participate in the research and who gave written informed consent; and 5) employees who were prepared to have a tape-recorded interview with the researcher.

Data collection

The data collection for this research consisted of a pilot study, qualitative interviews and field notes. The trustworthiness of the research and data was also an important aspect to consider.

Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted prior to the initial interviews in the research. Interviews were evaluated by experts (with expertise in qualitative research) for appropriateness. Questions that were not clear were refined and adjusted accordingly.

Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to conduct the research. The researcher asked specific questions without applying any expectations or preconceived ideas. The participants played a role in the direction the interview took and they could introduce an issue the researcher had not thought of. The researcher clearly explained the reason behind the use of tape-recorders as an interview tool. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed afterwards. The non-verbal response technique SOLER (i.e. face squarely, open body posture, lean slightly forward, eye contact and relatively relaxed) was used during the interviews. Other interview techniques such as paraphrasing, minimal verbal response, summarising, probing, reflecting and clarification were also used.

The interviews were conducted at the location the participant felt most comfortable with. Attention was given to the climate and atmosphere of the room, where the researcher ensured that it was free from any distractions. The interviews were formal and non-directive. All participants were asked three standard questions: 1) “You have a work life and a personal life. Can you please tell me how you experience the interaction between your work and all facets of your personal life?”; 2) “What are the causes and consequences of the interaction between your work and personal life?”; and 3) “What strategies do you use to deal with the interaction between your work and personal life?”.

Field notes

Field notes were completed after each interview. These field notes were used as a tool to record information on what unfolded in the interview sessions. Other notes reflected on what the participants said during the interview, to compensate for the researcher’s listening skills when reflecting, summarising, and clarifying on what the participant said.

Trustworthiness

Transcriptions, a second researcher and an independent coder were used to deal with the matter of trustworthiness. However, not any good writing is trustworthy so there are clear rules and criteria to comply with (Van Niekerk, 2002). Concerns of trustworthiness were dealt with by checking the information with the parties involved and as a result, creditability and dependability were assured.

Data analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and checked by two independent researchers. Content analysis was used to analyse, quantify and interpret the research data systematically and objectively, and consisted of five steps. The first step was to universalise the context that needed to be analysed, in order for it to be defined and to be categorised. The researcher read the entire description to obtain a sense of the whole. Secondly, the researcher identified individual units (themes). A theme is a sentence (i.e. a proposition about something). Thirdly, the researcher then eliminated redundancy in the units and clarified the meaning of the remaining units by relating them to each other and to the whole. Fourthly, the researcher reflected on the given units, and transformed the meaning from concrete language into the language or concept of science. The units were quantified by assigning numbers to the objects of the content analysis. The number of participants who mentioned each specific theme was then counted. The themes were then ranked, based on the frequency by which they were mentioned by different participants. Finally, the researcher integrated the knowledge gained into a descriptive structure. The exact words of the participants were used as proof, and themes were confirmed with the literature references. These themes were checked and verified by a WPLI expert and two industrial psychologists to confirm or criticise.

RESULTS

The results deduced from the interviews are outlined in table format. The tables consist of the major and sub-themes identified in the interviews. Themes were obtained based on the frequency of responses by participants. Six major themes and various sub-themes were extracted from the interviews. The major themes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Major Themes Mentioned by the Participants

| Themes | Description of themes | <i>n</i> = 12 |
|---------|--|---------------|
| Theme 1 | Organisational stressors | 12 |
| Theme 2 | Stressors in the work environment and their influence on the personal life | 12 |
| Theme 3 | Management style and the influence on work and personal life | 9 |
| Theme 4 | The interaction between work and personal life | 12 |
| Theme 5 | Positive experiences of work-personal life interaction | 6 |
| Theme 6 | Applied coping strategies | 12 |

Organisational stressors (Theme 1)

All twelve participants mentioned organisational stressors as a problem in their lives. Sub-themes that related to organisational stressors were extracted from the main theme and are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Organisational Stressors

| Sub-themes | Description of sub-themes | <i>n</i> = 12 |
|-------------|--|---------------|
| Sub-theme 1 | Long hours | 12 |
| Sub-theme 2 | Work overload | 11 |
| Sub-theme 3 | Inadequate physical and human resources | 10 |
| Sub-theme 4 | Nature of the job is traumatic and dangerous | 11 |
| Sub-theme 5 | Lack of promotion | 12 |

Long hours

There has been much talk about work-family problems centring around time, and more particularly, not enough time to deal with both work and family. Furthermore, time at work has become a proxy for commitment and competence, which creates a problem of time flow

for many employees (Bailyn & Harrington, 2004). As a result, employees tend to work long hours to show their level of commitment; a phenomenon found among the police officials in this study. All of the participants felt as if they were always working long hours, and identified with the saying that a police official is never off duty. Participants also reported working overtime, and this applied to both operational and administrative officials. Furthermore, working overtime had a measure of impact on the time that police officials spent on other aspects in their lives. Simply put, the participants felt as if they had no control over how they spend their time off or on duty.

At the same time, they felt obliged to work overtime because the job demands are so high that one cannot cover everything that needs to be done without having to work overtime. The following is a participant's exact expression referring to this concern: "*They give you so much work to do at a time. While you are busy with the one task, you are expected to abandon it and carry out the other one. Then you return to the previous task and finish, and as a result using your personal time*". Job demands, pressure to produce quality work, long hours, timing and location of work, as well as co-ordinating their personal lives have been linked with work-personal life interference. The following illustrates the participants' experience of having to work long hours: "...we work overtime, weekends for stand-by purposes and whenever there are gatherings, we have to attend because the commander tasks us..."; "...we work as long as there is work for us to do, we work 24 hours and that's it". The participants experienced working long hours as very unpleasant because, regardless of how hard or fast they worked, there is always something else to do.

In addition to fulfilling work responsibilities, the participants have to deal with responsibilities at the home front as well: "*You travel most of the time arriving late at home, well this spurs quarrels at home*". Participants have reported that working overtime affected their personal lives negatively. Also, unpleasant work schedules (working too late or too early) interfered with their personal and care arrangements (Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). This implies that excessive work hours prevented them from spending enough time with their families and fulfilling responsibilities from their personal lives. This negative spill-over from work to home is detrimental for employees because of a lack of good recovery periods. Consequently, they are expected to invest more effort in performing adequately, which results in increased negative reaction (Geurts et al., 2005).

Work overload

The police are under constant pressure and criticism when it comes to the crime rate and cases that have not been dealt with or solved on time. Besides their basic duties as police officials, they also have heavy case loads, meetings to attend and have to travel a great deal. In addition, a heavy load of paperwork accompanies each and every task or function. Participants also experienced stress and work overload as a consequence of their high job demands and lack of resources to satisfy these demands. This quotation was extracted in relation to this problem: *“Ever since I see in most cases at work ever since I have joined SAPS, there is too much work”*.

The participants expressed strong feelings regarding having to deal with many tasks all at once: *“You notice the bulk of work. I am saying that work overload could be reduced if there is an increase in the number of staff at work”*. Thus, job settings provide employees with insufficient possibilities to regulate work demands (e.g. high job demands). As a result, employees experience strain and are unable to recuperate and adjust to work strategies because of sustained high demands that exceed acceptable limits (Geurts et al., 2005). This was experienced particularly by participants who belonged to units that specialise in investigations (e.g. the child protection unit and the crime information gathering unit). One of the participant’s exact words on this issue were: *“What I would like to say is that the SAPS must reduce the existing case work in CPU (child protection unit), they are so demoralised because of the case backlog they have. They have to work with social workers, you have to attend different meetings, different awareness campaigns at schools, everywhere, pre-schools and so forth”*.

The participants believed that feelings of overload led to negative consequences such as being unproductive. Also, they reported that they experienced WPLI as negative due to their high job demands: *“... I have observed the detectives, they are not working. It is because they are unable to. Their workload is too high”*. Moreover, workload seems to be the most common organisational stressor associated with negative consequences and, furthermore, work pressures were revealed as having the most robust relationship with work-home interference. Furthermore, the absence of positive interactions is primarily related to the appraisal of the work environment as demanding (Demerouti & Geurts, 2004). Therefore,

considering the exact expressions of participants, the central assumption is that original adaptive responses develop into negative reactions due to work overload.

Inadequate physical and human resources

It seems as if all public servants complain about a lack of logistical and human resources. The SAPS also face a range of serious challenges such as responsibilities extraneous to their core functions. In addition, they have to deal with inadequate physical human resources. The participants expressed their concern regarding the growing demands placed on them from both management and the community at large. More specifically, they expressed concern about their inability to carry out these demands due to the lack of manpower and the small number of vehicles made available to them. Moreover, all of the participants expressed their frustrations over not having enough resources to do their jobs: *“You find that you want to continue with the work, but because of the lack of resources, you are unable to. Our resources are limited. You can only help at a certain time, you have to share the available resources, and then you have to wait so that you can continue with another case. Sometimes you want to communicate with the people at the office while you are at the field, but you cannot because you do not have a cell phone that you can use”*. Furthermore, they experienced a backlog in their work because they were unable to attend to everything at a given time. At the same time, they had to deal with criticism from the community for not doing their jobs.

It is evident that there should be an adequate amount of vehicles and members to fight crime, especially in South Africa. The unavailability of resources and the shortage of manpower were experienced as major problems and also made it difficult to carry out demands. Unfortunately, if these resources are not made available for purposes of crime fighting, it will lead to most personnel hours being spent on other sorts of activities. Clearly, there is a need for a reallocation of resources (Leggett, 2003).

Participants also mentioned how resources played an important role in their jobs. This suggests that every job task is in line with curbing crime. However, the demand and supply in SAPS are so unbalanced that effective crime curbing is being jeopardised. Furthermore, these high job demands have major effects on manpower. The participants experienced the job demands as high because there were few of them available to actually carry out the tasks.

These included guarding courts and public buildings, being court orderlies, controlling holding cells, transporting prisoners, being body guards to public officials and other dignitaries, being charge clerks at station level, acting as commissioners of oath and all administrative functions (e.g. licensing officers, public carriers, alcohol establishment). However, all of these tasks excluded their primary crime combating operations.

In addition, the participants had to carry out all these responsibilities, while many still question their level of competence. According to the participants, the questioning is a direct result of the case backlog due to the lack of manpower: *“I am saying that workload could be reduced if they increase the number of staff at work”*. Recent writings have definitely supported the fact that shortage of manpower is a problem. Despite the early infusion of personnel, total SAPS staffing has been declining in recent years. Furthermore, at present, training capabilities makes counteracting this trend very difficult. In addition, the SAPS have fallen behind schedule, creating a big problem for manpower: *“We are able to keep a person for an hour to four in the charge office just because we do not have a vehicle, mostly because there are not enough people at the charge office. The other complaints we would attend to them the next day. You feel guilty that you have not achieved anything before you knock-off. This is just because of a lack of resources”*.

Nature of the job is traumatic and dangerous

Over recent years, a number of surveys such as the national survey of the Families and Work Institute have shown the connection between work-family integration and characteristics of work (Bailyn & Harrington, 2004). These suggestions from the surveys are also confirmed by the reports from the participants regarding the nature of the job. The participants experienced their jobs as inherently stressful due to the danger elements and trauma surrounding case matters. The participants believed that one is directly and indirectly affected by the work environment: *“The things that happen to police officers are not, however, when they have problems with their work - they discuss it in the office, with all of us. At the end we all get affected directly, it is our culture”*.

The participants who have been exposed to such situations openly expressed their feelings towards this environment. Most of the participants who have been exposed to traumatic incidents and the dangers of being in the line of duty, expressed how they lived in constant

fear. Researchers have noted that police work is without a doubt the most dangerous and demanding job, especially since the transition from crime fighters to community police. Furthermore, they have to deal with dangerous citizens, abusive treatment; witnessing suicide, rape victims and domestic violence (Kleyn, Rothmann, & Jackson, 2004). The following quotation proved this: *“The other thing that stresses me at work is that you could find that we deal with traumatic cases, especially rape cases whereby you find a child being injured. I see so many of them it breaks my heart”*.

Police officials encounter dangerous offenders and circumstances on a daily base. In essence, the participants’ world of work is experienced as very negative. People who violate rules and commit internal harm cause officials to anticipate that there are other circumstances that could be harmful to them as well (Howard et al., 2002). Considering the suggestions at hand, the participants’ work environment is certainly a matter of concern that affects them as human beings.

Lack of promotion

When an organisation undergoes a miraculous transition, the new leadership should consider practices that allow their employees to gain from this. However, according to what the participants reported, the SAPS practices are contrary to that belief. Moreover, there is heightened concern among employees about their quality of life and possible changes in the meaning of success and expectations regarding self-fulfilment. Thus, employees are concerned about their marital satisfaction and social alienation directly relevant to work-family interaction because of a lack of a sense of achievement (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This cannot be truer anywhere than in the police profession. Indeed, the participants have expressed similar experiences as suggested by researchers. Participants were concerned about the lack of promotion opportunities and how this affects their future in the organisation and family endeavours. The following quote clearly demonstrates this concern: *“I enjoy my job, it is only those problems of promotions that get to us. I end up being demoralised so much that I do not want to go to work. I am stressing, more especially when it comes to promotions”*.

Participants mentioned that their unhappiness about the lack of promotion were not only because of money or status, but also because of ranking order. Lack of promotion transcends monetary value; it involves a sense of achievement and success. As a result, they were easily

demoralised and their level of motivation and commitment decreased likewise: “... *if you have a better salary or get promoted, they win your confidence and you will be able to arrest and deter crime. Therefore, we refuse a stiff type of a sentence in the sense that you are paid well and then you commit crime*”. Thus, police officials need major resources such as job enhancement, autonomy and reinforcement contingencies to make their jobs manageable (e.g. promotions and better salary). However, participant’s experiences differed from those expectations.

Besides dealing with concerns regarding promotions, participants had to deal with family responsibilities too, resulting in them experiencing WPLI as negative. Therefore, the consequences spread far beyond work and involved a sense of little recognition and pride, loss of hope, the inability to provide and a lack of growth. Therefore, it is possible to link the lack of promotion to the increasing levels of suicides, domestic violence, alcohol abuse and bribery that are currently rampant in the SAPS. Researchers suggest that the outcomes of a lack of promotion are depression, a sense of failure and loss of motivation, leading to absenteeism, high turnover rates and lowered productivity (Wiese, Rothmann, & Storm, 2003). The following was extracted from a participant’s interview: “*I have been on the same rank for 10 years, without any promotion or any increase in our salaries. This will enable us to manage our families. There is bribery and corruption which could go down*”.

Stressors in the work environment and their influence on the personal life (Theme 2)

Nine participants, of which five were male and four were female, expressed and discussed how their work, and more specifically organisational stressors, spilled over to their personal lives. The specific spheres that appeared to be affected were indicated by the frequency the issues were mentioned, namely their own personal selves, family life, the job and social life. Studies have shown that job characteristics and organisational stressors may spill-over to one’s personal life and are highly associated with work-home interaction. In addition, organisational stressors have been associated with low job satisfaction, a greater intention to quit, high levels of emotional exhaustion, psychosomatic symptoms and high levels of family dissatisfaction (Burke, 2004). The specific spheres in personal life that are affected by organisational stressors were extracted as sub-themes and are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Stressors in the Work Environment and their Influence on the Personal Life

| Sub-themes | Description of sub-themes | <i>n</i> = 12 |
|-------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Sub-theme 1 | The effect on the self | 10 |
| Sub-theme 2 | The effect on family life | 11 |
| Sub-theme 3 | The effect on the job | 11 |
| Sub-theme 4 | The effect on the social life | 11 |

The effect on the self

Participants openly expressed their concern over organisational stressors and the manner in which these affected them as individuals. They lost faith in whom and what they were because of the amount of stress that they were under, as well as the extent to which it affected them personally: *“Concerns like promotions at work affect us. You end up believing that things are unbearable in life. Take for example promotions. You would want to find out reasons behind being passed on for promotions; however, you are then treated inappropriately. These are the kind of things that demoralise us, and then you start believing that you are less than nothing and better off staying at home- then see what happens to you”*.

Individuals who are currently employed reported that they found it difficult to combine work and family obligations, and that they experienced the interaction between the two domains as negative. This also had an impact on their health. Research has suggested that time and strain-based work-home interference predicts health deterioration a year later. As a result, employees experience high levels of fatigue and depression (Van Hooff et al., 2005). Moreover, decreased levels of stress, depression and hopelessness have been associated with favourable changes in workload, job control, flexible hours and a sense of recognition from the organisation.

Participants also mentioned that they believed that a police official tends to change as a result of organisational stressors. They believed that they were not the same person than what they used to be before joining the service, and they blamed the environment they function in as well as the job tasks themselves. Also, the nature of the job is dangerous and traumatic to

some extent and made them fearful, suspicious and violent: *“I am already fearful at all times, get suspicious, and always worry about my safety and the safety of my children. I am fearful of what could happen. Some things just affect us”*; *“I feel so heartbroken, I am sure that I was not able to talk because... I am talking from a broken heart. You could even see that I was just about to cry. This is terrible”*.

One of the most promising models, the Demand-Control-Support (DCS) model, has given job demands some critical attention. The model examines the multifaceted nature of job demands, more specifically the role of demands, and evaluates emotional and mental demands on an individual as a component of job stress. Suggestions have been made that mental and emotional job demands are very high in occupations such as policing. As a result, it is at a high cost to the individual who has to deal with such demands (Montgomery et al., 2003). This implies that police officials live in fear and experience emotional strain and, as a result, these affect their personal well-being.

In addition to the emotional and psychological strain (e.g. frustration, suicide ideation, anxiety, misery and anger), the participants experienced a major level of physical strain (e.g. exhaustion, fatigue and headaches): *“Police work is very strenuous. A person works day and night and after that I feel very tired. This is why in most cases work gets one so stressed”*. Studies have indicated that employees/individuals who experience such demands have little resources, which in turn have a negative effect on them. The demands refer to those physical, social and organisational aspects that require sustained physical and/or mental effort. Therefore, certain psychological and physiological costs exist, including exhaustion, fatigue, lack of stimulation, and lack of evident support, growth and development. Consequently, individuals take strain and are affected personally.

The effect on family life

It has been reported that work, its characteristics and organisational stressors can lead to a lower quality of family life. Work issues have also been closely related to low marital or family satisfaction. Employees are more likely to take work issues home and as a result, the home domain becomes the dumping ground for many of these issues (Small & Riley, 1990). Participants expressed that they experienced many problems due to organisational stressors. However, their negative experiences extended beyond being a police official and infiltrated

their family life as well: *“In the SAPS our members have family problems like no other. Divorce rates are up, families breaking down and there are a lot of separations”*.

Various researchers have supported the fact that spill-over from the work domain to the family domain does exist, and is an issues for both dual career couples and other couples. The cumulative demands of multiple roles impose on time, energy and commitment, and results in role strain. This role strain can lead to either interference or overload in the family domain. Role overload means that the participants have roles that are too great to perform adequately, while interference means having difficulty to fulfil the requirements of multiple roles (Higgins & Duxbury, 1992). Participants experienced the interaction between work and family as particularly negative and they were unable to provide for their families - both emotionally and financially. When taking the Setswana speaking family into consideration, it is important to identify that the expectation is there that one would be financially responsible for the extended family members as well. The participants felt that they worked very hard and experienced many pressures, while no promotion or money was offered in turn. This meant that they are unable to provide for their family, which in turn causes many problems at home - with the children, parents and spouses.

“You see work brings conflict at home. Whether you are speaking the truth or not is not the point, but rather that you were at work or you were working overnight. They ask how can you arrive at 4am from work and then wake up at 8am and go to work again”; “...somehow I strongly believe that people who do this job should not be married. They have no idea of the responsibilities that married people have”.

The participants explained that they did not have a chance to make a difference in their children's lives. This is a result of working hard and being constantly tired and not being able to spend time with their children. However, when they were not tired they were obsessed with a case that they had to solve and were preoccupied with having to interact appropriately: *“Then finally I will get a chance to go home. I will be expected to be free, to be open, to be with my wife and children. But you would find that I am pre-occupied with some things at the office”*. The experiences of the participants are supported by studies and suggest that worker's principal emotional moods, when arriving home from work, affect the worker's relationships, activities and required interactions. Workers who are psychologically absorbed at work become preoccupied at home, as well as physically drained. In addition, the amount of time

spent at work takes quality time away from the home domain. As a result, the employee had no available energy to pursue home activities and personal relationships in non-work settings. Furthermore, the quality of home relations is weakened, causing home overload for the employee (Small & Riley, 1990).

The effect on the job

Participants also reported that the stressful work environment impacted on the effective execution of their jobs. Because they were affected emotionally, psychologically and physiologically, their ability to deliver at work was also affected. As a result, their level of productivity and their level of willingness to work decreased considerably. *“The bigger picture is the reason why you would have our performance level going down. It is only unfortunate that a person would not be able to generate energy elsewhere. One tends to be ignorant towards your tasks and end up underperforming”*. Regarding this point, research suggests that responsibilities, attitudes and emotions experienced in the organisation can cause problems at work and result in negative spill-over. Furthermore, presence at work or what is known as “face time” is perceived as a direct indicator of commitment. As a result, employees spend long hours overcompensating, which could lead to other negative consequences (Thompson, Beaurais, & Lyness, 1999).

The effect on social life

Almost all of the participants extensively described their social lives and studies as important parts of their personal lives. Furthermore, they experienced a lack of time for both their social lives and studies. Most participants identified the fact that once they became a police official, their time to take on something additional became limited. Their studies suffered and they felt socially isolated due to their inability to spend time in their social circles: *“My work takes so much of my time. I am supposed to knock off at 4 pm, but this is only on paper. This is because I work endlessly. You find that making plans does not help, because they will be disrupted and changed because of work issues”*.

Work stressors due to role conflict can produce strain symptoms in individuals (e.g. depression, anxiety and irritability). With that in mind, stressful work experiences can affect all spheres of an employee’s life, including his or her social life. More specifically, a person’s

moods (e.g. depression and stress) usually influence the manner in which people relate on a social level. This spill-over involves a spread of emotion from one role to another, be it positive or negative. Moreover, behaviour-based conflict can occur when one role is incompatible with behavioural expectations in another role (Curbow, McDonnell, Spratt, Griffin, & Agnew, 2003). Interestingly, participants reported exactly this in both their social life and work-personal life interaction: *“I have lost touch with my friends because they think I have changed since I am working and got married. I cannot even cook or go to church with my family. I always have stories for my lecturers and friends why I could not meet with the group and as a result did not complete my tasks. I am always tired”*.

Management style and the influence on work and personal life (Theme 3)

The organisation’s environment has a definite influence on the manner in which individuals and employees perceive their job experiences as negative or positive. This includes perceptions regarding the style of leadership employed by the organisation’s managers. In this study, the participants openly expressed their concern over the organisational culture, specifically the management style of their supervisors and overall management group. The participants reported that they were having problems with the authoritative leadership style, experienced a lack of proper communication and had unsupportive and unappreciative supervisors. In support of this, Howard, Donofrio, and Boles (2004) propound that traditional organisations undeniably foster conflict. This suggestion is based on task leadership and social leadership, which furthermore concentrate on cohesion. In addition, the organisation’s objective would dominate and employees would experience the leadership style as negative. This is very similar to what the participants experienced. Sub-themes that relate to management style were identified and are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Management Style and the Influence on Work and Personal Life

| Sub-themes | Description of sub-themes | <i>n</i> = 12 |
|-------------|---|---------------|
| Sub-theme 1 | Authoritative approach | 10 |
| Sub-theme 2 | Lack of proper communication | 10 |
| Sub-theme 3 | Unsupportive and unappreciative supervisors | 10 |

Authoritative approach

South Africa, along with the SAPS, underwent a period of transformation. An organisation functioning in a militant approach ('police force') transformed to that of a 'police service'. When considering the post-political turmoil, it is especially associated with organisations such as the police, who are exposed to the changing context of South Africa. It is evident and expected that the bureaucratic nature of police organisations is a major problem (Gulle, Tredoux, & Foster, 1998). This became even more evident in the current, seeing that it was clearly expressed by the participants as very frustrating. They felt that the only change that has taken place is on paper, and that it is reinforced by the authoritarian way in which they are led. As a result they felt frustrated and incredibly oppressed. The only sense of fairness that they would attest to was the paper trail left behind by the claimed transformation. *"The SAPS is (sic)oppressive management. It oppresses its workers and they are not interested enough. The thing is those at the top oppress those at the bottom. They want those at the bottom to feel that they are at the bottom"; "Everything is a command. Even though the organisation is called a service, it is actually a force. Everything is with immediate effect, now, now, now"*.

Lack of proper communication

The SAPS is a quite large organisation operating between three spheres, namely the national, provincial and area level; each with respective stations. With this in mind, communication could be a challenge. However, a communication system has been in place to create proper communication channels. Thus, communication is expected to flow from top to bottom and vice versa, following protocol. However, participants' experiences attest to the contrary. They believed that managers do not follow protocol when communicating, which causes several

problems and conflict: “...you could find members report directly to the national office, bypassing the provincial office. Things will never be better because finally the overall head of spiritual services and employee assistance services have this problem of not getting their information. When information finally reaches the right people it is distorted. The information favours the senior persons of the service ... the very people that cannot assist members at grass roots level”.

In the event of a supervisor crossing the protocol lines, junior members experience this as an abuse of power or status to override protocol. This simultaneously creates an impression that rules and regulations only apply to junior police officials and that supervisors are effectively pardoned. Furthermore, the participants feel cut off and unworthy, which eventually affect their ability to perceive the interaction between their work and personal lives as positive. In addition, employees indicated that being valued as team members instead of being abandoned by supervisors who, for example, do not follow protocol, affects their attitudes at work and at home (Greasley et al., 2005).

Unsupportive and unappreciative supervisors

As members of the SAPS, police officials have to deal with a number of concerns. These include poor relations with supervisors and a lack of support and appreciation. After 1994, there was a hope that management would start treating junior police official with more respect. However, nothing seems to have changed, and they were left with frustration and anger. The participants expressed that they experienced high levels of stress due to the lack of support, motivation and appreciation: “*The problem at work is that our managers do not have our interests at heart.*”

Previous research clearly indicated that police officials do not feel cared for, that they experience an unsupportive climate in the SAPS and - coupled with public criticism and negative public attitudes - feel even more unsupported (Gulle et al., 1998): “*The last time a member was in a car accident and lost his family, they didn't even contact the helping professions for support and to assist the member. Instead they were worried about their car and getting the member to pay for the costs. There is no sense of compassion. This person has just lost his wife and children. And all they could think about is policy and procedure ... could they not apply those after the member has received some form of counselling or help?*”

The participants felt that having an unsupportive manager made the interaction between their work and personal lives very difficult. They expressed that the level of appreciation has nothing to do with monetary value; instead, all they want is to be treated with common decency: *“The trust we had and the problems of that member in Krugersdorp, a police official killing members. They do not see that. The question is why did he kill only senior officials? They are hiding the reasons behind the killings; it is because he was not given attention when he had a problem.”* Literature suggests that supervisors are primarily responsible for defining what kind of working experiences employees will have. Therefore, supervisors who are supportive and flexible, reduce role conflict and have lower levels of stress (Warren & Johnson, 1998). As a result, employees who are not supported experience hardships, role strain and conflict, and they are highly stressed, exactly as the participants reported. In addition, participants found the interaction between their work and personal lives to be even more difficult: *“...feeling that I am not supported. As such leading to poor production, low morale and anxiety, things like that.”*

The interaction between work and personal life does exist (Theme 4)

There is mixed evidence regarding the extent of work-personal life interaction, but there is no confusion when coming to the fact that it does exist. In this study, twelve of the participants expressed that there was a definite interaction between their work and personal lives. However, the extent to which the interaction affected their lives varied. According to Stoner, Robin, and Russell-Chopin (2005), most people accept that overall life and work balance includes various domains that are common and conflicting. However, it could be different when additional domains such as social interactions, physical and emotional health and community involvement are added to the general mix. Furthermore, work-personal life interaction experiences and developed perceptions are highly idiosyncratic and personal, as the participants expressed. Sub-themes that related to the existence of interaction between work and personal life were extracted from the main theme and are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

The Interaction between Work and Personal Life

| Sub-themes | Description of sub-themes | <i>n</i> = 12 |
|-------------|--|---------------|
| Sub-theme 1 | Work-personal life interaction is problematic | 9 |
| Sub-theme 2 | Work-personal life interaction is satisfactory | 3 |

Work-personal life interaction is problematic

Nine of the participants experienced the interaction between their work and personal life as having a major impact on their lives. They felt that their lives are affected so adversely that their livelihood was unbalanced. Balancing their work and personal life is a major concern to them. They are unable to balance their roles and responsibilities from both their work and personal life; and as a result, they experience the interaction as negative and stressful. Furthermore, the participants experienced their work responsibilities as most stressful and weighing on them, where time spent and the strain experienced during work spill over to their personal lives: *"It is difficult to stand up and face the challenges from work. I do not know how to explain it. The interaction between the two does not satisfy me, not knowing if I will end up resigning or not. I am really not satisfied"*. Research has also indicated that the rationale of the relationship is based on the assumption that if one's work-related problems and responsibilities interfere with the accomplishments of one's family-related obligations, these unfulfilled family obligations may begin to interfere with the accomplishments of one's day-to-day functioning (Frone et al, 1992). Literature further supports the idea that individuals perceive attention to work and attention to family as either negative or pleasurable work-personal life interaction. Consequently, it is the belief that work and personal life are separated and when they interact at any level, life becomes difficult or unbalanced (Bailyn & Harrington, 2004): *"When I combine them, eish! When you think of them, it becomes a problem because you have to handle them equally. You find it becomes difficult when they are combined, they become one thing"*.

The employees typically referred to the balancing of their work and family life as major issues of concern. Therefore, the overall feeling was that there is a definite interaction between their work and personal lives. Their general indication was that not all experiences related to the

interaction between the two domains were positive, seeing that it lacked some level of balance. Previous research has identified that work domain variables were hypothesised to be particularly related to the interference from work to home. These consist of time and strain-based factors (Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998). This is evident in the participants' beliefs that time afforded to their families, friends, work and themselves was not well balanced or not sufficient. In addition, the amount and type of work also lead to increasing strain as a result. More specifically, they had to deal with organisational and management style in their lives, which made work-personal life interaction even more difficult for them. These difficulties resulted in a feeling of imbalance: "*It is so difficult to balance them! To balance the two, unless maybe at the end of the day, you become fatigued and you no longer want to do anything. You just let it go*".

The participants expressed that the strain and lack of time really do affect their sense of wellbeing in their lives, either at home or in themselves. They mostly experienced that insufficient time for their children, wives and household responsibilities are more of a problem than their personal selves, because it leads to a great deal of conflict. There is increasing evidence that work-personal life interaction do exist, more specifically negative experiences between the two parts of an individual's life. The evidence is based more on work-family life conflict, and the two being correlated with job and life satisfaction (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998), which is exactly what the participants expressed during their interviews: "...*my work affects my life*"; "*There is conflict very often, the conflict is at home. Whenever someone works at night, night shift, this leads to conflict with the wife.*"

There has been evidence that there are cross-time relationships between work-family conflict and these reactions, which suggest that the association of work-personal life conflict with well-being and satisfaction may be time-dependent (O'Driscoll et al., 2004). Thus, the participants were complaining about not having enough personal and family time. The experiences of the participants' work-related sources of conflict are closely related to the number of hours they work. In addition, inflexible schedules can also produce conflict and severe work-family tension. However, it cannot be assumed that flexible working hours will positively reduce the work-family conflict of all employees (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This does not pardon the extent to which the strain and time issues consequently affect other parts of their lives. In other words, their lifestyles are affected in more ways than one: "*I do*

not think I am coping, it is a compromise from my family and my studies. For me the two things interact and there is no proper balance as far as I am concerned”.

The participants expressed that they suffer only because their work and personal life experiences do not interact well. In support of this, research shows that negative work-personal life interaction is associated not only with conflict, but with serious consequences such as depression, psychosomatic complaints and reduced marital satisfaction (Bakker & Geurts, 2004). Supporting evidence shows that negative interaction is consistent and also leads to an overwhelming perception that, in addition to work-personal conflict, there is family life dissatisfaction, heightened psychological and physical strain and physical health symptoms (O’Driscoll, 2004). As indicated by research, work and personal life interaction can be experienced as negative and was certainly experienced as negative by most of the participants in this study, when taking into consideration the consequences that accompany the lack of time for the home front and the strain resulting from responsibilities that accompany a police official with a family. Work-personal life interaction largely exists in their lives, as expressed and recorded by the participants: *“Is it possible to have balance? To have these two, your work and personal life - they do not balance!”*

Work-personal life interaction is satisfactory

Three of the participants reported that the interaction between their work and personal lives was not a problem for them. These participants also mentioned that they experienced their work as stressful. However, it did not have a major impact on their personal lives and could be handled. As a result they experienced the interaction as balanced and manageable: *“In this sense, my home and my work will never be the same, there is a major difference.”* Carnicer et al. (2004) suggest that there is a notable increase in the number of individuals with significant responsibilities at both work and home. Moreover, the family and work domains create an interaction and relevancy to each other. However, some people still experience no or less conflict between these two domains.

In addition, the participants mentioned above also indicated that they experienced many negative feelings because of job stressors. Nevertheless, these negative feelings did not transcend or relate to any of their home responsibilities. However, if this happens at any point the consequences are rarely negative: *“I do not say I am unable to balance this, I need to*

confess that when I am at home, it is family time. I should give them my undivided attention. I say to myself 'Ok!' When I am home, sometimes I have to go out and work at night. I do not think they interact, that is why I am saying some things just depend on your strength." According to Milkie and Peltola (1999), balance may, to a certain extent, also have to do with a sense that there is harmony among the various roles in the two spheres of life. Therefore, beliefs about proper balance and one's actual experiences of unpaid and paid work and the quality of relations among role partners result in perceived fairness of the distribution of tasks. In addition, the police officials are likely to feel that the interaction between work and personal life is less pressing, due to the decisions that represent a sacrifice of one domain for the other: *"The thing is, when I get home it is not that there is a lot of problems that I cannot even go to work. It is just that, every day when I wake up I know that I am going to work, there are people to serve. Everything is okay! When I get home the children are there and so is the helper."*

It is evident that partners of the police official tend to fall victim to the stress that their husbands and wives experience. However, these participants currently under discussion expressed their gratitude towards their partners for being understanding. This does not necessarily imply that they do not have work-family life conflict, but only that the effects are fewer due to the amount of support and understanding received from their partners. The families take time to consider the circumstances and do not allow conflict to rule their partnerships: *"I will have an excuse most times for not completing my tasks at home, my husband tends to understand, I am afraid to ask for time off at work to take my child to the doctor, my husband then has to do it and he does not mind."*

Positive experiences of work-personal life interaction (Theme 5)

In this study, some participants have alluded to the idea that being a police official has its own positive aspects, regardless of all the stressors they have. The majority of the reports from the participants have revealed that being a police official can make work-personal life interaction fairly difficult. The same applies to this study of work-personal life interaction and perceptions of Setswana speaking police officials. Police work is dangerous and one could list various reasons supporting the fact that police officials' world of work is very negative, and situations are unique (Howard et al., 2004). However, police officials also reported that they actually enjoyed their jobs and that the interaction between their work and

personal lives is positive. Various sub-themes regarding positive aspects of the job were identified and are presented in Table 7.

Table 7
Positive Experiences of Work-Personal Life Interaction

| Sub-themes | Description of sub-themes | <i>n</i> = 12 |
|-------------|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Sub-theme 1 | Natural enjoyment of the job | 5 |
| Sub-theme 2 | Serving society | 6 |
| Sub-theme 3 | Good relationships with colleagues | 7 |

Natural enjoyment of the job

The nature of work is definitely changing, particularly in terms of how individuals perceive their jobs, especially their actual job tasks (Geurts, Kompier, Roxburgh, & Houtman, 2002). This is supported by the participants who expressed that they were satisfied with their job tasks and that they would not do anything else if they had the choice. Also, the actual tasks performed when completing their daily activities were experienced as positive. In addition, police officials often love what they do, regardless of the extent to which they experience stress. Moreover, participants also explored the extent to which they spend more of their time at work than at home. The only major concern when performing their tasks is related to the environment in which they have to work in (e.g., lack of resources and work overload): “*Do they balance or not? The way I see it, as they interact they give me a lot of stress and there is nothing I could say. But I like this job and that is why I perform my work wholeheartedly*”; “*I wish to succeed in life. I should focus and I have a vision. I know where I am and where I am going, so that I can protect the society effectively. Right now, I work appropriately and try hard to not get queries in my cases. I am always in court and I like it. I am available to assist and also provide evidence in court. I am trying everything.*”

There is a definite recognition of the possibility of positive experiences between work and family interaction as identified through the participants’ expressions. The status of the job refers to the responsibilities accompanying the job; in addition the status is enhanced by the things they do when completing those responsibilities (e.g. making arrests and setting up road

blocks). Research findings suggest the possibility that work and family roles may conflict with regard to certain aspects, and enrich each other each regarding others, and the job can simply be enjoyable (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002). This is exactly what was alluded to in the sessions: participants expressed that work-personal life interaction definitely existed; however, there were certain aspects about being a police official that made the interactions positive: *“It is enjoyable, we form partnerships with other members, we gain trust, they help us get the suspects and the criminals. The crime goes down.”*

Serving society

The decision to join the police tends to come naturally and one could thus say that it is a calling. Although these participants were well informed about the circumstances that they are getting themselves into, they still joined the organisation. Furthermore, the participants believe that it is in their nature to serve members of their community and society. To them, it means taking responsibility for their family members, friends and colleagues: *“I wish I could succeed in life. I will focus, have a vision, and know where I am going, so that I can protect the society effectively. I try very hard to be available and assist. I am trying everything; I do not want to lower myself.”* Thus, they serve and protect South Africans and aim to create a safe society for all. The fact that they contribute towards building a safe society makes them feel good and contributes towards something positive in their lives. They believe that all bad and traumatic experiences are worthwhile because of the important role that they play in the safety of others. There is ample empirical evidence that supports such reports, where several researchers have argued that workers may also benefit from the type of work they do, combining work and family, and also having the benefits outweigh the costs (Bakker & Geurts, 2004).

The participants believe that serving the community does not constitute combating crime only. Most of the participants mentioned the fact that they are everything to the community. They perceive themselves as social workers, teachers and parents. Also, being police officials make them feel good about themselves. Research found that occupying more than one role has been associated with higher self-esteem and greater job satisfaction in employed women and men, and is unrelated to overall life stress. It was established from the discussions with participants that role accumulation may contribute to a complex cognitive representation of the self that, in turn, can moderate the outcomes of stress. Increased levels of ego

involvement, satisfaction and time commitment accompany this. Also, the rewards and pleasures of that domain heighten the positive experiences regarding other realms of life (Kirchmeyer, 1992): *“What I can say, as far as the service is concerned, working within the police; I see it as all right because we are based in the community, we guide them”*; *“We have parties like the community policing forum (CPF) and the ‘adopt a cop’. We adopt schools and conduct workshops on drugs and things like that. Yes, furthermore we are able to teach our community.”*

Good relationships with colleagues

Few would dispute the good intentions of the present SAPS to create “a better life for all” (Legett, 2003). Considering this statement, however, both the old and new school police officials still seem to believe it is only a statement. As members of a negative environment they need all the support they can get. The one aspect of their work life that brings some form of positive perception is the preached and practised *buddy system* (b – be available, u – understand, d – do not criticise, d – do not interrupt, and y – you can make a difference). In addition, police officials also have their partners and colleagues to support them through the difficulties that they experience with the interaction between their work and personal life: *“It gives me a boost to know that we do have support from our colleagues and co-workers as a friend, as a true friend. As co-workers we sit down and advise each other and then refer to the relevant person. So all in all we do get support.”*

In 1999 - by the second lap of democracy - the SAPS had changed somewhat, and the Employee Assistance Services, previously known as the Helping Professions, was in place. Furthermore, they were meant to manage and assist SAPS members within the parameters of the micro (SAPS) and the macro (general population) environment. This was a structure put in place as a supporting unit for police officials and their immediate family members. According to Swanepoel (2000), it brings growth to develop and extend support services to every police official and civilian: *“We do get support from the social workers and spiritual services. We can be able to solve problems and they can help us where they can.”*

Most of the participants mentioned that the support they receive from this unit constitutes a positive part in their lives as police officials. The fact that people have been employed to support them and their families, somehow makes police officials feel special and important.

On the other hand, this is the one aspect they miss from their managers: “*You can see I am about to cry, However, I appreciate what they do and your presence here. I wish you could keep coming to debrief us, like you always do. I appreciate your efforts.*” Burke (2004) also supports the idea that having support is associated with positive work-home interference.

Applied coping strategies (Theme 6)

Having a coping strategy is a major concern for every employed individual, regardless of the organisation in which he or she works. This would be particularly important for SAPS members because of the kind of environment in which they operate on a daily basis. Participants reported how difficult it was to be a police official, but they also believed that they were dealing with the experience in one way or the other. Participants mentioned that they made use of a variety of coping strategies. Sub-themes that were extracted included religion or prayer, socialising through sports, personality style, empowering communication and surrendering (giving in). Following is the sub-themes as presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Applied Coping Strategies

| Sub-themes | Description of sub-themes | <i>n</i> = 12 |
|-------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Sub-theme 1 | Religion or prayer | 12 |
| Sub-theme 2 | Socialising through sports | 10 |
| Sub-theme 3 | Personality style | 6 |
| Sub-theme 4 | Empowering communication | 7 |
| Sub-theme 5 | Surrendering (giving in) | 5 |

Religion or prayer

All of the participants reported that religion was the one thing that kept them going. Also, they strongly believed that religion was their most potent source of strength and survival. All the participants reported their sense of spirituality to be a tool that aided them in dealing with any negative or bad experience they have had. They believe in the power of God and going to church. Furthermore, they also believe that religion should not be practised individually but as

a family. To practise it as a family activity assists the police official to regroup, to gain hope and to strengthen as a family: *"You cannot work in the police environment without the Word of God. That is why they encourage us to go to church when we are home."* A programme within the organisation reinforces this sense of prayer and religious beliefs. The SAPS have a unit named Spiritual Services that falls under the office of Employee Assistance Services. This unit teaches that religion and prayer are extended as an experience and create fellowships which assist in times of trouble. *"I am spiritual. I get my strength from that. I console myself"; "I am a spiritual person at home and at work. After hours I go to church. I interact with the people and that makes me feel better. I feel better because I have people to discuss and get advice from. It keeps me going."*

Socialising through sports

The participants viewed socialising as an important part of their lives which helps them to cope. In addition, one creates defence mechanisms towards ill health created by stress. This includes getting involved in physical activities such as participating in sports and going to the gym. The females experienced sports more as an opportunity to talk to their friends, whereas males experienced it as an opportunity to work out all the negative energy associated with stress: *"I do not allow work stress to get to me and in my home. I keep on playing sports so that I can relax. When I play or watch sports I tend to forget those things for a while."*

Literature suggests that social activities moderate the relationship between WPLI and psychological strain, physical health symptoms, job satisfaction and family satisfaction (O'Driscoll et al, 2004). The following quote supports this notion and confirms that police officials use sports as a coping strategy that really works for them: *"I go out with my friends, relax, play soccer or support our team. We relax and advise each other. It is like a men's club, we help each other if necessary."*

Personality style

The participants reported that an individual's character or personality has a definite influence on how one deals with different experiences. They believe that their perception of work and personal life interaction is based on an individual's interpretation of, and reaction to events and situations. In addition, Hurrell (1995) also propounds that behaviour is one of coping

mechanisms or measurements. This seems to be a function of not only situational factors, but also of personality and behavioural dispositions such as hardiness, self-esteem and locus of control: *“If someone is not strong, they will have problems and life will be problematic. I am trying to balance the two.”*

It is evident that participants felt that it is important for an individual to believe that one can survive and is strong enough: *“I think I am strong enough. I am in a position to be able to handle those issues when they come my way.”*

Empowering communication

Reports of the participants have definitely painted a picture of the high levels of stress in the police. All things considered, there is a great need for police officials to off-load as much as possible. The participants also mentioned that talking, no matter what the circumstances, made them feel good, and this was regarded as their number one coping strategy. Talking makes police officials feel empowered, free and more ready to face their problem, especially if the person they talk to is a spouse and the conversation is empowering, without searching for solutions. Research shows that various types of family support, including talking about difficulties are associated with a decrease in role stressors, which is involved in work-personal life interaction: *“I talk, sometimes you find out a lot. You find out that they have the same problem and then you get their views on it.”*

It has been suggested that having good communication with one's spouse and friends helps one to regain and maintain a semblance of life balance. Therefore, sharing and engaging in regular empowering discussions assures clarification of needs and expectations (Stoner et al., 2005). Furthermore, for these participants it goes beyond just talking. It also constitutes being enlightened and educated by others on situations they face. They strongly believe that empowering communication is a definite contributory factor towards decreasing conflict at home and at work: *“I even took my family to the office where I work. I showed them my work and I even attended very sensitive cases with them. When I get home they understand when I say I am tired because they saw my type of cases. It gets better.”*

Surrendering (giving in)

Participants believe that suicidal ideation and giving in are ways to deal with stressful events in the organisation. When police officials are faced with difficulties, they have a list of options to choose from such as suicide, resignation or giving in to the stressors: *“Most people commit suicide, some resign and some one will no longer see them. It is just that they are elders some of them, if it was possible they would kill themselves. They are heartbroken.”* Literature supports the idea that police officials make use of maladaptive coping strategies such as substance abuse and withdrawal, which are indicators of one giving in (Wiese et al., 2003). Furthermore, research suggests that - compared to the norms of the general population - the police service is the one organisation that has a high rate of suicide, family suicide, alcohol abuse and ill health. In addition, the North West Province has been identified as one of the danger areas (Rothmann & Van Rensburg, 2002). Participants reported that resigning from their jobs is the option that they would most likely choose. This is because they cannot handle the pressures, and the only way to cope with work-personal life interaction is to leave the SAPS: *“If I could resign, I will run my own company. Maybe livestock and maybe it could be better because my rules would be professional rules. Then, I would benefit at the end of the day and the society at large.”*

DISCUSSION

This study focused on the experience of work-personal life interaction (WPLI) of Setswana speaking police officers in Mafikeng and surrounding areas. It focused particularly on at the average Setswana speaking police official's functional and administrative perceptions of the interaction between work and personal life. What was deduced from the data of the participants is the fact that an interaction certainly exist in their lives; the distinction was found to be only in the extent to which it affects both their work and personal lives.

Major changes have taken place in the nature and composition of organisations in South Africa. The greater importance of knowledge workers, different ethnic compositional membership of organisations and changes in value systems and beliefs may be seen as factors influencing the quality of employees' work lives (Kotze, 2005).

In this study it was identified that there are work stressors that can affect the individual's personal life negatively. Organisational stressors and extra-organisational stressors are mutually interactive and bring about the psychological and physiological condition called stress (Swanepoel, 2003). Stressors found in this study included a lack of promotion, working long hours, work overload, inadequate resources and traumatic and dangerous situations. Stressors experienced directly from the organisation included management style, the organisation's authoritative approach and unsatisfactory communication. The participants also reported that these stressors affect their personal lives in such a way that their sense of self, their family lives, their social lifestyles and their work are affected. For many police officials, these stressors affected the interaction between their work and personal lives negatively. Police officers work in circumstances of chronic and irregular working hours, poor working conditions and constant fear and trauma. These make them more susceptible to experiencing the interaction as unbalanced or negative.

With all that in mind, some participants reported that there were also positive aspects regarding the police profession. These positive aspects included their natural enjoyment of the job, serving their society and good relationships with their colleagues. Although the participants expressed their concern over the stressors they experience, they mentioned that these stressors did not overshadow the fact that there were also positive aspects. According to Montgomery et al. (2003), support from work can reduce demanding aspects of the job. This was supported by the participants' expressions that having supportive colleagues brought a positive quality into the work-personal life interaction issue. However, one measure of psychological spill-over may constitute more than a single psychological process. There is a positive engrossment of a person who loves his or her work, reminding us that present work is a building block in a broader, more complex system (Small & Riley, 1999).

The influence of intra-psychic factors on the life and work functioning of the individual is currently beginning to generate more interest (Lohann, 2001). Literature on the effects of work hours and working conditions in SAPS is scant. Research findings on police stress in the SAPS indicate that the way in which the organisation operates creates additional stress to the inherent pressure that already exists in police work (Van Rooyen, 2001). Reports from the participants clearly suggest the same; that time-strain is a definite problem when work and personal life have to interact.

Most of the police officials have been in the service for more than a decade; however, they feel discouraged and have low morale because their work is not well recognised and they do not receive promotions. This sense of non-acknowledgement leads to the participants' diminished level of self. Policemen experience and manifest a diminished sense of personal accomplishments and negative self-evaluation. According to O'Neil (1996), depersonalisation is more likely to cause work-to-home spill-over and significantly predicts quality of family life for the wives of such policemen. Work provides one with a sense of achievement, self-worth, growth opportunities and interaction with others. However, for most individuals, work is and can also be a stressful part of their lives (Sardiwalla, 2003).

The final drive of this discussion is that there are both negative and positive aspects connected to being a police official and having to deal with work-personal life interaction. Dealing with the matter, to them, means applying coping mechanisms such as prayer or religion, socialising in sports, their personalities, having empowering conversations and, finally, giving in (surrendering). Research also suggests that individuals can operate independently from the psychological stress and anxiety caused by an over-demanding boss or excessive work (Small & Riley, 1999). To the participants, it means that when playing sports, going to church and socialising, one gets an opportunity to detach from everyday problems for a period of time. During this time one is relieved and can then face the challenges that go hand in hand with work-personal life interaction experiences. The participants also used their coping mechanisms to enable them to operate independently. Furthermore, personality traits, depersonalisation and higher levels of personal accomplishments certainly had a positive effect on the extent to which participants experienced work spill-over (Rothmann, 2003).

Researchers and employers alike operate under the assumption that work and personal life are not competing priorities, but should rather be complementary ones (Harvard Business Review, 2000). However, the participants' reality is contrary to that assumption. Work-personal life interaction denotes an ideal of being able to integrate paid work and personal life rather than seeing them as two separate (and by implication incompatible) parts that have to capture the potential synergies and connections between different parts of life (Lewis & Cooper, 2005). In addition, as supported by participants' reports, the experience of interaction (whether balanced and/or unbalanced) was perceived as temporal and constantly shifting at times. As suggested by findings, consequences of random life events could alter a structural

assumed sense of balance rather quickly (Stoner et al., 2005). Those holding more traditional views seem to be experiencing more strain than those who have moved with cultural shifts (Bee, 1998).

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A limitation was the fact that the researcher was a member of the service and in the ranking system, and this could have created resistance. The participants might have had the feeling that their confidentiality could be compromised and could have believed that the researcher would report back to their superiors. The Setswana speaking community is also a large community with sub-cultures which have divergent cultural beliefs and practices. As a result, their experiences are viewed differently due to tribalism. It would therefore not be appropriate to generalise the results deduced from the data as applicable to all Setswana speaking police members.

The sample was not well represented when gender is taken into consideration. The numbers of males and females interviewed were not equal, and it should be taken into consideration that gender roles could play an important part in family and work matters. Perceptions have to be analysed in accordance with gender roles and not across the board. Language was also a problem for the researcher. Expressing oneself in Setswana and not knowing applicable Setswana words or concepts when posing the questions were difficult and were experienced as limitations. There was the danger of misrepresenting the question due to the inability to find an appropriate word in Setswana, although English words explained it gracefully. The participants themselves struggled to reflect accurately in Setswana due to the lack of certain words that explain certain concepts. As a result, communication was stifled and the researcher felt incompetent in her home language at times. However, this problem was overcome by using English words that both the researcher and participants were familiar with. Finally, some participants were unhappy with putting up the 'do not disturb' sign on their doors. This resulted in being disturbed regularly. Also, the participants' lack of honouring appointments as scheduled resulted in having an unbalanced number of males and females.

Change occurs in most organisations as a consequence of the evolution of work and play in the local, national and global context. Therefore, managing change is a strategic challenge

for organisations which have to react and adapt to it (Lewis & Cooper, 2005). As a result, the police organisations join the unavoidable process of change. They should design, develop and implement planned interventions that address the organisation on both an individual level and as a whole. Furthermore, it is important to assist individual police officers whose psychological well-being is affected by their work. An organisational rather than an individual approach is more likely to be effective, seeing that most stressors are found on an organisational level (Storm, 2002). This is supported by the findings that employees were often reluctant to use certain practices for fear of being seen as uncommitted. The individual's efforts fell short since the organisational environment continued to demand high levels of visible effort (Burke, 2004).

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, conclusions regarding the results of the empirical study of the research article are provided according to the general and specific objectives. The limitations of this research are discussed, followed by recommendations for the organisation and for future research.

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

This study focused on the experience of work–personal life interaction (WPLI) of Setswana speaking police officers in Mafikeng and surrounding areas. It focused particularly on the average Setswana speaking police official’s functional and administrative perceptions of the interaction between work and personal life. What was deduced from the data of the participants is the fact that an interaction certainly exist in their lives; the distinction was found to be only in the extent to which it affects both their work and personal lives.

Major changes have taken place in the nature and composition of organisations in South Africa. The greater importance of knowledge workers, different ethnic compositional membership of organisations and changes in value systems and beliefs may be seen as factors influencing the quality of employees’ work lives (Kotze, 2005).

In this study it was identified that there are work stressors that can affect the individual’s personal life negatively. Organisational stressors and extra-organisational stressors are mutually interactive and bring about the psychological and physiological condition called stress (Swanepoel, 2003). Stressors found in this study included a lack of promotion, working long hours, work overload, inadequate resources and traumatic and dangerous situations. Stressors experienced directly from the organisation included management style, the organisation’s authoritative approach and unsatisfactory communication. The participants also reported that these stressors affect their personal lives in such a way that their sense of self, their family lives, their social lifestyles and their work are affected. For many police officials, these stressors affected the interaction between their work and personal lives negatively. Police officers work in circumstances of chronic and irregular working hours,

poor working conditions and constant fear and trauma. These make them more susceptible to experiencing the interaction as unbalanced or negative.

With all that in mind, some participants reported that there were also positive aspects regarding the police profession. These positive aspects included their natural enjoyment of the job, serving their society and good relationships with their colleagues. Although the participants expressed their concern over the stressors they experience, they mentioned that these stressors did not overshadow the fact that there were also positive aspects. According to Montgomery, Peeters, Schaufeli, and Den Ouden (2003), support from work can reduce demanding aspects of the job. This was supported by the participants' expressions that having supportive colleagues brought a positive quality into the work-personal life interaction issue. However, one measure of psychological spill-over may constitute more than a single psychological process. There is a positive engrossment of a person who loves his or her work, reminding us that present work is a building block in a broader, more complex system (Small & Riley, 1999).

The influence of intra-psychic factors on the life and work functioning of the individual is currently beginning to generate more interest (Lohann, 2001). Literature on the effects of work hours and working conditions in SAPS is scant. Research findings on police stress in the SAPS indicate that the way in which the organisation operates creates additional stress to the inherent pressure that already exists in police work (Van Rooyen, 2001). Reports from the participants clearly suggest the same; that time-strain is a definite problem when work and personal life have to interact.

Most of the police officials have been in the service for more than a decade; however, they feel discouraged and have low morale because their work is not well recognised and they do not receive promotions. This sense of non-acknowledgement leads to the participants' diminished level of self. Policemen experience and manifest diminished sense of personal accomplishments and negative self-evaluation. According to O'Neil (1996), depersonalisation is more likely to cause work-to-home spill-over and significantly predicts quality of family life for the wives of such policemen. Work provides one with a sense of achievement, self-worth, growth opportunities and interaction with others. However, for most individuals, work is and can also be a stressful part of their lives (Sardiwalla, 2003).

The final drive of this discussion is that there are both negative and positive aspects connected to being a police official and having to deal with work-personal life interaction. Dealing with the matter, to them, means applying coping mechanisms such as prayer or religion, socialising in sports, their personalities, having empowering conversations and, finally, giving in (surrendering). Research also suggests that individuals can operate independently from the psychological stress and anxiety caused by an over-demanding boss or excessive work (Small & Riley, 1999). To the participants, it means that when playing sports, going to church and socialising, one gets an opportunity to detach from everyday problems for a period of time. During this time one is relieved and can then face the challenges that go hand in hand with work-personal life interaction experiences. The participants also used their coping mechanisms to enable them to operate independently. Furthermore, personality traits, depersonalisation and higher levels of personal accomplishments certainly had a positive effect on the extent to which participants experienced work spill-over (Rothmann, 2003).

Researchers and employers alike operate under the assumption that work and personal life are not competing priorities, but should rather be complementary ones (Harvard Business Review, 2000). However, the participants' reality is contrary to that assumption. Work-personal life interaction denotes an ideal of being able to integrate paid work and personal life rather than seeing them as two separate (and by implication incompatible) parts that have to capture the potential synergies and connections between different parts of life (Lewis & Cooper, 2005). In addition, as supported by participants' reports, the experience of interaction (whether balanced and/or unbalanced) was perceived as temporal and constantly shifting at times. As suggested by findings, consequences of random life events could alter a structural assumed sense of balance rather quickly (Stoner, Robin, & Russell-Chaplin, 2005). Those holding more traditional views seem to be experiencing more strain than those who have moved with cultural shifts (Bee, 1998).

3.2 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

Resistance was a stumbling block that resulted from the members believing that research is conducted on a continuous base in the South African Police Service (SAPS). Another limitation was the fact that the researcher was a member of the service and in the ranking

system, and this could have created resistance. The participants might have had the feeling that their confidentiality could be compromised and could have believed that the researcher would report back to their superiors.

The Setswana speaking community is a large community with sub-cultures which have divergent cultural beliefs and practices. As a result, their experiences are viewed differently due to tribalism. It would therefore not be appropriate to generalise the results deduced from the data as applicable to all Setswana speaking police members.

The sample on its own is not well represented when gender is taken into consideration. The numbers of males and females interviewed were not equal, and it should be taken into consideration that gender roles could play an important part in family and work matters. Perceptions have to be analysed in accordance with gender roles and not across the board.

Language was a problem for the researcher. Expressing oneself in Setswana and not knowing applicable Setswana words or concepts when posing the questions were difficult and were experienced as limitations. There was the danger of misrepresenting the question due to the inability to find an appropriate word in Setswana, although English words explained it gracefully. The participants themselves struggled to reflect accurately in Setswana due to the lack of certain words that explain certain concepts. As a result, communication was stifled and the researcher felt incompetent in her home language at times. However, this problem was overcome by using English words that both the researcher and participants were familiar with.

Finally, some participants were unhappy with putting up the 'do not disturb' sign on their doors. This resulted in being disturbed regularly. Also, the participants' lack of honouring appointments as scheduled resulted in having an unbalanced number of males and females.

3.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Change occurs in most organisations as a consequence of the evolution of work and play in the local, national and global context. Therefore, managing change is a strategic challenge for organisations which have to react and adapt to it (Lewis & Cooper, 2005). As a result, the

police organisations join the unavoidable process of change. They should design, develop and implement planned interventions that address the organisation on both an individual level and as a whole. Furthermore, it is important to assist individual police officers whose psychological well-being is affected by their work. An organisational rather than an individual approach is more likely to be effective, seeing that most stressors are found on an organisational level (Storm, 2002). This is supported by the findings that employees were often reluctant to use certain practices for fear of being seen as uncommitted. The individual's efforts fell short since the organisational environment continued to demand high levels of visible effort (Burke, 2004).

3.3.1 Recommendations for the organisation

It is recommended that the existing work-personal life policies and practices of the SAPS are re-evaluated. Also, policies and practices are not attractive on paper alone and it is important to recognise that work-personal life policies in themselves are insufficient if these are not implemented on a practical level. The outdated organisational policies operating with a lack of social support for the dual-career role contradict social norms, and organisations are faced with the prospect of losing talented dual-career roles. Therefore, organisations want to consider personnel policies and expectations that operate as if the worlds of work and family can be separated (Higgins & Duxbury, 1992). Clearly, the SAPS is a service-orientated organisation with a significant proportion of its members having direct contact with the public. Any organisation committed to qualifying improvements as they are reported to be doing, influences the members' level of satisfaction and their perception of work-personal life interaction (Bekker, 2002). This include intensifying the selection systems that are already in place, such as the entry-level constable assessments that are meant to select only those applicants that can handle such an environment. As research suggests, the assessments of coping strategies might be beneficial when having the ability to better tolerate inherent organisational stressors (Hurrell, 1995).

In addition, the organisation could establish a wellness centre that accommodates aspects such as flexible scheduling, child facilities and in-house health facilities. According to the participants, the Mafikeng area had such a wellness centre, but unfortunately was closed down. These facilities will facilitate the transition from work to personal health and childcare,

and thus make work-personal life interaction more manageable for members. Organisations could also offer work-time alternatives, dependent (child) care facilities and could also create a culture in which employees who are experiencing work-personal interference feel entitled to use such facilities that are available (Van Hooff et al., 2005).

There is a need for a dramatic injection of human and logistical resources to address the major issue of lack of manpower which, in turn, could deal with concerns of work overload and decrease the amount of time working. While the police cannot be said to control the amount of crime reported, they can control their own internal management, which includes the availability, distribution and utilisation of resources (Leggett, 2003). In addition, organisation should make an effort to make their organisations a more desirable place to work (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). A greater need also emerged to improve the working environment for the members in the form of better promotion opportunities, motivation, improved salaries and working conditions. Research also agrees that altering the job aspects of the organisation as a strategy for reducing employee stress represents the preferred approach, because the focus is on the stressors and changing the source of the problem (Hurrell, 1995).

Special measures should be implemented to protect the vulnerable group (Nel & Conradie, 1997). Therefore, members should participate in policy-making processes and take responsibility to contribute towards equitable solutions that build a sense of worth – something that is dwindling fast in the SAPS. Providing employees with opportunities to make decisions and feeling trusted lead to perceived and actual empowerment (Greasley et al., 2005). As research suggests, higher levels of perceived employer support have beneficial effects on employee attitudes and behaviours. These include flexibility and care benefits that have been associated with higher commitment, job satisfaction and turnover intention. Consequently, police officials may feel grateful and be able to better focus on doing their jobs well, while still meeting their family needs (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2005).

Immediate supervisors are primarily responsible for defining what the working experiences of the employees will be like and, as a result, having a direct influence on perceived strain between work and family (Warren & Johnson, 1995). It is then recommended that line managers take note of their management style and take responsibility for reducing unnecessary stress and uncertainty by protecting their subordinates from worrying about

events over which they have no control. First contact with management should also be part of the police official's work team. Research supports this by mentioning that other ways of maximising rewards are to emphasise professional roles and activities through self-improvement and being actively involved in groups in order to gather support and advice (Curbow, McDonnell, Spratt, Griffin, & Agnew, 2003).

Police officials experience a great deal of stress; unfortunately the nature of the job itself is stressful, even if resources are increased. It is then recommended that training should be provided to all entry-level constables sensitising them towards the kind of environment they will be exposed to, as well as training on life skills, equipping them with the ability to deal with the consequences of their job realities. The incorporation of individual stress coping training might be beneficial towards the empowerment of police officials (Storm, 2002).

While these suggestions are important for work-personal life harmonisation, it is also essential to harness pragmatic actions and strategies at local levels. Any attempts at pragmatic action for work-personal life interaction must be considered within the complex situations and debates and also within diverse contexts and the lack of precise course for diverse stakeholders (Lewis & Cooper, 2005).

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

There is still some marginalisation in the workplace policies in relation to family and care needs. Many men are prevented from taking advantage of these initiatives, thus reinforcing existing gender roles, especially in ethnic groups. The need arises to investigate perceptions on gender roles in work-personal life interaction policy effectiveness, how paid work could be done differently to accommodate a variety of personal life needs or wishes, regardless of family circumstances.

There have been inconsistent findings in past research on gender differences, which may be explained by the idea that females are likely to experience more conflict than men (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000). As a result, more research ground still needs to be covered regarding what women really need from their organisations, and whether there are any unique antecedents in work-personal life interaction as opposed to their partners. This is due to the

reality that organisations are becoming more populated with women. There is a need to consider the fact that women have special needs in the workplace. As the trends proceed apace companies will rely on women and will have to address these continually (Paris, 1990). In addition to gender relations, it is important to know what the differences are regarding researching a single individual versus a couple dealing with work-personal life interaction experiences.

When researching a subject that concentrates on a certain language group, interviews should be conducted in a language with which the researcher is most comfortable. The home language can be used if and when the need arises. Botha (2001) strongly supports the notion that language could also be a barrier as a result of cross-cultural studies.

It is evident that there is a vast difference between police members that perform administrative duties as compared to functional members. There is a certain element of danger attached to functional members that is not a matter of concern for administrative members. As a result, the need arises to consider the difference in perceptions when it comes to the two categories. In this research paper, administrative members constituted a small number, something that could suggest that one should not apply the same perceptions to functional members.

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