

**COPING, SOCIAL SUPPORT, JOB SATISFACTION, AND
WORK/LIFE IMBALANCE**

Mianda Smith, Hons B.Comm

**Mini-dissertation submitted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Magister Commercica in Human Resource Management at the Northwest-University**

Supervisor: Dr. Jaco Pienaar

November 2006

Potchefstroom

COMMENTS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The references as well as the editorial style as prescribed by the Publication Manual (5th edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA) were followed in this dissertation. This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the Northwest-University in all scientific documents as from January 1999.
- The mini dissertation is submitted in the form of two research articles. 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.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my gratitude to various special individuals who, at various stages during the completion of this mini dissertation, were prepared to help, guide and support me to complete my research successfully:

- My Lord, for blessing me with talent, opportunities, strength, family and friends. You give me more than I can ever ask for and I am truly blessed by Your presence in my life.
- My parents – Jan and Mathilda Smith. Words are not enough. Without you I wouldn't have been where I am today and I am so unexplainably thankful for the opportunities and guidance you gave me throughout my life. I know your prayers carried me through this project. Thank you for your love, support (emotionally as well as financially), care and comfort every day. You are both incredible and I love you with all my heart.
- My brother, Jardus Smith. You are special to me in so many ways. I know we've walked this road together. Thank you that you always believe in me. I love you and I am proud of your achievements.
- I owe a special debt of gratitude to Dr. Jaco Pienaar, my mentor, for his support, guidance, insight and faith in me throughout the completion of this project. Also for the statistical analysis.
- The participants of the research project.
- The personnel of the North West University, Potchefstroom.
- Thank you to Rod Taylor for the professional language editing.
- To Chrizelle, a true friend. Your support, love and understanding mean the world to me.
- To all my dearest, special friends from all over the world – without you my life would have been incomplete. Thank you for your support and faith in me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This mini dissertation focuses on the effects of coping on job satisfaction when job insecurity is being experienced by a group of managers in a South African mining company. The second part of the dissertation deals with role conflict, goal clarity, and how social support affects work/life imbalance.

In this chapter, the problem statement is discussed, whereupon the research objectives are set out. Following this, the research method is discussed and the division of chapters is given.

1. PROBLEM STATEMENT

With the intent of increasing competitiveness and reducing labour costs, many organisations, with increasing frequency over the past decade, have turned to downsizing, layoffs, and restructuring. The nature of work has changed in recent decades due to industrial restructuring, technological advancements, economic recessions, and intensified global competition (Howard, 1995). Globalisation and increased competition result in companies adapting their operations through downsizing, rightsizing, restructuring, and outsourcing of non-core functions (Spark, Faragher, & Cooper, 2001). In many cases, this can result in a decreased number of employees carrying out the same amount of work (Hellgren & Sverke, 2001). Magnet (1984) and Walsh (1988) reported that relocation of employees and loss of jobs, status, benefits, and opportunities are common outcomes of mergers or takeovers.

Companies in the South African mining industry are not immune to these changes (Marais & Schepers, 1996). Companies in the Republic of South Africa are undergoing dramatic and unprecedented changes since democratisation of the country in 1994, and globalisation as an international phenomenon. Marais and Schepers (1996) state that companies are becoming lean

and mean, outsourcing non-core operations and mechanising to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Almost a quarter of a million jobs have been lost in the South African mining industry since 1987 (www.pbs.org). This trend has become irreversible over the past ten years. It is further stated that, in the past, the industry was sustained by periodic gold price increases and cheap labour through the migrant labour system. Since the unionisation of the industry's black workers in the early 1980's however, this trend changed. There has been growing unemployment in South Africa's rural areas and neighbouring states, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho, and Mozambique. The stagnant Rand gold price, high inflation, reduced reserves of high-grade ore, and the increasing depth of mineral exploration is pitted against miners' wage demands (www.pbs.org).

The Mining Charter (Republic of South Africa, 2004) states that South African mining companies should establish targets for employment equity, particularly in the junior and senior management categories. The stakeholders aspire to a baseline of 40 percent Historically Disadvantaged South Africans (HDSA) forming part of management within five years. The term Historically Disadvantaged South Africans (HDSA) in the Charter refers to any person, category of persons, or community, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination before the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, (Act 200 of 1993) came into operation. This tremendous drive for transformation could lead to job insecurity for managers, as companies should aspire to accommodate 40 percent HDSA managers by 2009.

For employees, these major changes in the world of work cause feelings of anxiety, stress, and insecurity concerning the nature and continued existence of their jobs (Jick, 1985; Romzek, 1985, Schweiger & Ivancevich, 1985). These events cause uneasiness, which manifests itself as job insecurity, low job satisfaction, low commitment to the organisation, and related organisational outcomes such as turnover and absence (De Witte, 1997).

Job security perceptions are related to job satisfaction (Nighswonger, 2001), while job satisfaction plays an important role in an employee's acceptance of change (Yousef, 2000a). According to Nighswonger (2001), job security perceptions are related to job satisfaction, job

satisfaction is related to safety knowledge, and job satisfaction is related to high levels of safety motivation.

According to Stanley (2001), job satisfaction is a person's attitude towards his/her job. Employees continuously appraise and evaluate the quality of their jobs, and they possess heartfelt beliefs about their jobs and organisations. Job satisfaction is a complex construct and is often measured as a global attitude of an employee towards his/her work (Lopopolo, 2002). In this regard, there is no commonly agreed upon theoretical generalisation that explains job satisfaction. However, job satisfaction can be defined as the extent to which an employee feels positively or negatively towards his/her job (Yousef, 2000b). Job insecurity is also consistently associated with reduced levels of job satisfaction (De Witte, 1997).

2. Job insecurity, coping, and job satisfaction

Job insecurity has been defined as an individual's "expectations of continuity in a job situation" (Davy, Kinicki, & Scheck, 1997, p. 323), "overall concern about the future existence of the job" (Rosenblatt & Ruvio, 1996, p. 587), and "perception of potential threat to continuity in his or her current job" (Heany, Israel, & House, 1994, p. 1431). Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) conceptualised job insecurity as a source of stress involving fear, potential loss, and anxiety. One outcome of such stress is strain in the form of somatic complaints such as lack of sleep, dizziness, and loss of appetite.

Job insecurity can further be defined as the concern felt by a person for continued existence of his/her job (De Witte, 1997). Some people may have a subjective experience or perception of job insecurity when there is no objective reason to feel insecure. Job insecurity concerns uncertainty about the future. The feeling of job insecurity occurs when there are possibilities of plant closure or transfer, and reduction of jobs from a non-profitable area to the more profitable one, but no final decision has been taken.

Sverke and Hellgren (2002) argue that there are two aspects of job insecurity, quantitative (worries about losing the job itself) and qualitative (worries about losing important features of

the job itself). Quantitative job insecurity may be regarded as a globalisation of the construct while qualitative job insecurity pertains to perceptions of potential loss of quality in the employment relationship, such as deterioration of working conditions, demotion, lack of career opportunities, decreasing salary, development, and concerns about person-organisation fit in the future.

From a uni-dimensional viewpoint, Van Vuuren (1990) defines job insecurity as a concern felt by a person for the continuance of his/her job. According to Jacobson and Hartley (1991), job insecurity reflects a discrepancy between the levels of security a person experiences and the level he/she might prefer. A distinction is made between three components, subjective experience, perception of uncertainty about the future, and doubts about continuation of the job itself. From a multidimensional perspective, job insecurity is not merely concerned with sustaining one's job, but encompasses various aspects of the entire job. Specifically, the change is from a belief that one's position in the organisation is safe to a belief that it is not (Jacobson & Hartley, 1991; Sverke & Hellgren, 2002). It is an anticipation that something detrimental or unpleasant is going to happen in one's job. The individual continuously appraises the situation within the organisation. In this regard, the employee undertakes a *cognitive* appraisal of the situation (Hui & Lee, 2000).

Petzall, Parker, and Stoeberl (2000) define job insecurity as the perception of the potential loss of continuity in a job situation that can range from permanent loss of the job itself, to loss of valued job features. This research also maintained that the loss must be involuntary. If not, the individual is not powerless to maintain the continuity of the positions and therefore true job insecurity would not be experienced. De Witte (1997) maintains that job insecurity lies in between stress, burnout, and its complement on one side, and the psychological consequences of unemployment on the other.

In the Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) model, the job insecurity construct is multidimensional, consisting of five components. The first component is a perceived threat to various job features, such as opportunities for promotion and freedom to schedule work. The more features an individual perceives to be threatened, the greater the job insecurity. The second component is

perceived importance of each feature to the individual. The construct's third component is the perceived threat of the occurrence of various events that would negatively affect an individual's total job; being fired or laid off for a short while are examples. The fourth component is the importance attached to each of those potentialities. These two components would also combine multiplicatively and, when summed, yield a weighted rating of the severity of the threat to a total job. The fifth component of the job insecurity construct is powerlessness. Although Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) did not explicitly define powerlessness, it seems to encompass an individual's ability to counteract the threats identified in the first four components. Thus, even if they perceive a threat of their jobs or job features, people who have the power to counteract threats (those who are low in powerlessness), should not experience much job insecurity.

Job insecurity has many negative effects even if it is only perceived, according to Canaff (2002). Canaff also states that research on job insecurity shows that insecurity increases stress levels, negative job attitudes, lack of trust, ignorance of workplace safety and causes health issues, often more than an actual job loss. Like other work-related stressors, job insecurity is associated with a number of detrimental consequences for both the individual and the organisation. Several studies, including a meta-analysis (Sverke, Hellgren, & Näswall, 2002), have related job insecurity to strain, such as mental health complaints (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989; Kinnunen, Mauno, Natti, & Happonen, 2002) and lower levels of job satisfaction (Davy et al., 1997, Hellgren, Sverke, & Isaksson, 1999).

Jacobson and Hartley (1991) suggest that low job security can lead to behavioural withdrawal in terms of absenteeism and resignation. The literature also shows that job insecurity has an impact on three crucial variables: psychological well-being, job insecurity, and commitment to the organisation (De Witte, 1997). Burchell et al. (1999) also states that job insecurity has a serious effect on the job attitudes of employees. He maintains that employees who feel that their jobs are not secure have strong intentions of leaving their jobs, and less commitment to their employers than employees who believe that their jobs are relatively secure.

Since job insecurity involves the experiencing of a threat, and implies a great deal of uncertainty regarding whether individuals get to keep their jobs in the future, it has been described as a

stressor (Barling & Kelloway, 1996; De Witte, 1999). Stress triggers a reaction by activating different biological systems, which increase a person's ability to perform and adapt to new situations. When these systems are repeatedly activated without the opportunity for recovery or rest, there is a risk for both physical and mental stress-related ill-health (Allvin et al., 1998).

Sverke et al. (2002) provided a structure outlining the indirect and direct effects of job insecurity.

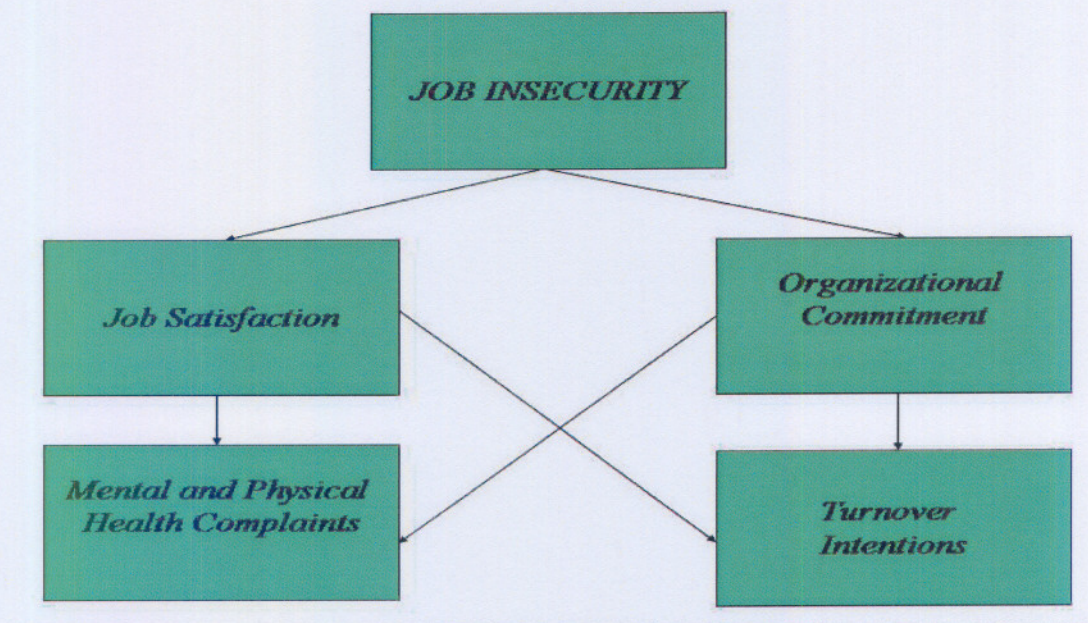


Figure 1: Proposed model of indirect and direct effects of job insecurity by (Sverke et al., 2002)

The figure simply implies that job insecurity can have a negative impact on both job satisfaction and organisational commitment. This negative impact can, in turn, harm both the organisation and the employees. For example, it can affect employees' mental and physical health, and affect the organisation through turnover.

Other consequences of job insecurity have been documented. Among these we find lower levels of job involvement (Kuhnert & Palmer, 1999), decreased trust in the organisation (Ashford et al., 1989), decreased organisational commitment (McFarlane, Shore & Tetrick, 1991), and increased

intention to leave the organisation (Hartley, Jacobson, Klandermans, & Van Vuuren 1991; Sverke et al., 2002).

The problem arises that job insecurity has a deleterious effect. It does not only affect the jobholder, but also the household to which the jobholder belongs (Felstead, Burchell, & Green, 2000). It has also been established that job insecurity is the major source of psychological ill health, with long lasting effects (Work/life imbalance).

Job satisfaction is an important aspect of people's lives, as most people are expected to spend a large part of their lives at work. Tietjen and Myers (1998) state that instilling satisfaction within workers is a crucial task of management, since satisfaction creates confidence, loyalty, and ultimately, improved quality in the output of the employed. Rust and Stewart (1996) state that organisations with satisfied employees have satisfied customers. This results in organisations with satisfied employees having higher levels of customer retention, which increases overall productivity.

According to Stanley (2001), job satisfaction is a person's attitude towards his/her job. Employees continuously appraise and evaluate the quality of their jobs and they possess heartfelt beliefs about their job and their organisation. High job satisfaction can bring out the creative spark that resides in all employees, lower rates of absenteeism, reduce turnover, and increase productivity.

Robbins (2001) defines job satisfaction as an individual's general attitude towards his/her job. He further states that a job requires interaction with co-workers and immediate supervisors, following organisational rules and policies, meeting performance standards and living conditions that are conducive. This means that an employee's assessment of how satisfied or dissatisfied he/she is with his/her job is a complex summation of a number of discrete job elements.

Furnham (1997) indicates that there are five dominant areas in terms of job satisfaction:

- *Need satisfaction.* This area states that an employee's needs satisfaction experience depends on the opportunities the work provides for an individual to satisfy his/her needs.
- *Value attainment.* This area can be regarded as the opportunity for the employee to work according to his/her values.
- *Generic component.* This area postulates that job satisfaction is the function of both personal and generic factors. Robbins (1998) refers to this model as consisting of self-image and the ability to handle stress.
- *Challenging work.* Employees choose work that is more challenging and tasks that give them opportunities to develop skills at a variety of levels. Freedom in the work situation is also important, as well as the degree of freedom that is received.
- *Supportive working conditions.* Robbins (1998) mentions that friendly and supportive colleagues lead to a greater level of job satisfaction. Greater levels of workers' satisfaction with their jobs can be an indication that they are also happy with their social environment.

According to Byers and Rue (1997) there are other factors that have an effect on an employee's job satisfaction. They include health, age, ambitions, social status, political beliefs, and social activity. Therefore, job satisfaction is caused by multiple factors.

The ability of individuals to employ coping strategies and tools to deal with stress in their work could have an effect on their life outside work – failure to employ the necessary strategies and tools will carry the increased demands and accompanying high stress over to the non-work situation (Van Zyl, 2002). If companies want to achieve outstanding business results, they have to realise the importance of employee effort, and emphasis should be placed on work-life and its effects on the well-being of people (Baker & Green, 1991; Cooper & Cartwright, 1994).

Coping is defined as the cognitive (by reframing and re-evaluation) and behavioural (by engagement in recreation and self-care activities or the seeking of social support) attempts to master, reduce, and eliminate the effect of stress on the well-being of individuals (Edwards & Baglioni, 1999; Folkman, 1984; Osipow & Spokane, 1987). Therefore, the purpose of coping

strategies is to resolve discrepancies between the perceived state and the desired state. Israel, House, Schurman, Heany and Mero (1989); Lazarus and Folkman (1984) and Parkes (1994) believe individuals use a range of coping strategies and tools to deal with stress, and that it varies greatly among individuals. Research has emphasised the importance of coping strategies and tools in reducing the negative effects of stress.

In general, coping strategies refer to behaviours that occur after stressors have been engaged (Pearlin & Schooler, 1978). According to Folkman and Lazarus (1988), coping strategies can be conceptualised as being either problem-focused (i.e., active) or emotion-focused (i.e., passive). Problem-focused strategies represent those aimed at influencing the nature of a demand, whereas emotion-focused coping strategies are aimed at eliminating or lessening the stress response (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988).

Edwards and Baglioni (1999) further state that problem-focused coping encompasses numerous specific coping strategies, such as defining the problem, generating, evaluating, and selecting potential solutions, and attempting to cognitively reappraise the situation by shifting the level of aspiration, reducing ego involvement, finding alternative channels of gratification, or developing new standards of behaviour. Emotion-focused coping includes strategies such as minimisation, positive comparisons, seeking positive value from negative events, selective attention, distancing, avoidance, exercise, meditation, use of alcohol, venting anger, and seeking emotional support (Edwards & Baglioni, 1999).

Although the literature is very clear regarding the relationship of job insecurity to work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction, much less work has been done on the variables that moderate this relationship. Individual coping might be such a variable. The first objective of the dissertation is thus to investigate the role of job insecurity in predicting job satisfaction, while studying the moderating effect of individual coping.

3. Goal Clarity, role conflict, social support and work/life imbalance

Work, in the modern working life, often involves interpreting and understanding the needs and expectations of the customer. A good interpretation is thus the goal, which means that both the ultimate goal and the path, by which that goal should be attained, are characterised by unpredictability. The fact that today's work does not result in finished, concrete products shows that work has become more indistinct (Allvin, Wiklund, Härenstam, & Aronsson, 1999). It is therefore important to increase the awareness of organisational goals and to discuss the concept of quality in the process of defining what constitutes good performance.

In modern working life, employees are expected to be autonomous and self-governing, which requires that they possess a great deal of skill and confidence in their own abilities (Allvin et al. 1998). However, in order for autonomy to bring out positive consequences for both the individual and the organisation, it is necessary for individuals to know what to do, and not least of all, how they should do it. Unclear demands and expectations can lead to feelings of insecurity and anxiety (Allvin et al, 1999).

Cranny, Smith and Stoner (1992) identify autonomy as one of the several factors that influence job satisfaction. They find that job satisfaction is substantially influenced by intrinsically rewarding conditions such as interesting work, challenges, and autonomy. Research also reveals that on-the-job role ambiguity and role conflict are major ingredients in the determination of levels of work-related stress and job satisfaction (Fisher & Gitelson, 1983; Fried & Tiegs, 1995; Wolverton, Wolverton, & Gmelch, 1999). One study revealed the direct relationship between role ambiguity and job satisfaction (Schaubroeck, Cotton & Jennings, 1989).

Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) regarded role ambiguity, role conflict, and locus of control as important causes of individuals experiencing job insecurity. Role ambiguity and role conflict both threaten an individual's sense of control and may thereby create perceptions of job insecurity. Ashford et al. (1989) contends that role ambiguity denotes a lack of information about job requirements and procedures, and role conflict occurs when the roles members fill are clouded with issues of conflict, control, expectation, and security. Both role ambiguity and role

conflict induce some anxiety about fulfilling parts of the psychological contract with employers, which will heighten feelings of job insecurity (Ashford et al., 1989).

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, numerous definitions of social support were proposed. These ranged from cognitive, as knowledge about one's position in the immediate social environment (Cobb, 1976), through the affective, as emotional states (Kaplan, Cassel, & Gore, 1977), to behavioural, as a transaction (House, 1981) and to the structural, as the presence of a particular kind of social relationship (Cohen & Syme, 1985; Pearlin, 1985). It can be viewed as a generalised perception that there are people available to provide assistance, regardless of the nature of the stressful events encountered (Laireiter & Baumann, 1992; Procidano & Heller, 1983).

As it is currently used in social and scientific parlance, the term "social support" commonly implies an abstract characteristic of persons, behaviours, relationships, or social systems. The evident diversity of what is subsumed under it is usually accounted for by postulating different kinds (e.g., emotional vs. instrumental), sources (e.g., spouse vs. family vs. friends), or other facets, forms, or expressions of the phenomenon "support". This view is best exemplified by multi-dimensional conceptual models, such as that proposed by House (1981). Regardless of its health-related outcomes, social support is a fundamental form of human interaction, as basic and pervasive as interactions intended to influence or inform (Burleson, Albrecht, & Goldsmith, 1993). As such, social support plays a crucial role in the formation and development of interpersonal relationships.

The interest in the way that social support contributes to the formation and development of relationships has emerged relatively recently, with current research focusing on how relationships, especially important personal relationships, are the product or outgrowth of supportive interactions (Barbee, 1990; Burleson, 1990).

Social support is associated with experiences of quality of life (Helgeson & Cohen, 1996), psychological well-being (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Frazier, Tix, Klein, & Arikian, 2000), physical

well-being (Flett, Blankenstein, Hicken, & Watson, 1995; Lin & Ensel, 1998) and work productivity and quality of work life (Uden, 1996).

There has been a substantial increase in focus by many organisations on achieving an appropriate balance between work and family life (<http://www.worklifeinitiatives.org>). Many companies have a strong desire to improve work/life balance and create work/family initiatives, but often implement programmes with limited effectiveness. Limited effectiveness is often the result of focusing on symptoms, rather than on the underlying problems that perpetuate them. To discover the root problems and attack them head on, companies and employees must engage in a cooperative dialogue. Work/life initiatives were created to facilitate that dialogue.

The keys to attaining long-term work/life balance are firstly to identify business processes generating excessive work schedules and life balance conflicts, to evaluate both business and customer requirements and life balance requirements within various employee demographics, and, lastly, to redefine work processes using the advantages of employee demographic requirements and preferences in a way that does not compromise the goals of the organisation as a whole (<http://www.worklifeinitiatives.org>).

Emotional health is influenced, in part, by the nature of one's personal strivings and the degree of success one experiences in achieving personal goals (Emmons, 1986). Ruehlman and Wolchik (1988) reasoned that social relationships may contribute to psychological functioning not only by influencing adaptation to life stress, but also by facilitating or by hindering one's pursuit of important goals.

Social support is a complex construct and encompasses at least the following three components: support schemata, supportive relationships, and supportive transactions (Pierce, Sarason, & Sarason, 1996). These elements of the social support construct are not mutually exclusive; they overlap and mutually influence each other in important ways. Support schemata encompass one's expectations about the level of accommodation of the social environment in providing aid should one need it. While individuals have support schemata that incorporate their expectations about how others, in general, will respond to them, they also have expectations about how others

are likely to respond should assistance be needed (supportive relationships). Supportive transactions involve behavioural exchanges between at least two individuals. Although not all supportive interactions involve each of the following elements, many transactions include efforts on the part of the potential support recipient to elicit support from another person, the enactment of supportive behaviours on the part of the provider and, consequently, the receipt of supportive behaviours by the individual who attempted to elicit support (Pierce, et al., 1996).

It is assumed that the more roles in which an individual participates, the greater the role pressures she or he may experience (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The relationship between inter-role conflict and life satisfaction (work/life balance) has not been found to be linear and research has shown that there are various moderators of this relationship, including career salience (Karim, 1997), self-esteem and social support (Barling, 1990). Hall and Hall (1976) found that in an organisation with high levels of social support for the individual and feedback there was evidence from path analysis of the following cycle of success: Goals→success→support→self-image→involvement→goals. In the lower support organisation, there was less evidence for this cycle. In the climate with lower support, personal and job goals were not related to performance, success, or a balance between work and personal life. Even more importantly, the results in a study done by Näswall, Sverke and Hellgren (2005) sustain suggestions that social support, at least non-work based support, may act as moderator of the relationship between stressors and strain and, consequently, together with clear and focused goals, have a positive effect on work/life imbalance.

The second objective of the dissertation is to investigate the role that a lack of goal clarity and the experience of role conflict play in predicting employees' experience of work/life imbalance. Specifically, social support might be said to have some moderating and adaptive potential. As such, the moderating role of social support from supervisor and colleagues between lack of goal clarity and role conflict on the one hand, and work/life imbalance on the other, will be investigated.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

4.1 General objectives

The first objective of this study is to look at the effect of job insecurity on job satisfaction, and determine whether coping reduces and eliminates the stress of job insecurity and improves the worker's feeling of satisfaction in his/her job. The second objective of the dissertation is to investigate the role that goal clarity and the experience of role conflict play in predicting employees' experience of work/life imbalance and the possible mediating effect of social support on this outcome.

4.2 Specific objectives:

- To determine the levels of qualitative and quantitative job insecurity, role conflict, goal clarity, coping, social support, job satisfaction and work/life imbalance for a group of management level employees in the mining industry.
- To study the main and interactive effects of individual coping in the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction for a group of management level employees in the mining industry.
- To study the main and interactive effects of social support in the relationship between role conflict and lack of goal clarity and work/life imbalance for a group of management level employees in the mining industry.
- To make recommendations regarding training and development in coping skills and the use of social support in reducing stress for individuals within the organisation.

5. RESEARCH METHOD

The research consists of a literature review and an empirical study. The results obtained will be presented in the form of two research articles.

5.1 Literature Review

The literature review will focus on work-related stressors (job insecurity, role conflict, and a lack of role clarity), coping, job satisfaction, social support, and work/life imbalance.

5.2 Empirical Study

The empirical study consists of the research design, measuring instruments, participants, and statistical analysis.

5.2.1 Research design

A cross-sectional design with a survey as the technique of data collection will be used to attain the objectives of this research. Cross-sectional designs are used to examine groups of subjects in various stages of development simultaneously, while the survey describes a technique of data collection in which questionnaires are used to gather data about an identified population (Burns & Grove, 1993). This design will be best suited to the descriptive and predictive functions associated with correctional research, whereby relationships between variables are examined (Shaughnessey & Zechmeister, 1997).

5.2.2 Sample

A random sample will be taken from a South African mining company ($N=206$). Individuals on E band to C Upper (managers) of the Paterson system will form part of the sample and all disciplines in the company will be considered. The various ethnic groups in South Africa will also be taken into consideration.

5.2.3 Measuring instruments

Job insecurity will be measured with a questionnaire developed by Isaksson, Hellgren, and Pettersson (1998), while coping will be assessed using the Cybernetic Coping Scale (CCS, Edwards & Baglioni, 1993). Participants' experience of social support is based on the scales of Caplan et al. (1975), and work/life imbalance on the scales of Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian (1996). The items comprising the job satisfaction scale were developed by Hellgren, Sjöberg and Sverke (1997), based on Brayfield and Rothe (1951), while goal clarity is measured with a combination of items from Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970). Role conflict is also measured by Rizzo et al.'s scale (1970).

Job insecurity, Isaksson et al. (1998) developed the seven-item questionnaire. Quantitative job insecurity is operationalised in accordance with Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt's (1984) definition of perceived threats to the continuity of the job itself, while qualitative job insecurity was designed to reflect what Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt characterised as a threat to the continuity of important job features (Hellgren et al., 1999). The internal consistency and reliability were satisfactory for both quantitative ($\alpha = 0,79$) and qualitative job insecurity ($\alpha = 0,75$).

Coping. The Cybernetic Coping Scale (CCS) was developed by Edwards and Baglioni (1993) based upon the cybernetic theory of stress. Edwards (1992) concept of stress, coping and well-being was derived from the cybernetic theory. This theory views stress, coping, and well-being as critical elements of a negative feedback loop in which discrepancies between the perceived state and the desired state induce stress, damage well-being, and activate coping. According to Guppy et al., (2004), Edwards' theory further states that the purpose of coping strategies is to resolve discrepancies between the perceived state and the desired state in which coping is conceptualised as attempts to reduce or omit the adverse effects of stress on well-being (Edwards & Baglioni, 1999). The CCS includes five forms of coping, identified as i) Change the situation; ii) Accommodation; iii) Devaluation; iv) Avoidance; and v) Symptom Reduction. According to Guppy et al. (2004), all five of the scales produce reliabilities $>0,70$. Furthermore, all 40 items loaded significantly on the appropriate factor. The 20-item CCS had a better fit than the 40-item scale and the reliabilities for all five scales exceeded, $0,70$. For the purpose of this study, the 15-

item version of the CCS was used. Internal reliability estimates for the 15-item model produced acceptable to high alpha coefficients (Guppy et al., 2004).

Social support. Based on Caplan et al., (1975), and other social support literature. This scale consists of three factors based on the source of the support – co-worker support, supervisor support, and family support. The response alternatives ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree) and a high score on either scale reflects a sense that support is available.

Work/life imbalance. This scale, based on Netemeyer et al. (1996), consists of four items measuring the extent to which working life affects life outside work. The response alternatives ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), and a high score reflects a negative effect of on life outside work.

Job Satisfaction. The three items comprising the scale measuring satisfaction with the job were developed by Hellgren, Sjöberg, & Sverke (1997), based on Brayfield and Rothe (1951) The response alternatives ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), and a high score reflects satisfaction with the job.

Goal Clarity. Combination of items from Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman (1970) and Caplan et al. (1975). Consists of four items measuring the extent to which the purpose of one's work tasks is clear. The response alternatives ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), where a high score indicates goal clarity.

Role Conflict: Role conflict is measured by Rizzo et al.'s scale (1970). This part of the scale consists of six negatively worded questions, such as "I receive an assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it". The response alternatives ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), where a high score indicates role conflict.

A *Biographical questionnaire* (age, gender, educational qualification, and language) will also be administered.

5.2.4 Statistical analysis

The data analysis will be carried out with the help of the SPSS-program (SPSS, 2005). The program will be used to carry out statistical analysis regarding the reliability and validity of the measuring instruments and descriptive statistics. The reliability and validity of the measuring instruments will be assessed with the use of Cronbach alpha coefficients (Clark & Watson, 1995). Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) and inferential statistics will be used to analyse the data.

The main and interactive effects of coping will be tested using hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Demographic characteristics will be controlled for in the first step. Job insecurity and coping variables will be entered in the second step. Interaction terms of job insecurity with each of the coping variables will be entered in the third step to test for the hypothesised moderating effect of coping on the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction. Following the procedures described by Aiken and West (1991), the predictor variables will be centred, i.e. the means of these variables will be set to zero while the standard deviations are kept intact.

The main and interactive effects of social support from supervisor and colleagues will be tested using hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Demographic characteristics will be controlled for in the first step. Role conflict and goal clarity, and social support variables will be entered in the second step. Interaction terms of role conflict and goal clarity and with each of the social support variables will be entered in the third step to test for the hypothesised moderating effect of social support on the relationship between role conflict and goal clarity and work/life imbalance. Following the procedures described by Aiken and West (1991), the predictor variables will be centred, i.e. the means of these variables will be set to zero while the standard deviations are kept intact.

6. CHAPTER DIVISION

The chapters of the mini-dissertation will be divided as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: Article 1

Chapter 3: Article 2

Chapter 4: Conclusions, limitations, and recommendations

7. SUMMARY OF CHAPTER

The first chapter gives an introduction and overall description of the aim of this study. The next chapter in this dissertation looks at the effect of coping with job insecurity on job satisfaction. Chapter 3 looks at role conflict and goal clarity, social support and its effect on work/life imbalance. In the last chapter, conclusions, limitations, and recommendations are made concerning the findings of this study.

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CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH ARTICLE 1

JOB INSECURITY, COPING AND JOB SATISFACTION

ABSTRACT

Labour markets all over the world, including South Africa, are currently undergoing a lot of dramatic changes because of economical instability. In order to stay ahead of these changes and to stay competitive, organizations have to engage in adaptive strategies such as downsizing and mergers. As a result, employees experience feelings of uncertainty and job insecurity. The aim of this study was to determine whether a relationship existed between job insecurity and job satisfaction, and whether coping moderated the effect between these variables. The population of the study comprised of a group of managers from a South African mining organization. The Job Insecurity Scale, Cybernetic Coping Scale and Job Satisfaction Questionnaire were administered to a sample of 250 employees and 206 useful responses were received. Acceptable alpha coefficients were obtained on the Job Insecurity and Cybernetic Coping Scale as well as the Job Satisfaction Questionnaire. It was found that employee's job satisfaction could be predicted by job insecurity, and that negative coping strategies moderate the effect that job insecurity has on an employee's job satisfaction.

OPSOMMING

Arbeidsmarkte regoor die wêreld, ook in Suid-Afrika, is tans besig om dramatiese veranderinge te ondergaan as gevolg van ekonomiese onstabieleit. Ten einde voorbereid te wees op hierdie veranderinge en kompetend te bly moet organisasies deelneem aan aanpassingsstrategieë soos byvoorbeeld afskaling en samesmelting. As gevolg hiervan kan werknemers gevoelens ondervind van onsekerheid en werksonsekerheid. Die doel van hierdie studie is om vas te stel of daar 'n verhouding is tussen werkssekerheid en werkstevredenheid, en of coping die effek van hierdie veranderlikes kan temper. Die populasie vir hierdie studie bestaan uit 'n groep bestuurders by 'n Suid-Afrikaanse mynmaatskappy. Die werksonsekerheidsskaal, Kubernetiese Copingskaal en 'n werkstevredenheidsvraelys is gebruik met 'n steekproef van 250 werknemers en 206 bruikbare response is ontvang. Aanvaarbare alpha koëffisiënte is verkry op al drie skale. Daar is gevind dat werknemers se ervaring van werksbevrediging voorspel kan word deur werksonsekerheid, en dat negatiewe copingstrategieë die effek wat werksonsekerheid op werkers se ervaring van werkstevredenheid temper.

Organisations world-wide, and especially in South Africa, are exposed to radical changes in the economic, political, social, demographic, and technological arenas. These changes have led to transformations in the labour market during the last few decades (Mauno & Kinnunen, 1999). Economic pressures and international competition have forced organisations to reduce their costs, while still preserving, or increasing, their productivity and quality (Roux, 2002). Words like “downsizing”, “rightsizing” and “restructuring” all refer to the reduction of the workforce in order to cut costs, and are used interchangeably (Marais & Schepers, 1996). Employees are no longer secure in their jobs, given that organisations can only afford to employ workers as long as they can make a contribution and their skills and knowledge are needed (Roux, 2002).

Burger and Jafta (2005) stated that South Africa has long been notorious for its exceptionally high levels of inequality in the labour market and the persistence of racial overtones. The 1994 general election and the subsequent redrafting of the South African Constitution marked the end of an era of legislated labour market discrimination under apartheid. In the ten years post-1994, government has proposed and implemented a series of remedial measures, including an ambitious set of black empowerment and affirmative action policies (Burger & Jafta, 2005). The first fully democratic elections in April 1994 were followed by the roll-out of a series of legislative changes (Nel, Gerber, & Van Dyk, 2001). This process began with the promulgation of the new Labour Relations Act (No. 66 of 1995). This was followed by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (No. 75 of 1997), which came into operation on 1 December 1998, and then by the Employment Equity Act (No. 55 of 1998). The latter came into operation in phases, which began on 9 August 1999 (Nel, 2002).

As a result of the new implicit regulations in South Africa, many organisations implemented changes to their employment relationships. These changes did not exempt the mining sector. In the past, scholars became locked in serious academic debate on the interpretation of the role of employers in the creation of a cheap and docile labour force in this sector (Finnemore, 1999). Greenberg (1980) tried to explain the early divisions in the mining workforce as not only a convenient consequence of capitalist control of the developing economy, but also as having their origins in employment practices in the pre-capitalist economic era.

The mining labour system in the 1990s has retained features that have existed since the early 1900s, and still relies on a labour pool from Southern Africa. Yet, what have been most prominent since 1988, are the declining employment levels and the lesser occurrence of long-term employment in the mining sector (Standin, Sender, & Weeks, 1996). Employment in the mining industry is changing in several ways, for a variety of interrelated reasons: commercial, political, technological, demographic, and social. The net effect, however, has been a steady fall in the number of people employed in mining, an industry that accounts for less than one percent of the global workforce (International Labour Office Report, 2002). This report showed a decrease in employment in mining in South Africa from 807 400 to 416 800 in the fifteen years up to 2002.

Given the changes that have taken place in the mining industry, the employers in the South African mining sector must not only manage these changes as well as new forms of relationships, but must also implement them within the boundaries of the changing labour legislation. Furthermore, the employees who experience these changes, together with job insecurity in the employment relationship, need to cope with it, since it can directly influence the physical, psychological and social wellness of the employee (Bendix, 2001; Shore et al., 2004). The South African labour market has to deal with changes at a political level and government is placing more pressure and emphasis on the implementation of concepts such as employment equity. It is clear that job security, although desired by most, it is not to be expected (Labuschagne, 2005). Employees will most likely react to job insecurity, and these reactions will have consequences for organisational effectiveness (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984).

Job insecurity is conceptualised in a number of different ways. Often the term job security refers to the same concept or has the same meaning as the term job insecurity. Ruvio and Rosenblatt (1999) describe job insecurity as having two major components or dimensions. i.e. one-dimensional and multi-dimensional. The one-dimensional approach asks the question: Do employees perceive the continuity of their jobs as guaranteed or not? This view has been criticised as a narrow approach that ignores the richness and multiple meanings embedded in the concept of job insecurity. The multi-dimensional model views job insecurity as a subjective response to the objective threat of job loss. The employees' response encompasses various

aspects of loss (Ruvio & Rosenblatt, 1999). This response is multidimensional, composed of a general worry about keeping one's job and concerns about losing particular work features. Work features included are firstly extrinsic factors such as pay, location and physical demands, and secondly intrinsic factors such as autonomy, recognition and making a significant impact at work. In most instances, job insecurity has been defined according to the global viewpoint, signifying the threat of job loss or job discontinuity (Caplan, Cobb, French, Van Harrison, & Pinneau, 1980). Researchers who hold the multidimensional definition of job insecurity argue that job insecurity refers not only to the degree of uncertainty, but also to the continuity of certain dimensions, such as opportunities for promotion (Ashford, Lee, & Bobko, 1989).

Ruvio and Rosenblatt (1999) predicted that job insecurity would have an adverse effect on employees' attitudes and work behaviours. They argued that job insecurity led to deterioration of organisational effectiveness, because of decreased productivity and adaptability, and increased turnover of insecure employees. Furthermore, job insecurity negatively affects job commitment; trust in organisations, and job satisfaction (Ruvio and Rosenblatt, 1999).

Job insecurity is problematic for both the individual and the company, as the impact of job insecurity on individual employees can erode the effectiveness of the organisation (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). A downward spiral is created, whereby productivity decreases in such a manner that the competitive strength of the company is undermined. The risk of further redundancies is increased which, in turn, increases the feeling of job insecurity due to the associated costs of increased absenteeism, which results from lowered employee well-being (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984).

Employees who experience feelings of job insecurity are more likely to display undesirable organisational outcomes such as withdrawal behaviours, job dissatisfaction, and low organisational commitment (De Witte, 2000).

To investigate the relationships between job insecurity and its consequences, one needs to consider other factors that might have an influence on this relationship. Three major aspects of such influence are individual differences, work control, and social support. These relationships can be illustrated as in the model below:

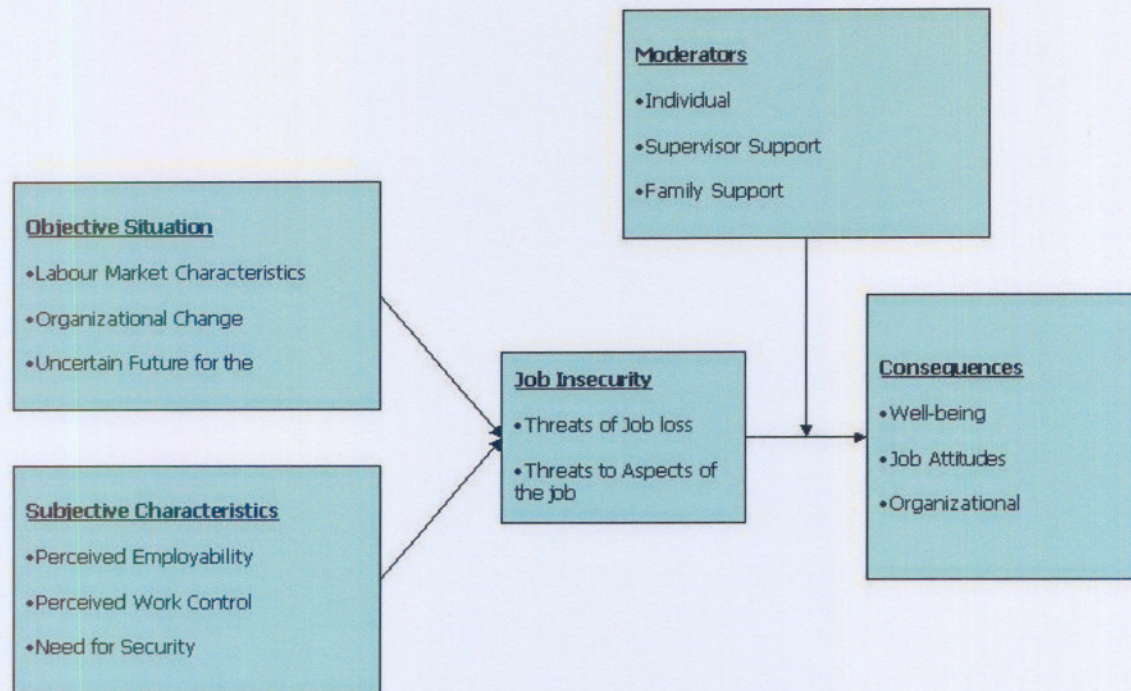


Figure 2. *Integrated model of Job Insecurity (Adapted from Sverke & Hellgren, 2002)*

A study by Barling and Kelloway (1996) amongst South African gold miners investigated relationships between job insecurity, workplace control, and personal outcomes (psychosomatic symptoms, negative mood, and blood pressure) and organisational outcomes (turnover intentions, organisational commitment). They indicated that job insecurity was positively related to turnover intentions and negative mood, and positively associated with somatic symptoms and blood pressure, when perceived workplace control was low.

Jacobson and Hartley (1991) suggest that low job security can lead to behavioural withdrawal in terms of absenteeism and resignation. However, this propensity to withdraw does not necessarily lead to increased turnover in the organisation. Burchell et al. (1999) state that job insecurity seriously affects the job attitudes of employees. They maintain that employees who feel that their jobs are not secure have a strong intention of leaving their jobs, and are less committed to their employers than employees who believe that their jobs are relatively secure.

The results of other studies demonstrated that the feelings created by job insecurity are accompanied by lower job satisfaction and weaker commitment to the organisation (Van Vuuren, Klandermans, Jacobson & Hartley, 1991). King (2000) found that white collar workers who reported high job insecurity were less supportive of organisational goals, gave less effort to produce quality work, and were more actively seeking alternative employment. Sverke, Hellgren, and Näswall (2002) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the immediate (i.e. attitudes) and long-term consequences (i.e. health and behaviour) of job insecurity. They observed that the relationships between job insecurity and the outcome variables were stronger for the immediate consequences, and more moderate for the long-term consequences. Hellgren (2003) assumes that certain stress reactions (e.g. attitude reactions) develop more quickly and in a way that is more immediately connected to the origin of the stressor, whereas other reactions (e.g. behaviour and health-related symptoms) are experienced at a later phase.

The productivity of workers is one of the most important factors that can contribute to organisational effectiveness which, in turn, contributes to the survival of the organisation, in spite of the trends of ever changing circumstances and increasing competition. Stress from job insecurity is a factor that constantly influences productivity. It contributes to patterns of behaviour such as absenteeism, coming late, and reduced productivity. However, positive, effective, and successful coping with stress is related to behaviour that indicates a positive organisational orientation. Therefore, an organisation can benefit by decreasing the stress levels of workers caused by job insecurity, by developing their coping skills (Venter, 2001).

Kleinke (1991, p. 3) defines coping as “the efforts we make to manage situations we have appraised as potentially harmful or stressful”. Lazarus and Folkman (1984, p. 141) define coping

as "...constantly changing cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person". In accordance with the objectives of coping, authors have made an essential distinction between coping oriented to the problem and coping oriented to the emotion (Edwards, 1988; Lazarus & Folkman, 1986;). Coping oriented to the problem would represent an attempt to respond directly to the stressful situation; coping oriented to the emotion would consist of attempts to moderate the emotional response to stressful events.

Although it seems evident that strategies oriented to the problem are much more effective for coping with stressful situations than those oriented to the emotion and to avoidance (Roger, Jarvis, & Najarian, 1993), there is evidence that the effectiveness of strategies oriented to the problem would depend on effective control of the potential stressors of the environment and individual emotions (Edwards, 1988). Lazarus and Folkman (1984) argued that there are no universally adaptive coping strategies that are suitable for all individuals in all situations. In order to know whether or not a specific coping strategy is adaptive or not, one needs to know why it was selected from the repertoire of available coping strategies.

According to the Cybernetic theory of stress, postulated by Edwards (1992), coping and well-being in organisations are influenced by stressful stimuli, understood as the discrepancies between a perceived state and a desired state and which, at the same time, are considered important by the individual. These stimuli can activate coping in two different ways, directly or indirectly. Stress would activate coping directly, anticipating potential threats to psychological well-being, whilst coping would be activated indirectly when psychological well-being had already been damaged in some way (Edwards, 1992).

Hobfoll (1989) developed the Conservation of Resources (COR) model. Hobfoll and Lilly (1993) go out from the point of view that individuals strive towards obtaining, protecting, and building up resources. The threat to the individual is the potential or actual loss of these resources. The core of this model is that losses or potential losses lead to the experience of stress, and that individuals need to invest in resources to obtain more resources or to prevent their loss (Hobfoll, 1989; Hobfoll & Lilly, 1993).

The basic need in terms of coping is to obtain, keep, and protect resources. Thus individuals try to maximise the acquisition of resources and minimise the loss thereof (Venter, 2001). Hobfoll and Lilly (1993) also stretch the fact that a cycle can develop while obtaining and laying off resources. They claim that individuals who easily build up resources, cope better with the situation and, as a result of this, build up even more resources. On the other hand, individuals who struggle to build up resources easily lose them in a crisis and find it difficult to build up more resources. In this research, job satisfaction is conceptualised as a resource that individuals would like to protect and expand.

Job satisfaction is the extent to which one feels positively or negatively about intrinsic or extrinsic aspects of one's job (Bhuiyan & Mengue, 2002). According to Stanley (2001), job satisfaction is a person's attitude towards his/her job. Employees continuously appraise and evaluate the quality of their jobs and they possess heartfelt beliefs about their jobs and organisations. Job satisfaction is a complex construct and is often measured as a global attitude of an employee towards his/her work (Lopopolo, 2002).

Although there are certain variations brought about by the different definitions of job satisfaction, this is supported by the generic definition of Cranny, Smith and Stoner (1992) and Kreitner and Kinicki (1998), which states that job satisfaction is an affective (emotional) reaction to a job that is the result of employees' comparison of the real outcomes with the outcomes they hoped for.

Job satisfaction is an important aspect of people's lives, as most people are expected to spend a large part of their lives at work. Tietjen and Myers (1998) state that instilling satisfaction within workers is a crucial task of management, because satisfaction creates confidence, loyalty and ultimately improved quality in the output of the employed. Rust and Stewart (1996) state that organisations with satisfied employees have satisfied customers. This results in organisations with satisfied employees having higher levels of customer retention, which increases overall productivity.

Stanley (2001) maintains that employees who are satisfied at work will have high levels of productivity. Also, Brown (2002) maintains that the key to productivity lies in keeping job satisfaction high. Low job satisfaction is associated with high absenteeism and turnover (Stanley, 2001). According to Milkovich and Boudreau (1997) organisations prefer satisfied employees because this will contribute to a better work environment. In addition, employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to be better ambassadors for the company, and show more organisational commitment.

Job satisfaction further plays an important role in employee retention (Rust & Stewart, 1996). Recent research also suggests that many of the effects of job insecurity on individual and organisational outcomes are mediated by employee levels of job satisfaction (Probst & Brubaker, 2001).

The relationship between job insecurity, coping and job satisfaction

The relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction is demonstrated in the research of Ashford et al. (1989), who found a significantly lower level of job satisfaction among employees who felt insecure. Heany, et al. (1994), as well as Probst and Brubaker (2001), found that job insecurity is associated with decreased levels of extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction. According to Yousef (1998), job insecurity has been linked to numerous important outcomes including employee health, psychological well-being, turnover, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. Heymans (2002), in a South African study, found that cognitive job insecurity is related to decreased levels of extrinsic and intrinsic job satisfaction.

Dunbar (1993), in his study on psychological stress and employee safety, finds that job insecurity causes negative attitudes in the form of anxiety regarding job satisfaction, and reduces satisfaction with other facets of the job, like payment and promotion opportunities. He also maintains that these, in turn, might result in a reduction in adherence to safety policies. According to Yousef (1998) the significance of job insecurity relates to the fact that it is critical in influencing work-related outcomes, *inter alia* employee health, physical and psychological well-being, employee turnover, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment.

Research done by De Witte (1999) on the psychological consequences of job insecurity showed that job insecurity reduces psychological well-being and job satisfaction, and increases psychosomatic complaints and physical strains. Hauge (2004) stated that feelings of job insecurity are typically accompanied by lower job satisfaction and weaker commitment to the organisation as a whole. Job insecurity is especially prevalent among employees in industries that are downsizing and closing facilities, and especially stressful for those employees who will be least able to find other comparable jobs if they were to lose their current positions (Heany, et al. 1994).

To feel that one has adequate resources to cope with the situation one is facing has been found to have moderating effects between work stress and different kinds of strains, and has shown to have significant effects in protecting individuals from dissatisfaction, reduced well-being, and somatic symptoms at insecure workplaces (Lim, 1996; Vingerhoets & Van Heck, 1990). The more an individual feels he/she is coping with the situation, the less likely it is that he/she will experience negative consequences of job insecurity and job dissatisfaction. Although control at work exerts some direct influence on job satisfaction, Büssing (1999), found coping at work to be much more successful in moderating the relationship between objective job insecurity and strain than, for example, social support. As such, the objective of this research was to investigate the moderating effect of individual coping between job insecurity and job satisfaction.

METHOD

Research design

A cross-sectional design with a survey as the technique of data collection was used to attain the objectives of this research. Cross-sectional designs are used to examine groups of subjects in various stages of development simultaneously, while the survey describes a technique of data collection in which questionnaires are used to gather data about an identified population (Burns & Grove, 1993). This design is best suited to the descriptive and predictive functions associated with correctional research, whereby relationships between variables are examined (Shaugnessey & Zechmeister, 1997).

Participants

A random sample was taken from a South African mining company and 206 usable responses were gathered ($N = 206$). Individuals on E band to C Upper (managers) of the Paterson system form part of the sample, and all disciplines in the company are considered. The characteristics of the participants are portrayed in Table 1.

Table 1*Characteristics of the Participants*

Item	Category	Percentage*
Gender	Male	91,70
	Female	8,30
Children younger than 12 living with you	No	50,50
	Yes	48,50
Household	Single (living alone)	8,70
	Married or living with a partner	75,70
	Living with parents	1,90
	Divorced or separated	5,30
	Remarried	8,30
Educational Qualifications	Grade 10 (Standard 8)	18,00
	Grade 11 (Standard 9)	6,80
	Grade 12 (Matric)	32,00
	Technical College Diploma	15,50
	Technicon Diploma	14,60
	University Degree	6,30
	Postgraduate (Honours, Masters or Doctorate)	5,30
Language	Afrikaans	69,40
	English	15,50
	Sepedi	1,00
	Sesotho	2,40
	Setswana	4,40
	IsiSwati	1,00
	IsiXhosa	3,40
	IsiZulu	2,90
Employment status	Permanent	95,60
	Substitute position	2,40
	Employed by the hour	0,50
	Employed for a project	0,50
	Trainee	1,00
Employment	Full-time	99,50
	Part-time	0,50
Union member	Yes	83,00
	No	17,00

*Where percentages do not total 100, this is due to missing values.

The sample consisted mostly of males (91,70%), which is a representation of the gender spread of the population in the gold mining company. A large number of participants (75,70%) are married or live with a partner. Nearly half of the participants (48,50%) have children younger than 12 living with them. The average number of years participants have been working for the organisation is 14,03 years ($SD = 9,00$ years), while the mean salary of participants was R7003,50 ($SD = R2523,60$). More than half of the participants (69,40%) were Afrikaans speaking. Most of the participants (73,70%) have at least completed high school or tertiary studies. Most participants (95,60%) are permanently employed, and nearly all the participants (99,50%) are employed full-time. The majority of the participants were union members (83,00%).

Measuring instruments

Job insecurity was measured with a questionnaire developed by Isaksson et al. (1998), while coping was assessed using the Cybernetic Coping Scale (CCS, Edwards & Baglioni, 1993). The job satisfaction scale was developed by Hellgren, Sjöberg and Sverke (1997), based on Brayfield and Rothe (1951).

Job insecurity. Isaksson et al. (1998) developed the seven-item questionnaire. Quantitative job insecurity is operationalised in accordance with Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt's (1984) definition of perceived threats to the continuity of the job itself, while qualitative job insecurity was designed to reflect what Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt (1984) characterised as a threat to the continuity of important job features (Hellgren, Sverke & Isaksson, 1999).

Coping. The Cybernetic Coping Scale (CCS) was developed by Edwards and Baglioni (1993) based upon the Cybernetic theory of stress (Edwards, 1992). This theory views stress, coping and well-being as critical elements of a negative feedback loop in which discrepancies between the perceived state and the desired state induce stress, damage well-being, and activate coping. According to Guppy et al., (2004), Edwards' theory further states that the purpose of coping strategies is to resolve discrepancies between the perceived state and the desired state, in which coping is conceptualised as attempts to reduce or omit the adverse effects of stress on well-being. Coping is conceptualised as attempts to reduce or eliminate the negative effects of stress on well-

being (Edwards & Baglioni, 1999). The CCS includes five forms of coping, identified as i) Change the situation; ii) Accommodation; iii) Devaluation; iv) Avoidance; and v) Symptom Reduction. According to Guppy et al. (2004), all five of the scales produce reliabilities $>0,70$. For the purpose of this study, the 15-item version of the CCS was used. Internal reliability estimates for the 15-item model produced acceptable to high alpha coefficients (Guppy et al., 2004).

Job Satisfaction. The three items comprising the scale measuring satisfaction with the job were developed by Hellgren et al. (1997), based on Brayfield and Rothe (1951) The response alternatives ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), and a high score reflects satisfaction with the job.

A *Biographical questionnaire* (including gender, children, household, education, language, employment status, union membership) was also administered.

Statistical analysis

The data analysis was carried out with the help of the SPSS-program (SPSS, 2005). The program was used to carry out statistical analysis regarding the reliability and validity of the measuring instruments and descriptive statistics. The reliability and validity of the measuring instruments were assessed with the use of Cronbach alpha coefficients (Clark & Watson, 1995). Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data.

The main and interactive effects of coping were tested using hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Demographic characteristics were controlled for in the first step. Job insecurity and coping variables were entered in the second step. Interaction terms of job insecurity with each of the coping variables were entered in the third step to test for the hypothesised moderating effect of coping on the relationship between job insecurity and job satisfaction. Following the procedures described by Aiken and West (1991), the predictor variables were centred, i.e. the means of these variables were set to zero while the standard deviations are kept intact.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics for the different variables are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Cronbach Alpha Coefficients of the Measuring Instruments

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	α
Job Insecurity					
Job Insecurity – qualitative	2,65	0,99	0,20	-0,50	0,61
Job Insecurity – quantitative	2,78	1,29	0,91	0,39	0,72
Cybernetic Coping					
Devaluation	2,97	0,98	-0,13	-0,23	0,67
Avoidance	2,33	1,07	0,40	-0,70	0,76
Symptom reduction	3,36	0,92	-0,14	-0,35	0,56
Change the situation	3,92	1,23	0,71	0,26	0,68
Accommodation	3,32	1,37	0,38	0,86	0,66
Job Satisfaction					
Job Satisfaction	3,72	1,03	-0,66	-0,20	0,80

Table 2 shows that acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients varying from 0,56 to 0,85 were obtained for the scales. The coping scale of Symptom reduction showed the lowest alpha coefficient, but can still be regarded as acceptable (see Nunally & Bernstein, 1994). It is evident from Table 2 that most of the scales of the measuring instruments have relatively normal distributions, with acceptable skewness and kurtosis.

Table 3 shows the correlations between the job insecurity, coping, and job satisfaction constructs. Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients were used to specify the relationship between the variables.

Table 3

Product Moment Correlation Coefficients between Job Insecurity, Coping and Job Satisfaction

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Change the situation	-	-	-	-	-	-
2 Accommodation	0,08	-	-	-	-	-
3 Devaluation	0,00	0,32 ⁺	-	-	-	-
4 Avoidance	-0,10	0,31 ⁺	0,51 ⁺⁺	-	-	-
5 Symptom reduction	0,07	0,23 [*]	0,46 ⁺	0,46 ⁺	-	-
6 Job Insecurity – qualitative	-0,05	0,05	0,05	0,01	-0,09	-
7 Job Insecurity – quantitative	0,05	0,13	0,09	0,10	-0,01	0,45 ⁺
8 Job satisfaction	0,03	0,08	0,14 [*]	0,07	0,19 [*]	-0,48 ⁺

* $p \leq 0,05$ - statistically significant

⁺ $r > 0,30$ - practically significant (Medium effect)

⁺⁺ $r > 0,50$ - practically significant (Large effect)

Accommodation correlates practically significantly (medium effect) with Devaluation and Avoidance, and is statistically significantly correlated with Symptom reduction. Devaluation is practically significantly related to Avoidance (large effect) and Symptom reduction (medium effect), and is statistically significantly related to Job satisfaction. Avoidance correlates with Symptom reduction (practically significant – medium effect). Symptom reduction is statistically significantly related to Job satisfaction. Qualitative and quantitative job insecurity showed a practically significant correlation of medium effect. Qualitative job insecurity also showed a practically significant negative correlation with Job satisfaction.

The results of the multiple regression with job satisfaction as the dependent variable are given in Table 4. Biographical variables of age and gender were entered in the first step, job insecurity and coping in the second, and the interaction terms in the third.

Table 4*Multiple Regression Analysis with Job Satisfaction as the Dependent Variable*

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>Beta</i>						
1 (Constant)	1,53	0,57		2,71	0,01	8,14	0,28	0,08	0,08
Age	0,01	0,01	0,08	1,13	0,26				
Sex	0,93	0,25	0,25	3,70	0,00*				
2 (Constant)	1,81	0,63		2,87	0,01	10,72	0,58	0,33	0,26
Age	0,01	0,01	0,11	1,84	0,07				
Sex	0,95	0,22	0,26	4,27	0,00*				
Job insecurity - qualitative	-0,44	0,07	-0,43	-6,47	0,00*				
Job insecurity - quantitative	-0,05	0,05	-0,06	-0,95	0,35				
Changing the situation	-0,01	0,05	-0,01	-0,23	0,82				
Accommodation	0,04	0,05	0,05	0,81	0,42				
Devaluation	0,07	0,08	0,07	0,98	0,33				
Avoidance	-0,02	0,07	-0,02	-0,33	0,74				
Symptom reduction	0,17	0,08	0,15	2,14	0,03*				
3 (Constant)	1,48	0,63		2,37	0,02	6,44	0,63	0,40	0,07
Age	0,01	0,01	0,06	0,95	0,34				
Sex	1,07	0,22	0,29	4,79	0,00*				
Job insecurity - qualitative	-0,40	0,07	-0,40	-5,72	0,00*				
Job insecurity - quantitative	-0,08	0,06	-0,11	-1,41	0,16				
Changing the situation	0,09	0,06	0,11	1,42	0,16				
Accommodation	0,06	0,06	0,08	1,02	0,31				
Devaluation	0,10	0,08	0,10	1,27	0,21				
Avoidance	-0,03	0,07	-0,03	-0,40	0,69				
Symptom reduction	0,12	0,08	0,11	1,59	0,11				
Change the situation x Job insecurity - quantitative	0,00	0,07	0,00	0,03	0,97				
Change the situation x Job insecurity - qualitative	-0,17	0,09	-0,20	-2,01	0,05*				
Accommodation x Job insecurity - quantitative	0,07	0,06	0,11	1,22	0,23				
Accommodation x Job insecurity - qualitative	-0,06	0,08	-0,06	-0,70	0,48				
Devaluation x Job Insecurity - quantitative	0,01	0,08	0,02	0,14	0,89				
Devaluation x Job insecurity - qualitative	0,06	0,09	0,06	0,64	0,52				
Avoidance x Job insecurity - quantitative	-0,17	0,07	-0,24	-2,40	0,02*				

Table 4 continued

Multiple Regression Analysis with Job Satisfaction as the Dependent Variable

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
	B	SE	Beta						
Avoidance x Job insecurity - qualitative	-0,01	0,08	-0,01	-0,08	0,94				
Symptom reduction - quantitative	0,14	0,08	0,19	1,87	0,06**				
Symptom reduction - qualitative	-0,07	0,09	-0,07	-0,81	0,42				

p*<0,05*p*<0,10

Table 4 shows that when only gender and age are used to predict job satisfaction, gender is a significant predictor. Gender remained a significant predictor throughout the analysis, but the skew representation of sexes most likely distorts this effect. When job insecurity and coping variables were entered in step 2, 33% of the variance in job satisfaction could be explained. Qualitative job insecurity – qualitative and the coping strategy of Symptom reduction ($\Delta R^2 = 0.26$; *p*<0,05) were statistically significantly related to Job satisfaction. In step 3 it can be seen that an additional 7% of the variance in job satisfaction can be explained by making use of the interaction terms. Qualitative job insecurity also remained statistically significant. Step 3 further indicates that changing the situation as coping strategy acts to moderate the effect of qualitative job insecurity on job satisfaction (*p*<0,05). Regarding the effects of quantitative job insecurity on job satisfaction, both Avoidance (*p*<0,05) and Symptom reduction (*p*<0,10) act as moderators between these variables.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the role job insecurity plays in predicting job satisfaction, and whether coping moderates the effect of job insecurity on job satisfaction for a group of managers in a South African gold mining company. The construct validity of the measuring instruments was also investigated, and found to show acceptable reliability. Only the

coping preference of symptom reduction showed really low reliability, and caution needs to be exercised in interpreting results related to this dimension.

The coping strategy of accommodation was positively related to the coping strategies of symptom reduction, devaluation, and avoidance. Regarding the relationship between these variables, the strongest relationship was indicated between having an avoidant coping strategy and a devaluing orientation, suggesting avoidance may be accompanied by deciding that the problem is not so important. Alternatively, those managers who do not accurately assess a problem's importance might be more inclined towards avoiding reaching a suitable solution. Venter (2001) came to the conclusion that using avoidance as a defence mechanism is only a way to cope with the problem at a certain time, but it cannot be seen as a real coping strategy to help the individual through the crisis. Avoidance as a coping strategy could lead to suppression which, in turn, could lead to the individual not solving or coping with the problem immediately. This could result in the individual experiencing bigger and more painful consequences when forced to deal with the problem later.

Devaluation is practically significantly related to avoidance and symptom reduction, and statistically significantly related to job satisfaction. Individuals use devaluation and avoidance coping perhaps to protect their well-being, but these are regarded as negative coping behaviours. Research into coping behaviours by Catalano, Rook and Dooley (1986) suggests that employees under stress are most likely to attempt to deal with stressful situations by adopting negative coping behaviours, whether problem-focused or emotion-focused. Generally speaking, active coping strategies are thought to be better ways of dealing with stressful events, and avoidant coping strategies appear to be a psychological risk factor or marker for adverse responses to stressful life events (MacArthur & MacArthur, 1998).

Focusing on reducing symptoms, as a coping strategy, was also associated with being more devaluating, avoidant, and accommodating. This indicates that individuals, who try to cope with threat by focusing on managing symptoms, are also more likely to be adjusting desires to meet the situation, reducing the importance associated with the discrepancy, and by directing attention away from the situation. In general, coping behaviours are intended to reduce the stress that

ensues from perceptions of job insecurity (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Jordan, Ashkanasy and Hartel (2002) note that coping behaviours can have either negative or positive outcomes in terms of addressing the employee's perceptions of job insecurity. To be avoidant and devaluating, for example, can be negative in a way that the individual doesn't recognise the problem and face it up front. This can create high levels of stress in the end and consequently, the individual could experience lowered job satisfaction.

Symptom reduction was also positively related to job satisfaction, which indicates that using this strategy to cope with a stressful situation could lead to greater job satisfaction. Thus, if an individual reduces the symptoms that job insecurity brings, he/she may be able to stay satisfied in their job and the insecurity he/she experiences can be controlled.

Qualitative and quantitative job insecurity were positively related. This shows that managers' experiences of threats to the continuity of their jobs, as well as threats to the continuity of important job features, are related and inseparable. Qualitative job insecurity was negatively related to job satisfaction. As a result, individuals with qualitative job insecurity could experience less job satisfaction. It may also be that individuals who are not entirely satisfied with their jobs perceive greater job insecurity as a reflection of a consideration to leave their current employment. If workers feel their needs threatened by an insecure employment situation, they are also experiencing a threat to vital economic, social, and personal aspects of their lives (De Witte, 1999). The more an individual values these features, the more severe will be the effects of the loss. The prospect of such loss will be more threatening if individuals are very dependent on their current job (Greenhalgh & Rosenblatt, 1984). Therefore, individuals who feel afraid of losing important features of their jobs, and not the job itself, might not see any fitting coping strategy to deal with these feelings. One could understand that losing job features might be experienced as less traumatic than losing one's employment entirely. This indicates that people feeling they may lose important job features could present with less job satisfaction, than those perceiving a total loss of employment.

The possession of coping resources has generally been found to alleviate occupational strain and increase job satisfaction (Kirkmeyer, 1988; Parkes, 1994). Wiesenfeld, Brockner, Petzall, Wolf

and Bailey (2001) found that if individuals' negative reactions stem from the experience of threat to the job or self integrity, then the relationship between certain stressors and survivors' negative reactions should be reduced when they cope with the threat by reaffirming their self-integrity.

Most of the participants in this study were white males, those most at threat for losing their job or important or valued job features. The currently dominant context of affirmative action, as imposed by the government (in the form of the Employment Equity Act), threatens mostly those who benefited from a previously inequitable society, divided on racial lines. These laws are national and not confined to the mining industry. This could lead to increased stress, as people cannot reduce the threats they are experiencing. Extended to the downsizing context, Steele's (1988) theory and research suggest that it may not be the aspects of layoffs *per se* that cause organisation members to react negatively. Rather, their negative reactions may be elicited by the implications of the stressors (e.g., job insecurity or unfairness) for individuals' sense of self-esteem, self-identity, or personal control (Armstrong-Stassen, 1993; Brockner & Wiesenfeld, 1993).

The results of the regression analysis showed that qualitative job insecurity, and following a coping strategy focusing on reducing symptoms, resulted in lower job satisfaction. This again confirms the ineffective ways the participants dealt with stressful situations. It is also indicated that changing the situation, as a coping strategy, acts to moderate the effect of qualitative job insecurity on job satisfaction. Changing the situation is conceptualised as an active coping strategy. Thus, individuals who actively respond to job insecurity are still able to experience job satisfaction. According to Billings and Moos (1981), individuals who approach the problem directly are able to adapt to the initial stressful situation and maintain their job satisfaction. By means of gathering information and problem solving techniques, they experience less psychological strain and are able to stay satisfied, regardless of their experienced strain. Venter (2001) stresses the fact that individuals who cope actively with their situations, are inclined to trust management, to be optimistic about the future, to be in control of negative feelings and experience job satisfaction as a result. These individuals are inclined to focus on the advantages of the transformation, as they believe they have to adjust and evaluate themselves in the

situation. Managers, who actively seek to deal with their experienced job insecurity in the current sample, may find it possible to sustain their job satisfaction.

Additionally, in evaluating the effects of quantitative job insecurity on job satisfaction, both the coping strategies of avoidance and reducing symptoms acted as moderators between these variables. Cognitive avoidance can be an effective short term coping strategy (Venter, 2001). Keeping in mind that different personalities use different kinds of coping strategies (Hewitt & Flett, 1996), individuals who choose to avoid the actual stressor might find it useful to stay positive and satisfied in his/her job. Reducing the actual symptoms of job insecurity might also moderate the effect that job insecurity as a stressor has on the experience of job satisfaction. When individuals use external sources, for example structural mechanisms and information gathering, this might reduce the stress of job insecurity and the individuals will not lose their feeling of job satisfaction (Shaw, Fields, Tacker, & Fisher, 1993).

Only qualitative job insecurity made a direct contribution towards predicting employees' experiences of job satisfaction. When individuals are experiencing quantitative job insecurity, they are faced with a situation where either total job loss, or no change in employment relationship is anticipated. However, with qualitative job insecurity, they have the perception that they might be losing important job features – but when, and how many job features may be involved, are uncertain. Qualitative job insecurity might thus be hypothesised to lead to more uncertainty than quantitative job insecurity which, in turn, may lead to higher stress and lower job satisfaction. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) were of the opinion that the anticipation of a stressful event may represent an even greater source of anxiety than the actual event. Karasek and Theorell (1990) confirm that job strain is manifested when the individual is presented with high stress circumstances and has little control over the situation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is evident that certain coping strategies moderate the effect of job insecurity on job satisfaction. Previous research done by Fogarty et al. (1999) showed that merely reducing negative symptoms is not enough. Proactive interventions that initiate improvements in the organizational environment are also essential if maximum results are to be achieved. Employees have to focus on coping strategies that will minimize the stress of job insecurity. In order to cope with uncertain situations, management ought to keep employees informed and provide them with the necessary “coping tools” to cope with the stress related symptoms and feelings of insecurity. Practically, the impact of stress management on employee well-being and job satisfaction, multiplies itself over time, as increases in well-being and decreases in job stressors mutually reinforce each other (Daniels & Guppy, 1997).

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CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH ARTICLE 2

ROLE CONFLICT, GOAL CLARITY, SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND WORK/LIFE IMBALANCE

ABSTRACT

The modern working life, together with constant organisational changes, is placing a lot of responsibilities and expectations on the employee. The individual is finding it difficult to differentiate and find the correct balance between his/her role at work and his/her role at home. This may result in work/life imbalance. The aim of this study was to determine whether there existed a relationship between goal clarity/role conflict and work/life imbalance and to determine if social support moderates the relationship between these variables. The population of the study comprised of a group of managers from a South African mining organisation. The Goal Clarity Scale, Role Conflict Scale, Social Support Scale and the Work/Life Imbalance Scale were administered to the sample of 206 employees. A significant relationship was found between participants' experiences of role conflict and their perceptions regarding work/life imbalance. It was shown that managers' work/life balance could be predicted by role conflict. It's also evident from the results obtained that social support could act as moderator between role conflict and work/life imbalance.

OPSOMMING

Die moderne werkslewe, saam met voortdurende organisatoriese veranderinge plaas 'n groot verantwoordelikheid op en verwagtinge by die werknemer. Die individu vind dit moeilik om te onderskei tussen en die korrekte balans te vind tussen sy/haar rol by die werk en by die huis. Dit mag 'n werk/lewens wanbalans tot gevolg hê. Die doel van hierdie studie is om te bepaal of daar 'n verhouding bestaan tussen doelgerigtheid/ rol konflik en werk/lewens ongebalanseerdheid en om te bepaal of sosiale ondersteuning die verhouding tussen hierdie veranderlikes temper. Die populasie vir hierdie studie bestaan uit 'n groep bestuurders by 'n Suid-Afrikaanse mynmaatskappy. Die Doel Duidelikeidsskaal, Rol Konfliksskaal, Sosiale ondersteuningsskaal en die Werk/lewe skaal is gebruik met 'n steekproef van 250 werknemers en 206 bruikbare response is ontvang. 'n Betekenisvolle verhouding is gevind tussen die deelnemers se ondevinding van rolkonflik en hulle waarneming van werk/lewens ongebalanseerdheid. Daar is aangetoon dat bestuurders se werk/lewensbalans voorspel kan word deur rolkonflik. Dit is ook duidelik uit die resultate wat verkry is dat sosiale ondersteuning kan dien as 'n modereerder tussen rolkonflik en werk/lewens ongebalanseerdheid.

The nature of work has changed in recent decades due to industrial restructuring, technological advancements, economic recessions and intensified global competition (Howard, 1995). The world is shrinking at a faster rate than ever before, distances are shorter, and events in other parts of the world are getting nearer and affect us more immediately than in the past. This resulted in a great deal of change in the fundamental conditions central to the organisation of work (Wikman, 2000).

Research indicates that advanced industrial societies are showing a shift away from more traditional, secular, rational values that stress material prosperity and physical and economic security, towards values that are more expressive of individual freedom and growth (Van Deth & Scarbrough, 1995). According to Inglehart and Baker (2001), changes in the global economy and advances in the field of technology and informatics have ushered in a wave of modernisation throughout the world, characterised by processes of rapid industrialisation, commercialisation and rationalisation. These systemic-level changes have the capacity to initiate both short-term and long-term change of values and norms at the individual level (Inglehart, 1997).

Forces of globalization and internationalisation have exposed South Africa to numerous new challenges of cultural diversity such as race, language, and gender issues (Booyesen, 1999). Affirmative action and employment equity programmes have opened up the workforce to previously excluded groups of the population, prompting Booyesen to argue that the two most prevalent changes that the management corps and workforce of South Africa have undergone are the advancement of black Africans and of women (Booyesen, 1999). This brought significant changes to a country previously plagued by apartheid. The challenge, however, was the reconstruction of the post-apartheid economy insofar as the development of human capital and the involvement of the country in the global market are concerned (Phakathi, 2002).

The South African gold mining industry deemed it necessary to relinquish the old, traditional, and obsolete, and to adopt new and innovative forms of work that focus on participative schemes such as self-directed teamwork. As Bobby Godsell, Chief Executive Officer of AngloGold, argues with regard to the transformation of the labour process in an industry faced by the challenge of international competition: "...work structures have remained remarkably unchanged

for many decades because of static technology, the impact of apartheid, and the previously closed nature - in times past - of the South African economy. We now face the transition from a Taylor-type of work structure or Fordism, as it is called in sociology of work terms, to models more appropriate for an information-driven society” (Godsell, 1998, cited in Webster et al., 1999, p. 14).

Work, in the modern working life, often involves interpreting and understanding the needs and expectations of the customer. A good interpretation is thus the goal, which means that both the ultimate goal and the path to that goal are characterised by unpredictability. The fact that today’s work does not result in finished, concrete products shows that work has become more indistinct (Allvin, Wiklund, Härensstam, & Aronsson, 1999). This, together with increased flexibility, leads to difficulties in measuring and defining performance.

In modern working life, employees are expected to be autonomous and self-governing, which requires that they possess a great deal of skill and confidence in their own abilities (Allvin et al., 1998). To bring about any positive consequence for both the individual and the organisation, it is necessary for individuals to know what to do and, not least of all, how they should do it (Allvin, et al., 1999). If work tasks and expectations (roles) are vaguely defined, and resources insufficient, the situation will be problematic (Allvin et al., 1999). It is assumed that the more roles in which an individual participates, the greater the role pressures he or she may experience (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Another important consideration is the amount to which different roles are complementary, or in conflict with, each other.

Role conflict has been defined as the perceived lack or clarity of information concerning (a) the expectations others hold for one’s behaviour, (b) the consequences of one’s behaviour, and (c) the means through which others’ expectations can be fulfilled (Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970). When such information is lacking, the social function of roles as mechanisms for minimising uncertainty and increasing predictability related to interpersonal activity, is hampered (Sarbin & Allen, 1968). It has been suggested that work-family conflict exists when time devoted to the requirements of one role, strain from participation in one role, and certain behaviours required by one role, make it difficult to fulfil the requirements of another role (Brink & De la Rey, 2001).

Thus, inter-role conflict may have an adverse effect on an individual and his or her psychological well-being (Greenberger & O'Neil, 1993). Another important aspect of expected roles to consider is the clarity of goals.

Goal clarity refers to the extent to which goals are stated specifically and clearly, and are understood by the unit managers responsible for meeting them. Hirst and Yetton (1999) and Weingart (1992) indicated that increased task interdependence creates uncertainty and a lack of clarity for managers in achieving goals. Such unclear goals can reduce managerial performance. Several research studies have supported the positive effects of task-goal clarity on managerial performance (Imoisili, 1989). Managers working with unclear goals are faced with higher uncertainty in relation to goal achievement. Ross (1995) found that managers who worked under such uncertain situations suffered higher job-related tension.

Unclear demands and expectations can lead to feelings of insecurity and anxiety (Allvin et al., 1999). A promising theme from research done by Schuler and Jackson (1986) is that social support mitigates the effects of role ambiguity, role conflict, future ambiguity, and role overload. Consequently, typical stress symptoms such as irritation, anxiety, depression, and heart problems are less likely to occur in groups in which members report higher social support than where members report low social support. Thus, practices that enhance group social support, while minimising the side effects of group cohesiveness, are likely to be effective in minimising the impact of stress in organisations and individuals via groups, and restore work life balance (Cohen & Syme, 1984; Cohen, Mermelstein, Kamarck, & Hoberman, 1984; Ganster, Fusilier & Mayes, 1984; Schaefer, Coyne, & Lazarus, 1981).

The relationship between inter-role conflict and life satisfaction has not been found to be linear, and research has shown that there are various moderators of this relationship, including career salience (Karim, 1997), and self-esteem and social support (Barling, 1990). Social support has been well documented as a buffer against stress, when its quantity and quality are suitable for the needs of the individual. Social support cannot be assumed to be uniformly good or sufficient for the individual's well-being, as it is complex, interactive and multidimensional (De Cieri, Dowling, & Taylor, 1991). Social support, as a phenomenon with psychological, interactional,

and environmental components, involves reciprocity with qualitative and quantitative aspects (De Cieri et al., 1991).

Social support is conceptually defined as the assistance and protection given to others, especially individuals (Langford, Bowsher, Maloney, & Lillis, 1997). Assistance may be tangible or intangible and protection involves shielding others from the adverse effects of life stress. Social support has frequently been cited in psychological literature as having a potentially valuable role in reducing stress in the workplace and increasing well-being (Lim, 1996; Terry, Nielsen, & Perchard, 1993). Typical social support is defined as support “accessible to an individual through social ties to other individuals, groups and the larger community” (Lin, Ensel, Simeone, & Kuo, 1979, p. 109). Occupational stress literature suggests that social support may have two important effects in the workplace. Firstly, social support is seen to have a main effect on well-being, regardless of the level of stress (Terry et al., 1993) and a deficient level of support is suggested to accentuate stress and strain in an individual (Kaufmann & Beehr, 1989). Secondly, social support is suggested to interact with stress such that it buffers or moderates the relationship between stress and strain (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Support for the main effect of social support has been fairly consistent (Lim, 1996).

A social support network is thought to reduce the effects of stress through four explicit functions (House, 1981). Specifically, it can provide an individual with a) a sense of acceptance and self-worth (emotional support), b) affiliation and contact with others (social companionship), c) concrete aid, material resources, and financial assistance (instrumental support), or d) information useful in understanding and coping with potentially stressful events (informational support). All four of these forms of input contribute to positive secondary appraisal, but informational support also plays a key role in primary appraisal. That is, it impacts on the stress process by influencing the appraisal of events that have the potential to be threatening to self (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997). More specifically, informational support (also called appraisal support) is thought to provide individuals with the opportunity to compare their reactions with others, increasing their understanding of the situation and indicating the appropriateness of their emotional reactions. Along lines suggested by Lazarus, and implicit in the manipulations used in his early studies (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), this exchange of information within a social

network enables individuals to acquire new interpretations and to clarify their understanding of potentially threatening situations (Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997).

Social support may also originate from different sources, such as the individual's work situation (e.g., colleagues, supervisors, or the union) as well as the individual's social sphere outside of work (e.g., family and friends) (Billings & Moos, 1981; Jackson, 1992). Following Lim (1996), the present study differentiates work-based support from non-work based support, since it is reasonable to believe that support from work sources may have a more direct influence in alleviating the impact of a lack of goal clarity and the presence of role conflict in the working situation.

Social support is expected to interact with the stressor so that those who perceive that they have strong social support may react less negatively to stressors than those who do not perceive strong social support (Fenlason & Beehr, 1994). Social support has been described as a coping resource (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The access to a social network may help individuals to use coping strategies more effectively (Heany, Price & Rafferty, 1995).

Steyn (1990) stated that enough opportunities for co-operation between colleagues, loyalty towards each other, intellectual fellowship and comradeship, and support for and from colleagues must be present for harmonious collegial relationships and that these harmonious relationships between co-workers can lead to job satisfaction. These give an indication that colleagues are important for one's well being in the work environment. Other than work itself, a person has to rely on his colleagues for his full functioning. Social support has also played a prominent role in occupational stress models developed over the last few decades (Kahn & Byosiere, 1992). In these models, stressors are aspects of the work environment (e.g., role ambiguity, role conflict, role clarity) that negatively affect health, and strains are the negative health outcomes (e.g., burnout and depression) (Jex, Beehr, & Roberts, 1992).

In the global economy in which we live, the question is often asked how people manage the conflicting demands of work and family life – and the consequences of these conflicts. This is important, especially since these roles must have changed considerably since the first democratic

elections in 1994, as is evident in the more representative workforce of South Africa. Nowadays it is generally agreed that a good work/non-work balance is of growing importance for the economic viability of organisations and for the welfare of employees and families (Barnett, 1998).

Work-life balance is not a side issue, but a central issue in 21st century societies. There is an increase in female participation in the workforce, greater diversity than the traditional single breadwinner and a homemaker per household, increased dissatisfaction with long working hours intruding on family life, a more dynamic work/life cycle and increased awareness of the negative effects of economic determinism on happiness and well-being (Thompson, 2003).

Extensive research has explored the potential negative outcomes related to an imbalance in the individual's life. These include aspects such as stress and burnout (Geurts, et al., 2005), lack of engagement (Geurts et al., 2005) and poor general health (Frone, 2003; Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Burke (1988) also reported a positive relationship between work-family conflict and negative affective states, including depression, the impulse to overt aggression, anger, irritation, and insomnia.

Work-home interference is a broad concept that encompasses a negative as well as a positive side. However, virtually all measures that focus on this subject measure work-family and family-work conflict and the negative spillover effect of one domain on the other (Netemeyer, Boles & McMurrian, 1996; Stephens & Sommer, 1996). Employees strive towards attaining a balance between work and leisure – and greater flexibility on where, when and how they work (Cascio, 2001).

Work-home interference (WHI) or home-work interference (HWI) is an interactive process in which a worker's functioning in one domain (work or home) is influenced by positive or negative load reactions that have built up in the other domain (Geurts et al., 2005). Although the definition stated that work-home interference is a much broader concept that also includes a positive side, very few studies have addressed the occurrence, frequency, and correlation of positive interaction between work and private life (Frone, 2003; Geurts & Demerouti, 2003) and

virtually all measures that focus on work-home interference measure work-family and family-work conflict and the negative spillover effect of one domain to the other (Carlson, Dacmar & Williams, 2000; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996; Stephens & Sommer, 1996).

The Effort-Recovery (E-R) model (Meijman & Mulder, 1998) guides this research. The E-R model is a work psychological model that is rooted in exercise physiology, particularly in its application to the study of workload in relation to a person's capacity. The E-R model also sheds light on how work and private life may interact and the mechanisms through which well-being may be affected (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003). According to this model, effort expenditure is associated with specific load reactions (physiological, behavioural and subjective responses) that develop within the individual. In practice, the short-term reactions include all the responses at a physiological, behavioural, and subjective level that can be related to the load process. These reactions are, in principle, reversible. Recovery takes place when the exposure to load ceases and the respective psychological systems stabilise again at a specific baseline level within a certain period of time (Drenth, Thierry, & De Wolff, 1998). As a result of the recovery process, fatigue and other effects of stressful situations are reduced, but when demands do not cease but are continuously put on the individual, no recovery occurs.

The objective of this research was to investigate the experience of work/life imbalance of employees in a gold mining organisation. Specifically, the contributing factors of a lack of goal clarity and the experience of role conflict are investigated in relation to work/life imbalance. Also, the moderating effect of social support between role conflict, goal clarity, and work life imbalance is investigated.

METHOD

Research design

A cross-sectional design with a survey as the technique of data collection was used to attain the objectives set for this research. Cross-sectional designs are used to examine groups of subjects in various stages of development simultaneously, while the survey describes a technique of data

collection in which questionnaires are used to gather data about an identified population (Burns & Grove, 1993). This design is best suited to the descriptive and predictive functions associated with correctional research, whereby relationships between variables are examined (Shaughnessey & Zechmeister, 1997).

Participants

A random sample was taken from a South African mining company and 206 usable responses were gathered ($N = 206$). Individuals on E band to C Upper (managers) of the Paterson system formed part of the sample and all disciplines in the company were considered. The characteristics of the participants are portrayed in Table 1.

Table 1*Characteristics of the Participants*

Item	Category	Percentage*
Gender	Male	8,30
	Female	91,70
Children younger than 12 living with you	No	50,50
	Yes	48,50
Household	Single (living alone)	8,70
	Married or living with a partner	75,70
	Living with parents	1,90
	Divorced or separated	5,30
	Remarried	8,30
Educational qualifications	Grade 10 (Standard 8)	18,00
	Grade 11 (Standard 9)	6,80
	Grade 12 (Matric)	32,00
	Technical College Diploma	15,50
	Technicon Diploma	14,60
	University Degree	6,30
	Postgraduate (Honours, Masters or Doctorate)	5,30
Language	Afrikaans	69,40
	English	15,50
	Sepedi	1,00
	Sesotho	2,40
	Setswana	4,40
	IsiSwati	1,00
	IsiXhosa	3,40
	IsiZulu	2,90
Employment status	Permanent	95,60
	Substitute position	2,40
	Employed by the hour	0,50
	Employed for a project	0,50
	Trainee	1,00
Employment	Full-time	99,50
	Part-time	0,50
Union member	Yes	83,00
	No	16,00

* Where percentages do not sum to 100, this is due to missing values

The sample consisted mostly of males (91,70%), which is a representation of the gender spread of the population in the gold mining company, where males represent 95% of the total population. Most of the participants (69,40%) were Afrikaans speaking. Most of the participants (68,4%) have at least completed high school or tertiary studies.

Most participants (95,60%) are permanently employed, and nearly all the participants (99,50%) are employed full-time. The majority of the participants were union members (83,00%). A large number of participants (75,70%) are married or live with a partner. Nearly half of the participants (48,50%) have children younger than 12 living with them. The average number of years participants have been working for the organisation is 14,03 years ($SD = 9,00$ years).

Measuring instruments

Goal clarity and role conflict will be measured by the items developed by Rizzo, House and Lirtzman (1970) and Caplan (1970), while work-life balance will be measured by a scale based on Netemeyer et al. (1996). The scales developed by Caplan et al. (1975) will be used to indicate social support from supervisors and colleagues.

Goal Clarity is measured by a combination of items from Rizzo et al. (1970) and Caplan et al. (1975). The scale consists of four items measuring the extent to which the purpose of one's work tasks is clear. The response alternatives ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), where a high score indicates goal clarity. "I know exactly what is expected of me" is an example of an item measuring goal clarity.

Role conflict is also measured by Rizzo et al.'s scale (1970). This part of the scale consists of six negatively worded questions, such as "I receive an assignment without adequate resources and materials to execute it". The response alternatives ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), where a high score indicates role conflict.

The social support scales used here are based on those developed by Caplan et al. (1975), and other social support literature. This scale consists of two factors based on the source of the

support - colleague support and supervisor support. The response alternatives ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree) and a high score on either scale reflects a sense that support is available. "I usually receive help from my co-worker when something needs to be done quickly" is a sample item indicating collegial support, and supervisor support is indicated by items such as "When I encounter problems at work, I can always ask my manager for advice".

Work/life imbalance is measured with the Netemeyer et al. (1996) scale. It consists of four items measuring to what extent working life affects life outside work. "The demands in my work have a negative effect on my private life" is a typical item. The response alternatives ranged from 1 (disagree) to 5 (agree), and a high score reflects a negative effect on life outside work.

A *Biographical questionnaire* (gender, children, household, education, language, employment status, union membership) was also administered.

Statistical analysis

The data analysis was carried out with the help of the SPSS-program (SPSS, 2005). The program was used to carry out statistical analysis regarding the reliability of the measuring instruments and descriptive statistics. The reliability of the measuring instruments were assessed with the use of Cronbach alpha coefficients (Clark & Watson, 1995). Descriptive statistics (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) and inferential statistics were used to analyse the data.

The main and interactive effects of social support from supervisors and colleagues were tested using hierarchical multiple regression analysis. Demographic characteristics were controlled for in the first step. Role conflict, goal clarity, and social support variables will be entered in the second step. Interaction terms of role conflict and goal clarity with each of the social support variables were entered in the third step to test for the hypothesised moderating effect of social support on the relation between role conflict and goal clarity on the one hand, and work/life imbalance on the other hand. Following the procedures described by Aiken and West (1991), the

predictor variables were centred, i.e. the means of these variables were set to zero, while the standard deviations were kept intact.

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics for the different variables are given in Table 2 below.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Coefficients of the Measuring Instruments

	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	<i>A</i>
Role conflict	2,97	0,88	-0,09	-0,38	0,65
Goal clarity	4,23	0,84	-1,47*	2,26*	0,75
Social support from colleagues	3,54	1,02	-0,41	-0,41	0,80
Social support from supervisor	3,38	1,18	-0,46	-0,73	0,91
Work/Life imbalance	3,17	1,08	-0,30	-0,64	0,81

*High skewness and kurtosis

It can be seen from Table 2 that acceptable Cronbach alpha coefficients varying from 0,65 to 0,91 were obtained for the scales. Role conflict showed the lowest alpha coefficient, but it is still deemed acceptable (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). It is evident from Table 2 that most of the scales of the measuring instruments have relatively normal distributions, with acceptable skewness and kurtosis. Only goal clarity showed high negative skewness, and high positive kurtosis.

Table 3 shows the correlations between the role conflict, goal clarity, social support and work/life imbalance constructs. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were used to specify the relationship between the variables. Spearman correlations were computed between Goal clarity and the other constructs, due to its high skewness and kurtosis.

Table 3

Correlation Coefficients between Role Conflict, Goal Clarity, Social Support and Work/Life Imbalance

Item	1	2	3	4
1. Role conflict	-	-	-	-
2. Social support colleagues	-0,23	-	-	-
3. Social support supervisor	-0,30	0,46 ⁺	-	-
4. Work/Life imbalance	0,41 ⁺	-0,26	-0,07	-
5. Goal clarity	-0,16	0,34 ⁺	0,46 ⁺	-0,12

* $p \leq 0,05$ - statistically significant

+ $r \geq 0,30$ - practically significant (Medium effect)

++ $r \geq 0,50$ - practically significant (Large effect)

It can be seen from Table 3 that role conflict correlates practically significantly (medium effect) with work/life imbalance. Social support from colleagues correlates practically significantly (medium effect) with social support from supervisors and goal clarity. Social support from the supervisor is practically significantly (medium effect) related with goal clarity.

Table 4 gives the results of a multiple regression with work/life imbalance as the dependant variable. Biographical variables of age and gender were entered in the first step, role conflict, goal clarity, and social support in the second, and the interaction terms in the third.

Table 4
Multiple Regression Analysis with Work/Life Imbalance as Dependant variable

Model	Unstandardised		Standardised	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
	Coefficients		Coefficients						
	B	SE	Beta						
1 (Constant)	2,78	0,62		4,50	0,00	3,39	0,18	0,03	0,03
Sex	0,58	0,28	0,15	2,09	0,04*				
Age	-0,02	0,01	-0,13	-1,81	0,07**				
2 (Constant)	2,02	0,69		2,92	0,00	10,74	0,50	0,25	0,22
Sex	0,49	0,25	0,13	1,93	0,06**				
Age	-0,02	0,01	-0,13	-2,05	0,04*				
Role conflict	0,50	0,08	0,40	5,99	0,00*				
Goal clarity	-0,02	0,09	-0,01	-0,20	0,84				
Social support colleagues	-0,26	0,08	-0,24	-3,45	0,00*				
Social support supervisor	0,14	0,07	0,15	2,02	0,04*				
3 (Constant)	2,48	0,73		3,39	0,00	7,43	0,53	0,28	0,03
Sex	0,49	0,26	0,13	1,86	0,07**				
Age	-0,02	0,01	-0,15	-2,37	0,02*				
Role conflict	-0,02	0,08	0,39	5,76	0,00*				
Goal clarity	-0,02	0,11	-0,06	-0,76	0,45				
Social support colleagues	-0,02	0,08	-0,23	-3,11	0,00*				
Social support supervisor	-0,02	0,07	0,16	1,99	0,05**				
Role conflict x Social Support supervisor	-0,02	0,07	0,13	1,93	0,06**				
Role conflict x Social Support colleagues	-0,02	0,08	0,00	0,06	0,95				
Goal clarity x Social Support supervisor	-0,02	0,08	-0,07	-0,85	0,39				
Goal clarity x Social Support colleagues	-0,02	0,08	-0,06	-0,84	0,40				

**p*<0,05
***p*<0,10

Table 4 indicates that when only gender and age are used to predict work life imbalance, both are significant predictors. When role conflict, goal clarity, and social support variables were entered in step 2, 50% of the variance in work life imbalance could be explained. Gender, age, role conflict, and both sources of social support ($\Delta R^2 = 0,22$; $p \leq 0,05$) were predictive of work life imbalance. In step 3, it can be seen that an additional 3% of the variance in work life imbalance can be explained by making use of the interaction terms. Step 3 further indicates that gender, age, role conflict, and both sources of social support are predictive of work life imbalance.

Additionally, the moderating effect of the interaction between role conflict and social support from the supervisor was also a significant predictor of work/life imbalance. This result suggests that even though role conflict made a direct contribution to the experience of work/life imbalance, the interaction of supervisor support with experienced role conflict explained additional variance.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate the functionality of role conflict and goal clarity in affecting work life imbalance, and whether social support moderates the effect of role conflict and goal clarity on work life imbalance for a group of managers in a South African gold mining company.

Role conflict showed a significant relationship with work/life imbalance. Diraz, Ortlepp and Greyling (2003) suggested that work-family conflict exists when time, strain, or certain behaviours of one role, make it difficult to fulfil the requirements of another role. Thus, role conflict may have an adverse effect on an individual and his or her psychological well-being. When individuals don't have clear boundaries between the roles they are supposed to fill, it could become difficult to maintain the balance between the different roles, and specifically between work and life at home.

When an individual receives social support from colleagues as well as supervisors, he or she should become more aware of their goals and roles in the company. There is evidence that the relationship between social identification and work stress is mediated by perceptions of the social support provided specifically by in-group members of the organisation (Haslam, O'Brien, Jetten, Vormedal, & Penna, 2005). This pattern accords with the central argument that social identification achieves its effects because it is a basis for receiving and benefiting from the support of fellow group members and colleagues – support which, in turn, can serve as a buffer against the adverse effects of stressful situations like role conflict and being unclear about one's goal (Branscombe, Schmitt & Harvey, 1999; Haslam, 2004; Postmes & Branscombe, 2002).

Gender, age, role conflict, and both sources of social support were predictive of work life imbalance. The small number of females precludes the interpretation of the seeming influence of gender in predicting work/life imbalance. Arthur (2004) claims that the ageing working population is a matter of considerable concern, and one which is adding to the pressure of the working population to cope with not only the demands of work, but also with family life and care for the increasing number of elderly. Without well-defined roles and a strong social support system from both supervisors and colleagues, employees are likely to experience an imbalance between life at work and life at home. As a result of role conflict, the employee might be inclined to spend more time in their preferred role (either at work or at home), which may increase the chances for conflict with the other role, and could likely lead to him/her experiencing work/life imbalance.

The moderating effect of the interaction between role conflict and social support from the supervisor was also a significant predictor of work/life imbalance. This result suggests that even though role conflict made a direct contribution to the experience of work/life imbalance, the interaction of supervisor support with experienced role conflict explained additional variance. There appears to be widespread acceptance that there is also a general positive correlation between social support and well-being. In line with previous research (e.g. Aspinwall & Taylor, 1997; Cohen & Wills, 1985; Underwood, 2000) there was also evidence that the level of social support also predicted positive outcomes, as well as less depressed moods experienced by participants. It is also evident that social support has played a prominent role in occupational stress models developed over the last few decades (Kahn & Boysiere, 1992). In these models, stressors are aspects of work environment (e.g., role ambiguity, role conflict) that negatively affect health and disturb an individual's work/life balance and have negative outcomes such as burnout and depression (Jex, Beehr, & Roberts, 1992).

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is clear that balance between the two major domains in people's lives (work and family) can only be achieved via collaboration between workers and management in organizations. These domains share the responsibility for ensuring that individuals do not experience excessive work-family conflict and that all efforts are made to enhance people's work and family lives. Based upon a social identity perspective on work-family relations, Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Collins (2001) predicted that level of involvement in both family and career (from supervisors and colleagues) would moderate the relationships of work-to-family interference (WFI) and withdrawal intentions and behavior.

To achieve a balance between life at work and life at home, the individual needs to assess his/her stressors (those aspects that cause stress) as well as support/resources (which may help with the coping process). Any intervention needs to be based upon an assessment of the extent to which these variables are present and the affect on the person's life. In particular, the employee needs to be sure of his/her work demands and family demands and determine what the impact of these on him/her as person. Along with these, it is also important to recognize available moderators. For example, as illustrated by O' Driscoll, Brough, Kalliath (2004), the extent to which a person has access to appropriate forms and levels of social support (at both work and in the family) can play a critical role in alleviating the negative effects of work-family conflict. Along with others (e.g. Frone, 2003; Grzywacz, 2002) they also suggest that greater effort needs to be expended on research exploring the ways in which work and family experiences contribute positively to each other.

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CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter encompasses conclusions regarding the literature review and the empirical study. The limitations of the study are highlighted and recommendations are made for further studies.

4.1 CONCLUSIONS

In this section, conclusions are drawn in terms of specific theoretical objectives and the results of the empirical studies. Conclusions are discussed separately for the two separate articles.

4.1.1 Article 1: Job insecurity, coping and job satisfaction

4.1.1.1 Conclusions in terms of specific theoretical objectives

The first objective of the first article was to conceptualise coping, job insecurity and job satisfaction from the literature. Subsequently, the following conclusions are drawn in terms of the theoretical objectives.

Individuals may react to stress differently, and their appraisal of the stress will determine the reaction. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) distinguish two forms of appraisals. First the individual will determine the significance of the incident (primary appraisal) and then the individual will evaluate what can be done about it (secondary appraisal). Individuals may act the same way when the threat of job insecurity is perceived. They will firstly ask how a stressor may affect them, and secondly how best to handle it. In line with Edwards (1992) and Edwards and Baglioni (1993, 1999), coping was conceptualised as comprising five possible strategies, a.) Changing the situation - attempting to bring the situation in conjunction with desires; b.) Accommodation - adjusting desires to meet the situation; c.) Devaluation - reducing the importance associated with the discrepancy; e.) Avoidance - directing attention away from the situation; f.) Symptom reduction - improving well-being directly.

Job insecurity has been described as an employee's "expectations about continuity in a job situation" (Davy, Kinicki & Scheck, 1997, p. 323), "concern about the future permanence of the job" (Van Vuuren, 1990, p. 133), and "perception of a potential threat to continuity in his or her current job" (Heany, Israel & House, 1994, p. 1431). When entire job loss is not a threat (quantitative job insecurity), the threat of losing important job features (qualitative job insecurity) may cause the individual to experience constant feelings of uncertainty.

Job satisfaction can be described as an affective or emotional reaction to the job, resulting from the incumbent's comparison of actual outcomes with the required outcomes (Hirshfield, 2000; Locke, 1976). Job satisfaction relates to individuals' perceptions and evaluations of their jobs, while these perceptions are influenced by unique circumstances such as needs, values and expectations. People will, therefore, evaluate their jobs on the basis of factors that they regard as being important to them (Sempane, Rieger, & Roodt, 2002).

4.1.1.2 Conclusions in terms of specific empirical objectives

The second objective for the first article was to investigate the role played by job insecurity in predicting job satisfaction behaviours, and whether coping moderates the stress of job insecurity and improves job satisfaction for a group of managers in a South African gold mining company.

The results of the regression analyses showed that qualitative job insecurity and the coping strategy of Symptom reduction were negatively related. Changing the situation as a coping strategy also acted to moderate the effect of qualitative job insecurity on job satisfaction. Regarding the effects of quantitative job insecurity on job satisfaction, both the coping strategies of Avoidance and Symptom reduction act as moderators between these variables.

4.1.2 Article 2: Role conflict, goal clarity, social support and work/life imbalance

4.1.2.1 Conclusions in terms of specific theoretical objectives

The first objective of the second article was to conceptualise role conflict, goal clarity, social support and work/life imbalance from the literature. The following conclusions are drawn in terms of the theoretical objectives for the same group of managers in a South African gold mining company.

The business world has been studying the effects of role ambiguity for several decades. Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) defined role ambiguity as one or more unclear roles that face the “role incumbent” in terms of the actual tasks or the evaluation of those tasks. The lack of clarity may be due to communication gaps. The literature describes several aspects of role ambiguity that would be applicable in business: goal/expectation ambiguity, process ambiguity, priority ambiguity and behaviour ambiguity (Bauer & Simmons, 2000). Ambiguity or role conflict in these areas eventually prompts concern or stress, particularly when evaluation criteria are unclear. The stress, in turn, decreases effectiveness (Davis, 1998; Fried, Ben-David, Tiegs, Avital, & Yeverchayahu, 1998).

With the current fast-paced life we live in, employees also experience role conflict with what is expected of them in their private lives at home. This, together with the stress that role ambiguity at work brings, might result in work/life imbalance. The individual may find it difficult to distinguish and find a balance between his/her role as employee in the organisation and his/her role at home.

Social support has been cited as a potential alleviating factor in the context of stress appraisals and stress reactions, and it has been suggested that those employees who perceive their access to social support to be satisfactory, are better equipped to deal with stressors such as role conflict (Quick, Quick, Nelson & Hurrell, 1997). Social support from supervisors as well as from colleagues can play an important role in moderating the effect that role conflict and ambiguity have on the balance between life at work and life at home. Support from supervisors and

colleagues can mean a variety of resources that assist employees in their work and daily life, such as task-relevant information or praise. In occupational stress research, it is often the social supports available in the workplace that receive the most attention (Karasek, Triantis, & Chaudhry, 1982).

Regardless of one's personal definition of balance, most people know when they are out of balance: they are constantly tired, feel as if their choices are limited, have minimal control, and are no longer able to manage their lives effectively. Within the past decade or so, the global workplace has seen increased numbers of working women, dual-career and single-parent families, increased numbers of employees with eldercare responsibilities, a decrease in job security, and a blurring of work-family boundaries due to technological change (Brown, 2004; Duxbury & Higgins, 2001, 2003; Parker & Arthur, 2004). As many individuals juggle several significant life roles (e.g., parent, spouse, child, worker, student, community member), role conflict has contributed to work-life imbalance.

4.1.2.2 Conclusions in terms of specific empirical objectives

The second objective for the first article was to investigate the roles played by goal clarity and role conflict in predicting work/life imbalance, and whether social support moderates the stress of role conflict and improves work/life imbalance for a group of managers in a South African gold mining company.

The results of the regression analyses showed that role conflict and both sources of social support were predictive of work life imbalance. Individuals that experience role conflict and receive no social support from supervisors or colleagues are more likely to experience work/life imbalance. The moderating effect of the interaction between role conflict and social support from the supervisor was also a significant predictor of work/life imbalance.

4.2 LIMITATIONS

A limitation was the language used in the measuring instruments. The majority of respondents in this study were Afrikaans-speaking (68.40%) and the rest of the other national South African languages 15,1 percent. The fact that only an English version of the measuring instruments was used was indeed a language barrier to respondents, which could have influenced the results.

Gender was also unevenly distributed, which could skew the interpretations of these findings. Males represented 91,70% of the population.

The specific research design (cross-sectional) was also a limitation in the present study. This means that very little is known about the long-term effects of job insecurity or role conflict and goal clarity (Sverke & Hellgren, 2002).

Further analysis of symptom reduction as a coping mechanism is also warranted. Does this factor measure actual reduction of symptoms (vs. the individual's perceptions) and, if it does, how effectively will it reduce the symptoms and will this have a temporary or permanent effect? We could also ask whether self-reported questionnaires are even justifiable for something as complex as coping skills.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for the organisations and for future research are made in this section.

4.3.1 Recommendations for the organisation

Based on the results obtained in this study, organisations can implement the following recommendations to reduce the effect of job insecurity on employees' job satisfaction:

- Employees should be informed about their current situation in the company on a continual basis.
- Management need to inform employees of changes in the mining industry that will have a direct effect on their positions in the company.
- Employees should be tasked specifically to identify their role in terms of expectations and goals for themselves and the company.
- Work wellness programmes should be implemented to provide the correct balance between work life and home life for employees with high demands from both.
- Social support networks between colleagues, as well as from supervisors, should be established to offer support to employees in uncertain circumstances.

4.3.2 Recommendations for future research

Based on the results obtained in this study the following recommendations are made with regard to future research:

- Further analysis of symptom reduction as a coping mechanism is warranted.

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