

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

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COMMENTS

The reader should keep the following in mind:

- The editorial style as well as the references referred to in this mini-dissertation follow the format prescribed by the Publication Manual (4th edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA). This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, to use the APA style in all scientific documents as from January 1999.
- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article. The editorial style specified by the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology (which agrees largely with the APA style) is used, but the APA guidelines were followed in constructing tables.

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ABSTRACT

Title: A phenomenological study on the experience of work-personal life interaction in a sample of Afrikaans speaking police officers

Key terms: Work-personal life interaction, experiencing work and personal life, domains, antecedents, consequences, strategies, Afrikaans speaking, police officers, SAPS

Effectiveness, productivity and motivation of police members are important factors that contribute to a country's stability, economic growth and development. As such, understanding experiences that police members might have with regard to the relationship between their work and personal life is the main focus area in this study.

The objectives of this study were to determine how Afrikaans speaking police members experience work-personal life interaction, and secondly, to determine the main dimensions in the lives of Afrikaans speaking police members that is in interaction with each other, and thirdly, to determine the major antecedents and consequences of work-personal life for Afrikaans speaking police members, and fourthly, to determine which strategies Afrikaans speaking police members use to deal with work-personal life issues. Unstructured interviews were conducted with ten males and females in the police stations based in the Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp areas. Qualitative interviews based on the phenomenological paradigm, were used to determine police officers perception regarding work and personal life interaction. A Content analysis was used to analyse, quantify and interpret the research data.

Police members reported experiencing their work as stressful, in that it interfered negatively with their lives and also had certain health implications. They further experienced some aspects in their personal lives (e.g., household duties, family responsibilities) interfering with their work. Furthermore, they reported using certain strategies (e.g., communication, support from a spouse) as a way of bettering the interaction between their work and personal lives.

Recommendations for future research were made.

OPSOMMING

Onderwerp: 'n Fenomenologiese studie oor die ervaring van werk-persoonlike lewens interaksie in 'n steekproef van Afrikaans sprekende polisie offisiere

Sleutelterme: Werk-lewe interaksie, ervaring van werk en persoonlike lewe, oorsake, gevolge, strategieë, Afrikaans sprekende, polisie, SAPS

Doeltreffendheid, produktiwiteit en motivering van polisie lede is belangrike faktore wat bydra tot 'n land se stabiliteit, ekonomiese groei en ontwikkeling. Begrip vir die ervaring wat polisie lede mag hê met betrekking tot die verhouding tussen hulle werk en persoonlike lewe is die hoof fokusgebied in die studie.

Die doelstellings van die studie was om werk-persoonlike lewens interaksie by Afrikaans sprekende polisie lede te bepaal, en tweedens, om die hoof dimensies in die lewens van Afrikaans sprekende polisie lede wat in interaksie met mekaar is te bepaal, en derdens, om die hoof voorgeskiedenis en gevolge van werk-persoonlike lewens van Afrikaans sprekende polisie lede te bepaal, en vierdens, om te bepaal watter strategie Afrikaans sprekende polisie lede gebruik om werk-persoonlike lewens kwessies te hanteer. Ongestruktureerde onderhoude is gevoer met tien manlike en vroulike offisiere wat in die Potchefstroom en Klerksdorp areas gestasioneer is. Kwalitatiewe onderhoude gebaseer op die fenomenologiese paradigma om polisie lede se belewing van werk en persoonlike lewe interaksie te bepaal. 'n Inhoudsanalise is gebruik om die navorsingsdata te analiseer, te kwantifiseer en te interpreteer.

Polisie lede het gerapporteer dat hulle hul werk as stressvol ervaar aangesien dit negatief inmeng met hulle huislike lewe en ook sekere gesondheidsimplikasies het. Hulle het ook ervaar dat sekere aspekte van hulle persoonlike lewe (b.v., huishoudelike pligte, familie verantwoordelikhede) inmeng met hulle werk. Verder het hulle ook gerapporteer dat hulle sekere strategieë gebruik (b.v., kommunikasie, ondersteuning van 'n wederhelf) gebruik as 'n manier om die interaksie tussen hulle werk en persoonlike lewe te verbeter.

Aanbevelings vir toekomstige navorsing is aan die hand gedoen.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This mini-dissertation focuses on how Afrikaans speaking police officers in the North West Province experience work-personal life interaction. In this chapter the problem statement is discussed. This is followed by the research objectives and specific objectives. The research design and research method is explained, which is then followed by the chapter summary and the division of chapters.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Since 1993, the traditional view of the South African Police Service (SAPS) has changed from that of crime fighters to that of community policing. The movement from the traditional crime-fighting model to a community based model of policing in South Africa brings about change in the definition of policing. Whereas it used to be a "police force" it is now a "police service" (Kleyn, Rothmann, & Jackson, 2004). According to Barlow and Barlow (1999, pp. 14–15), an effective and efficient police service is important for at least two reasons. Firstly, it is important for security and maintaining social order, which provides the business confidence necessary for owners of capital to invest and the cycle to begin. Secondly, it is important so that the rule of law can prevail; otherwise our society will not only lack order, but also the environment essential to society and economic progress.

The productiveness, motivation and health of a police service are regarded as important factors contributing to a country's stability, economic growth and development (Rothmann & Van Rensburg, 2002). However, police work has been described as one of the most stressful occupations (Alexander, 1999; Anshel, 2000; Anson, Johnson, & Anson, 1997; Paton & Violanti, 1999). Factors such as excessive paperwork, threats of violence, the militaristic nature of policing itself, and having to deal with a bureaucratic organisational structure are among the job stressors that police work includes. These factors could have a profound effect on the interaction between work and personal life, in that they could affect employees' ability to do their work and also meet their family responsibilities (Bailyn & Harrington, 2004). As a result, decreased motivation and creativity, resulting from lack of such interaction may

actually hinder organisational effectiveness (Fletcher & Bailyn, 1996). Therefore, it seems necessary to investigate how police officers experience the interaction between their work and personal lives.

Views on work and personal life have evolved and developed during the last few decades. Initially, writers viewed work and personal life as two conflicting domains (that is, work conflicts with family and family conflicts with work). However, researchers came to realise that work and personal life could also influence each other in a positive way. Therefore, in order to assist an individual to live in an optimal way, both domains (work and personal life) should be in harmony with each other and influence each other in a positive way.

Changes in the economic and political climate, as well as social changes, suggest that the integration between these two domains will become more difficult and that work-family issues will become increasingly important. For instance, the employment relations have changed, altering the type of work that people do, when they work and how much they work (Rothmann, 2003). Furthermore, technological and telecommunication advancements have made it possible to work longer hours and perform job tasks in a variety of locations. Another fact that has become recognised (particularly in South Africa) is the high unemployment rate, which has become problematic for employees, where they feel the need to work harder and longer hours in response to uncertain feelings about their future security. In addition, there has been an increase in working women, dual-career couples, single parent households, and fathers who are actively involved in parenting (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). As a result, boundaries between work and home has become blurred, making it a pressing concern for women, men, families and organisations.

Investigating work-life interaction (WLI) seems to be important, since the consequences associated with poor interaction between the two domains could be detrimental for both the individual and the organisation. For instance, various studies showed that a high proportion of employed workers, and particularly employed parents, have serious difficulty in combining obligations in the work domain with domestic obligations (Bond et al., 1998; Galinsky, Bond, & Friedman, 1993; Geurts & Demerouti, 2003). In addition, the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has identified work-family conflict as one of the 10 major stressors in the workplace (Kelloway, Gttlieb, & Barham, 1999). Furthermore, poor interaction between work and home is also associated with various

negative outcomes, including organisational commitment and intentions to quit (turnover) (Jamal, 1981), job stress and burnout (Kandonlin, 1993), low levels of job performance and prevalence of accidents (Monk & Folkard, 1985). Therefore, work-family issues affect company competitiveness and are therefore not only a problem for employees, but also pose a challenge for organisations (Hall & Marvis, 1995). This is also true for police officers as they face tremendous stress at work and in addition to work stress, has to cater for their families' responsibility which involves added duties. Furthermore, the lack of proper strategies to deal with work-life balance (WLB) (whether at work or home) can have an undue impact on the organisations effectiveness as it costs money, time and resources when employee's life are not in balance.

It seems clear that the consequences of poor interaction between work and personal life could have negative implications for individual and organisational functioning. Unfortunately, work-family issues hardly cause some employees to raise an eyebrow. Public policy and workplaces largely fail to address the issue, even though it is generally agreed that a good work/non-work balance is of paramount importance for the economic viability of organisations and for the welfare of families (Barnett, 1998).

Although research regarding work-family integration is conducted in South Africa, there are several limitations that influence an accurate and in-depth understanding of this phenomenon. Firstly, there are a relative scarce amount of scientifically sound studies regarding work-home interaction. Most of the studies have serious limitations, including poorly designed studies, a lack of sophisticated statistical analysis and poorly controlled studies. Furthermore, some of the scales used had poor reliability coefficients and none of the measuring instruments were validated for different demographical groups (especially different language and cultural groups) (Mostert, 2006). In addition, international models and measuring instruments are used to conduct WLI research although South Africa differs in many ways from other countries, implicating that South African employees could experience WLI in different ways. Furthermore, most research focused on work-family and work-home interaction. It is possible that other dimensions in life, such as spiritual dimensions, self-actualisation, etc, could interact with work. There could also be different antecedents and consequences of WLI in South Africa.

Since South Africa is a multi-cultural country, research should focus on how different languages experience WLI. Because cultures are diverse, they could experience WLI in different ways. For instance, Afrikaans speaking groups might have different ways of experiencing WLI than other language groups. Afrikaans speaking people could be more prominent for individualism (in terms of family issues), while other language groups (e.g., Setswana, Xhosa, Zulu) could be more prominent of community or society (Schwartz, 1994). Therefore, the meaning that different language groups in South Africa attach to WLI may be different, because of the way in which they embrace their different cultures, in terms of their home situations and the manner in which they conduct their lives.

Finally, as South Africa is a multicultural society and the SAPS employs individuals of diverse cultural backgrounds (Storm & Rothmann, 2003), it is imperative to understand the meaning and experiences that these diverse individuals attach to WLI. This study will focus on how Afrikaans speaking police officers in the North West Province experience WLI.

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

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

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives are divided into a general and specific objectives.

1.2.1 General objective

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

1.2.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives are:

- To determine how Afrikaans speaking police officers experience WLI.
- To determine the main dimensions in the lives of Afrikaans speaking police officers that is in interaction with each other.
- To determine the major antecedents and consequences of WLI for Afrikaans speaking police officers.
- To determine which strategies Afrikaans speaking police officers use to deal with WLI issues.

1.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study can be classified as qualitative research from a phenomenological approach. In this approach, the researcher is interested in the meaning a person attributes to his or her relationships. The person's cognitive experience must be understood and defined because it is only through this that the true essence of the person can be realised.

The aim of this research design is to understand from the phenomenological point of view the experience of work–personal life interaction in a sample of Afrikaans speaking police officers from the SAPS in the North West Province (Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp).

1.4 RESEARCH METHOD

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

1.4.1 Literature review

The literature review focuses on work–life interaction in broad. The focus is on a brief history of WLI, why it is important to investigate this phenomenon and major limitations in the field, specifically in the South African context.

1.4.2 Empirical study

The empirical study consists of the participants and procedure, data collection, data analysis and ethical aspects that should be considered.

1.4.3 Participants and procedure

The participants are Afrikaans speaking police officials in different positions (ranking order) within the SAPS in the North West province (Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp). The population is stratified in terms of language (Afrikaans), however, other factors such as rank, marital status and parental status were controlled for. A non-probability purposive voluntary sample was taken from the population. Interviews were held with participants until the information provided has saturated.

A letter requesting permission of participation to conduct research was given to the Area Commissioner of the North West Province within the SAPS. This letter requested permission to conduct the research in the stations based in Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp areas as well as for the person working within any of the departments of Human Resources to act and assist the researcher as an inter–mediator in the research. The role of the inter–mediator was to identify employees who were willing to participate in the research, as well as provision of the names, contact details and the language group of the participants. The selection criteria for employees willing to participate included the following:

- Employees living in the North West Province (Potchefstroom and Klersdorp).
- Employees working in the SAPS.
- Employees who are Afrikaans speaking.
- Employees working within the SAPS for at least two or more years.

- Employees willing to participate in the research (and will give written informed consent) after having been informed about the purpose and procedure of the research.
- Employees that are able to understand and communicate in Afrikaans and are prepared to have a tape-recorded interview with the researcher.

1.4.5 Data collection

1.4.5.1 Interviews

The measuring instrument used in this research was an unstructured interview, based on the phenomenological paradigm. With unstructured interviews, the researcher studied the phenomenon without predetermined expectations of categories and tried to understand the data from the perspective of the participant. The researcher had two or three predetermined questions on an interview schedule, but the interview was guided by the schedule rather than dictated by it. The participant shared more closely in the direction the interview took and he or she could introduce an issue the researcher had not thought of. The interviews were tape recorded (where the use of the tape recorder is included in the consent form and verbally explained to the participants prior to the commencement of the interview), and field notes were taken with every interview. The non-verbal response technique SOLER, (i.e., S-face squarely, O-open body posture, L-lean slightly forward, E-eye contact, R-relatively relaxed) was used during the interviews. Other interview techniques (communication) were also used during the interviews and include the following:

- **Paraphrasing:** this involved a verbal response in which the researcher enhanced meaning by stating the participant's words in another form with the same meaning;
- **Minimal verbal response:** a verbal response that correlated with occasional nodding, e.g., "mm- mm, yes, I see", to show the participant that the researcher was listening;
- **Summarising:** involved summarising the participant's ideas, thoughts and feelings verbalised during the interview, to show that the researcher understood what the participant was saying, which in turn stimulated the participant to give more information;
- **Probing:** it involved deepening the response to a question that the researcher posed to the participant, who increased the richness of the data that was being obtained and

gave cues to the participant about the level of response that is desired (e.g., “Tell me more of what you said...);

- **Reflecting:** reflected back on something important that the person said in order to get him or her to expand on that idea e.g., “So, you feel... in that...”;
- **Clarification:** this embraced the technique that was used to get clarity on unclear statements, e.g., “Could you tell me more about...”, “You seem to be saying...”.

The interviews were conducted at the location the participant felt most comfortable. Attention was given to the climate and atmosphere of the room, where there were no distractions. A workshop was held by an expert (with expertise in qualitative research), where the researcher received training in interviewing skills and techniques that were used during interviews. The interviews were formal and non-directive, with three central questions:

- “You have a work life and a personal life. Can you please tell me how you experience the interaction between your work, and all facets of your personal life?”
- “What are the causes and consequences of the interaction between your work and personal life?”
- “What strategies do you use to deal with the interaction between your work and personal life?”

1.4.5.2 Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted prior to the initial interviews in the research. With the pilot study, interview schedules conducted were evaluated by experts (with expertise in qualitative research) for appropriateness. During the training (workshops), questions that were not cleared were refined and adjusted accordingly with the help of experts. The pilot study was conducted with willing participants within the SAPS. The goal and the procedure of the research and interview were verbally explained to the participants prior to the interviews. A letter of the procedure of the interview and a consent form were given to the participants prior to the interview.

1.4.5.3 Field notes

Field notes were taken during the interview. Field notes are, a written account of the things the researcher hears, sees experiences and thinks about in the course of the interview. This includes the manner in which the participants acts or reacts when answering the questions as well as their behaviour during the interview (e.g., being distant when asked questions, long pauses in between the conversation, starring outside the window, looking at space or upwards). Other notes reflected on what the participants said during the interview, to compensate the researcher's listening skills when reflecting, summarising, and clarifying on what the participant said.

1.4.5.4 Trustworthiness

Guba's model for qualitative research (Guba, 1981; Krefting, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was applied in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. Attention was given to the principles of credibility (checking the truth value of the findings), by means of field notes, triangulation, peer examination and independent coding; transferability (ensuring applicability of the findings), through comparison of sufficient descriptive data, as well as dense description of the data; dependability (ensuring consistency of the findings), by means of an audit, keeping of the raw material, giving a full description of the research method, applying the same procedure throughout.

1.4.6 Data analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and checked by two independent researchers. Content analysis was used to analyse, quantify and interpret the research data systematically and objectively. The interviewer and an expert in qualitative research carried out the content analysis jointly. The researcher had background knowledge of WLI, but not on the participants. The content analysis involved the following five steps:

- The first step was to define the universe of content that was analysed and to categorise the content. The researcher read the entire description to get a sense of the whole.

- The researcher then identified individual units (themes). A theme is a sentence, i.e., a proposition about something.
- The researcher then eliminated redundancy in the units and clarified the meaning of the remaining units by relating them to each other and to the whole.
- The researcher then reflected on the given units, and transformed the meaning from concrete language into the language or concept of science. The units were quantified by assigning numbers to the objects of the content analysis. The numbers of the participants who might mention each specific theme were counted. Then the themes were ranked, based on the frequency by which they were mentioned by different participants.
- The researcher then integrated the knowledge gained into a descriptive structure. The exact words of the participants were used as proof, and themes were confirmed with the literature references. These themes were checked and verified by a WLI expert and two industrial psychologists to confirm or criticise.

1.4.7 Ethical aspects

Ethical aspects that were considered on the part of the researcher in terms of the code of ethics involved, firstly, ensuring that the researcher is qualified and competent to undertake a particular research project. Secondly, ensuring the researchers' integrity in terms of honesty, fairness and respect towards others. Thirdly ensuring that the researcher upholds the standards of his/her profession and accept responsibility for his/her actions. Fourthly, ensuring that the researcher respects the rights and dignity of others. Lastly ensuring that the welfare of others is the major concern to the researcher.

Ethical aspects that were considered on the part of the researcher to the participants' rights included the following:

- *Informed consent.* The researcher ensured that participants voluntarily agreed to take part in the research. The participants were informed that they are free to decline to take part and may withdraw at any point in the research process. The participants were also informed in advance regarding any discomforts and embarrassments that

might be involved in the research (in such instances, contact details of a referral person (psychologists) were made available to participants.

- *Confidentiality.* Confidentiality (privacy) of the participants in this research was respected. The anonymity of their participation in the research was communicated and explained to them prior to the interviews. The information they provide is destroyed after the tapes were transcribed and their names remained anonymous.
- *Deception.* Participants were not provided with erroneous information and information was not withheld from them. They were fully informed with the goal of the research and interviews, the procedure thereof, the use of tape recorder and field notes and the consent form which gave them the right to withdraw from participation (Struwig & Stead, 2001).

1.5 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

In chapter 2, work-personal life interaction is discussed in a form of a research article and includes the domains, antecedents, consequences and strategies that the SAPS use to overcome issues pertaining to WLI problems. Chapter 3 deals with the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of this research

1.6. CHAPTER SUMMARY

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

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**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY ON THE EXPERIENCE OF WORK-
PERSONAL LIFE INTERACTION IN A SAMPLE OF AFRIKAANS SPEAKING
POLICE OFFICERS**

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the experiences of work-personal life interaction among Afrikaans speaking police officers. Unstructured interviews were conducted with ten males and females in the police stations based in the Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp areas. Qualitative interviews based on the phenomenological paradigm, were used to determine police officers perception regarding work and personal life interaction. A Content analysis was used to analyse, quantify and interpret the research data. Police officers reported experiencing their work as stressful, in that it interfered negatively with their lives and also had certain health implications. They further experienced some aspects in their personal lives (e.g., household duties, family responsibilities.) interfering with their work. Furthermore, they reported using certain strategies (e.g., communication, support from a spouse.) as a way of bettering the interaction between their work and personal lives.

OPSOMMING

Die doel van hierdie studie is om ondersoek in te stel na die werk-persoonlike lewens interaksie by Afrikaans sprekende polissie offisiere. Ongestruktureerde onderhoude is gevoer met tien manlike en vroulike offisiere wat in die Potchefstroom en Klerksdorp areas gestasioneer is. Kwalitatiewe onderhoude gebaseer op die fenomenologiese paradigma om polisie offisiere se belewing van werk en persoonlike lewe interaksie te bepaal. 'n Inhoudsanalise is gebruik om die navorsingsdata te analiseer, te kwantifiseer en te interpreteer. Polisie offisiere het gerapporteer dat hulle hul werk as stressvol ervaar aangesien dit negatief inmeng met hulle huislike lewe en ook sekere gesondheidsimplikasies het. Hulle het ook ervaar dat sekere aspekte van hulle persoonlike lewe (b.v., huishoudelike pligte, en familie verantwoordelikhede.) inmeng met hulle werk. Verder het hulle ook gerapporteer dat hulle sekere strategieë gebruik (b.v., kommunikasie, en ondersteuning van 'n wederhelf.) gebruik as 'n manier om die interaksie tussen hulle werk en persoonlike lewe te verbeter.

In comparison with other occupations, police work has been identified as one of society's most stressful occupations (Alexander, 1999; Anshel, 2000). As such, police officers are known to face some of society's most serious problems, where they are often working in dangerous settings where it is expected to react quickly and correctly. In addition, they have to adapt to an occupation, which at any moment may bring the threat of death, while other extended periods bring routine and boredom. They are also expected to maintain control in chaotic situations and to resolve serious conflicts among people with lifestyles substantially different than their own. Often they become deeply immersed in situations involving injustice, public apathy, conflicting roles, injuries, and fatalities (Kelley, 2004). Yet, it is expected of police officers to be productive, effective and efficient in carrying out their work, and to make critical decisions and be independent problem solvers simultaneously (Kelley, 2004).

Work-life interaction (WLI) represents two of the most central realms of adult life and has been defined as "a form of interrole conflict in which role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). Therefore, WLI seems to be an important aspect to consider, particularly among members of the South African Police Service (SAPS). According to Barlow and Barlow (1999), an effective and efficient police service is important to ensure that law and order can prevail, not only for the safety of the community, but also in order to sustain an environment essential for social and economic progress. Therefore, the productiveness, motivation and health of a police service are regarded as important factors contributing to a country's stability, economic growth and development (Rothmann & Van Rensburg, 2002). However, several factors inherent to the nature of the job (e.g., excessive paperwork, threats of violence, the militaristic nature of policing itself, having to deal with a bureaucratic organisational structure) could have a profound effect on the interaction between work and personal life, in that they could affect employees' ability to do their work and also meet their family responsibilities (Bailyn & Harrington, 2004). As a result, decreased motivation and creativity, resulting from lack of such interaction, may actually hinder organisational effectiveness (Fletcher & Bailyn, 1996).

Issues regarding work-life interaction seem to be important in many countries. For instance in Europe, political pressure for legislation to promote work-life balance has come from the European Commission as part of the European Employment Strategy, which aims to

modernise and reform European labour markets (Houston, 2005). With European Social Funding (ESF), key priorities in the first six years of the 21st century were to prevent the drift into long-term unemployment, reintegrate marginalised groups into the economy and society, and help in the transition towards the knowledge-based economy (Houston, 2005). In the UK, the 2001 the Labour Party Manifest made commitments to "fair and flexible work" and to increase maternity leave and introduce statutory paternity pay. As a consequence, rights to flexible work for parents and additional maternity leave for mothers were implemented in 2003 (Houston, 2005).

In order to monitor attitudes, demand and uptake of work-life balance policies, and to examine the impact of such policies on business, a baseline study of both employers and employees was conducted in 2000 (WLB1, Hogarth, Hasluck, Pierre, Winterbottom, & Vivan, 2000) and was followed up in 2003 (WLB2, Woodland, Simmonds, Thornby, Fitzgerald, & McGee, 2003; Stevens, Brown, & Lee, 2004). Furthermore, work and family researchers have begun to advocate the development and implementation of family-supportive programmes (FSP) by work organisations (e.g., Friedman, 1990; Friedman & Galinsky, 1992; Kraut, 1990; Lewis, 1992; Thompson, Thomas, & Maier, 1992). The major programmes discussed in the work-family literature are flexitime, compressed working weeks, job sharing, child-care assistance, work at home, and reduced working hours (e.g., Friedman, 1990; Friedman & Galinsky, 1992; Goodstein, 1994; Lewis, 1992; Morgan & Milliken, 1992; Paris, 1990; Thompson, Thomas, & Maier, 1992).

It is clear that a large amount of work is covered in other countries regarding work-life interaction research, practices and organisational policies. Although research regarding work-life interaction is conducted in South Africa, there are several limitations that influence an accurate and in-depth understanding of this phenomenon. Firstly, there are a relative scarce amount of scientifically sound studies regarding work-home interaction. Most of the studies have serious limitations, including poorly designed studies, a lack of sophisticated statistical analysis and poorly controlled studies. Furthermore, most of the scales used had poor reliability coefficients. None of the scales were validated for different demographical groups (especially for different language and cultural groups (Mostert, 2006). In addition, international models and measuring instruments are used to conduct WLI research in South Africa. However, South Africa differs in many ways from other countries, which could lead to employees in South Africa experiencing WLI in different ways. Furthermore, most

research focused on work–family and work–home interaction. It is possible that other dimensions in life could also be in interaction with work (e.g., spiritual dimensions, self-actualisation, etc.). There could also be different antecedents and consequences in South Africa.

It is imperative to understand the meaning and experiences that police officers attach to WLI, as the poor interaction between work and personal life could have negative implications for individual and organisational functioning. Furthermore, public policies, practices and legislation need to address issues regarding WLI in organisations and initiate and implement strategies to deal with it better. Without understanding this phenomenon (WLI) within the South African context, organisations might lose large amounts of money as WLI issues proved to have financial implications for organisations (Houston, 2005; Lewis & Cooper, 2005).

Because a healthy and motivated police force is so important for a country like South Africa, it seems necessary to investigate how police officers experience the interaction between their work and personal lives. The objectives of this study were therefore 1) to determine how Afrikaans speaking police officers experience WLI; 2) to determine the main dimensions in the lives of Afrikaans speaking police officers that are in interaction with each other; 3) to determine the major antecedents and consequences of WLI for Afrikaans speaking police officers; and 4) to determine which strategies Afrikaans speaking police officers use to deal with WLI issues.

Theoretical background

More recently, the interaction between work and family roles has captured the interest of a growing number of work and family researchers. This focus has been fuelled by several demographic changes suggesting that the interaction between these two domains will become more difficult and that work–family issues will become increasingly important (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). For instance, there has been an increase in working women, dual-career couples, single parent households, and fathers who are actively involved in parenting (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). Furthermore, the employment relations have changed, altering the type of work that people do, when they work and how much they work (Rothmann, 2003). In addition, advances in technology have made it possible to work twenty-four hours a

day, seven days a week (e.g., the use of e-mail, cell phones, lap top computers, etc. (Burke, 2004).

Another fact that has become recognised (particularly in South Africa) is the high unemployment rate, which has become problematic for employees, where they feel the need to work harder and longer hours in response to uncertain feelings about their future security. These demographic and structural changes in the workforce and family structure have not only affected work and family roles and their interrelation (e.g., Bond, Galinsky, & Swanberg, 1998; Ferber, O'Farrell, & Allen, 1991), but also have a significant impact on individual behaviour in an organisational setting, and ultimately on organisational functioning itself (Greenhaus, 1988; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 1999).

Various possible antecedents and consequences of the interaction between work and family (negative and positive) have been found in different studies (e.g., Demerouti & Geurts, 2004; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). Work-family conflict has been shown to have an unfavourable relation with a variety of variables associated with employees work life, home life and general health and well-being. Greater health risks were found for working parents as well as lowered performance in the parental role, lowered productivity at work, less life satisfaction, anxiety, and work stress (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kelly & Voydanoff, 1985; Small & Riley, 1990; Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998).

Previous research also indicate that work-family conflict correlates to lower overall job satisfaction (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998) and other negative dispositions, such as emotional exhaustion (Boles, Johnston, & Hair, 1997) and greater propensity to leave a position (Good, Sisler, & Gentry, 1988). On the other hand, family-work conflict occurs when the role pressures from the family domain are incompatible with the work domain, influencing it in a negative way (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Therefore, family and the conflict that transpires when family responsibilities conflict with an individual's work-related duties is also important to consider.

Recently, organisational research has focused on work-family conflict rather than family-work conflict (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Research suggests that work-family conflict has negative consequences and has been linked with workplace perceptions and attitudes. Burke (1994, 1993, 1989) and, more recently, Finn (2000) have reported that work-family conflict is

an important variable in determining work attitudes as well as emotional and physical well-being of police officers. The findings of their studies revealed a consistent correlation between work-family conflict and stress. There may also be a direct connection between work-family conflict and job satisfaction.

In terms of family-work conflict, several studies have reported the relationships between this construct and other work-related attitudes and/or behaviours. For example, Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian, (1996) discovered that both work-family and family-work conflicts are associated with work consequences such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction and intention to leave the organisation. Other research augments the view that family-work conflict is linked to workplace consequences in addition to non-work attitudes and behaviours (Higgins & Duxbury, 1992). Generally, work-family conflict appears to be more strongly related to job-related attitudes such as job satisfaction, job distress and turnover, while family-work conflict is more strongly related to attitudes such as life satisfaction (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Frone et al., 1992).

Few studies address factors that may promote positive interaction (also referred to as facilitation or positive spillover) between work and family. However, Grzywacz and Marks (2000) showed that the impact of family life on working life is more often evaluated positively than negatively. Furthermore, a recent set of concepts represents positive spillover between work and family, such as resource enhancement (Kirchmeyer, 1992a) and work-family success and balance (Milkie & Peltola, 1999; Moen & Yu, 1999). Moreover, participating in multiple roles is also likely to be associated with extra resources (e.g., social contacts, income), skills and opportunities that might improve the positive spillover in each domain of WLI (Frone 2003; Geurts & Demerouti, 2003; Geurts, Taris, Demerouti, Dikkers, & Kompier, 2002; Geurts, Taris, Kompier, Dikkers, Van Hooff, & Kinnunen, 2004).

It seems clear that WLI (negative or positive) has an impact on individuals and organisation. However, such antecedents, consequences and domains of work-life interaction could be different in a country such as South Africa. For instance, Afrikaans speaking groups might have different ways of experiencing WLI than other cultural groups (e.g., Tswana, Xhosa or Zulu speaking groups). For example, Afrikaans speaking people could be more prominent for individualism (in terms of family issues), while African groups for example, could be more

prominent of collectivism. According to Triandis et al. (1986) and Hermans and Kempen (1998), individualism is one of the dimensions of cultural variations. Schwartz (1994) defines individualism as “a preference for a loosely knit social framework in society in which individuals are supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate families”. In addition, Triandis et al. (1986) view individualists as people sharing only with their immediate nuclear family, are less willing to sub-ordinate their personal goals to those of collectives, are willing to confront members of their in-groups, feel personally responsible for their success and failures, and experience some separation and distance from their in-groups. On the other hand, Schwartz (1994) defines collectivism as “a preference for a highly knit social framework in which individuals can expect their relatives, clan or other in-group members to look after them, in exchange for unquestioning loyalty”. The emphasis is on the fact that collectivism involves the culture value type that includes values that express concern for the welfare of others and harmony with nature, social justice, equality and protecting the environment.

In the light of this background, the possibility seems clear that WLI for different language groups in South Africa may be different and influenced by the way that they embrace their cultures in terms of their home situations and the manner in which they conduct their lives. This study seems to be an important initiative in this regard and, for a start, will focus in detail on the experiences of one cultural group, namely Afrikaans speaking police members.

METHOD

Research design

This study can be classified as qualitative research from a phenomenological approach. In this approach, the researcher is interested in the meaning a person attributes to his or her relationships. The person’s cognitive experience must be understood and defined because it is only through this that the true essence of the person can be realised.

Participants

A non-probability purposive voluntary sample was taken from the population. The participants were Afrikaans speaking police officials in different positions (ranking order)

within the SAPS in the North-West province (Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp area). Although the population was not stratified, an effort was made to ensure variation of employees who were in different ranks and to include employees who are married vs. employees who are single, as well as employees who have (young) children vs. employees who have no or much older (18+ years) children. Interviews were held with participants until the information provided had saturated. Characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Characteristics of participants (N = 10)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Males	7	70,0
	Females	3	30,0
Age	20-29 years	1	10,0
	30-39 years	5	50,0
	40-49 years	3	30,0
	50-59 years	1	10,0
Race	White	8	80,0
	Coloured	2	20,0
Qualifications	Grade 10	1	10,0
	Grade 12	5	50,0
	Technical Diploma	3	30,0
	Technical College	1	10,0
Position	Official	8	80,0
	Officer	1	10,0
	Civilian personnel	1	10,0
Marital status	Married	9	90,0
	Single	1	10,0
Experience	2-9 years	1	10,0
	10-19 years	5	50,0
	20-29 years	3	30,0
	30-39 Years	1	10,0

According to Table 1, the total number of participants consisted of 70, 0% males and 30, 0% females of which 80% were White and 20% were Coloured. With regard to marital status, 1 (10%) of the participants was not married (either single or divorced) and 9 (90%) of the participants were married. A total of 6 (60%) of the participants possessed a secondary educational qualification (Grade 12 or lower), while 4 (40%) possessed a tertiary education qualification. With regard to position, 8 (80%) of the participants were officials, 1 (10%) of the participants was an officer, while 1 (10%) was a civilian personnel. All the participants were between the ages of 20 to 59 years old.

Research procedure

A letter requesting permission of participation to conduct research was given to the Area Commissioner of the North West Province within the SAPS. This letter requested permission to conduct the research in the stations based in the Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp areas and to identify a person working within any of the departments of Human Resources to act and assist as an inter-mediator in the research. The role of the inter-mediator was to identify employees who were willing to participate in the research, as well as to provide the names, contact details and the language group of the participants. The selection criteria for employees willing to participate included 1) employees living in the North West Province (Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp); 2) employees working in the SAPS; 3) employees who speaks Afrikaans; 4) employees who worked in the SAPS for at least two or more years; 5) employees willing to participate in the study (and who gave an informed written consent) after having been informed about the purpose and procedure of the research; and 6) employees who were able to understand and communicate in Afrikaans and were prepared to have a tape-recorded interview with the researcher.

Data collection

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

Pilot study

A pilot study was conducted prior to the initial interviews in the study. With the pilot study, interview schedules conducted were evaluated by experts (with expertise in qualitative research) for appropriateness. During the training (workshops), questions that were not cleared were refined and adjusted accordingly. The pilot study was conducted with four willing participants within the SAPS. Prior to the interview, the goal and the procedure of the study and interview were verbally explained to the participants and a letter explaining the procedure and a consent form were given to the participants.

Interviews

The measuring instrument used in this study was an unstructured interview, based on the phenomenological paradigm. With unstructured interviews, the researcher studied the phenomenon without predetermined expectations of categories and tries to understand the data from the perspective of the participant. The researcher had two or three predetermined questions on an interview schedule, but the interview was guided by the schedule rather than dictated by it. During the interview, the participant shared more closely in the direction the interview took and he or she could introduce an issue the researcher had not thought of. The interviews were tape recorded (where the use of the tape recorder is included in the consent form and verbally explained to the participants prior to the commencement of the interview), and field notes were taken with every interview.

The non-verbal response technique SOLER, (i.e., face squarely, open body posture, lean slightly forward, eye contact, relatively relaxed) was used during the interviews. Other interview techniques (communication) were also used during the interviews and included paraphrasing, minimal verbal response, summarising, probing, reflecting and clarification.

The interviews were conducted at the location the participant felt most comfortable. Attention was given to the climate and atmosphere of the room, where there were no distractions. The interviews were formal and non-directive, with three central questions: "You have a work life and a personal life. Can you please tell me how you experience the interaction between your work, and all facets of your personal life?"; "What are the causes and consequences of the

interaction between your work and personal life?"; and "What strategies do you use to deal with the interaction between your work and personal life?".

Field notes

Field notes were taken during the interview. Field notes are, a written account of the things the researcher hears, sees, experiences and thinks about in the course of the interview. This included the manner in which the participants acted or reacted when answering the questions as well as their behaviour during the interview (e.g., being distant when asked questions, long pauses in between the conversation, staring outside the window, looking at space or upwards). Other notes reflected on what the participants said during the interview, to compensate on the researcher's listening skills when reflecting, summarising, and clarifying on what the participant said.

Trustworthiness

Guba's model for qualitative research (Guba, 1981; Krefting, 1991; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was applied in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings. Attention was given to the principles of credibility (checking the truth value of the findings), by means of field notes, triangulation, peer examination and independent coding; transferability (ensuring applicability of the findings), through comparison of sufficient descriptive data, as well as dense description of the data; dependability (ensuring consistency of the findings), by means of an audit, keeping of the raw material, giving a full description of the research method, applying the same procedure throughout.

Data analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and checked by two independent researchers. Content analysis was used to analyse, quantify and interpret the research data systematically and objectively. The interviewer and an independent industrial psychologist carried out the content analysis separately. The content analysis involved five steps. The first step was to define the universe of content that was analysed and to categorise the content. The researcher read the entire description to get a sense of the whole. Secondly, the researcher then identified individual units (themes). A theme is a sentence, i.e., a proposition about

something. Thirdly, the researcher then eliminated redundancy in the units and clarified the meaning of the remaining units by relating them to each other and to the whole. Fourthly, the researcher then reflected on the given units, and transformed the meaning from concrete language into the language or concepts of science. The units were quantified by assigning numbers to the objects of the content analysis. The numbers of the participants who might mention each specific theme were counted. Then the themes were ranked, based on the frequency by which they were mentioned by different participants. Lastly, the researcher then integrated the knowledge gained into a descriptive structure. The exact words of the participants were used as proof, and themes were confirmed with the literature references. These themes were checked and verified by a WLI expert and two industrial psychologists to confirm or criticise.

RESULTS

The results obtained from the interviews are shown in table format. The tables consist of the main- and sub-themes identified in the interviews. Themes were obtained based on the number of participants who experienced them. The total frequency of responses supporting each theme or sub-theme are revealed in the last column of each table. The major themes are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Major themes experienced by the participants

Themes	Description of themes	N = 10
Theme 1	Stressors at work and their influence on the personal life	24
Theme 2	Domains in the personal life which are influenced by work stress and pressure	20
Theme 3	Demands in the personal life influencing work	17
Theme 4	Aspects positively influencing the interaction between work and personal life	25

As can be seen in Table 2, four main themes were extracted from the interviews. Next, each theme with its sub-themes will be discussed in detail.

Stressors at work and their influence on the personal life (Theme 1)

Most participants mentioned this aspect. They reported experiencing their work as stressful, particularly in terms of lack of advancement opportunities and long working hours which they do not have control over. In addition, participants reported the circumstances and the nature of their work as stressful, particularly when working shift hours. As such, several studies have documented that workplace problems (e.g., the promotion process, and climate issues like hostility or isolation of workers) were the strongest if not the only predictors of occupational stress for police officers (Crank, Regoli, Hewitt, & Culbertson, 1995; Hurrell, 1995; Kirkcaldy, Cooper, & Ruffalo, 1995; Brown, Cooper, & Kirkcaldy, 1996; Juniper, 1996).

The following sub-themes presented in Table 3 were identified by the respondents in terms of stressors at work and the influences thereof on the personal lives.

Table 3

Stressors at work and their influence on the personal life

Sub-Theme	Description of sub-theme	N = 10
Sub-Theme 1	Lack of advancement opportunities or promotions	3
Sub-Theme 2	Working long hours and having no control over working hours	10
Sub-Theme 3	Working shifts	3
Sub-Theme 4	The nature of police work, dangerous circumstances and pressure	8

Lack of advancement opportunities or promotions

Being unable to advance to a more rewarding position in any type of work environment is seen as a major stressor in peoples' lives. Without promotions at work, people will not be able to progress in life, particularly with the fluctuations in the markets and inflation rates.

This implicates that life becomes more expensive and as such, people need to leave accordingly. Participants in this study described their work as stressful because of the lack of advancement opportunities particularly in the SAPS. In this regard, White and Marino (1983) found from their longitudinal, quantitative research on men and women that the promotion process (as one of the workplace problems) was the only factor that seemed to be causally related to police officers' stress. This finding was substantiated by the following words:

“And there is no opportunity for promotion, especially for white men we do not have promotion possibilities in the police. Yes, and as you would have been promoted then it would also be more when you retire. We just do not get those opportunities”.

However, participants have hope that things will get better and their application for promotion will be considered: *“... those are one of the things, but you still hope that it would still happen, one still request a promotion every time. But this a thing that makes you quite negative in life, especially income – value income”.* However, because of the lack of advancement opportunity, they felt hopeless and disheartened. In turn, they felt negative about their lives and are reacting negatively towards their work. They also saw it as having financial implications in their personal lives, especially as the cost of living has become increasingly expensive by the day: *“...because life gets more expensive, you can not get by with the same salary for ten years, and that is the problem we have”.* In addition, they felt that their hard work was unappreciated particularly as they do not receive reward for it.

Working long hours and having no control over working hours

Work pressure (e.g., working long hours) reflects the frequency with which individuals perceive high job-related demands resulting from heavy workloads and responsibility. Whereas lack of autonomy (lack of control over working hours) reflects the frequency with which individuals perceive constraints on their ability to function autonomously and influence important job parameters (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1995). As such, participants experienced work pressure and lack of autonomy in their work as a major stressor in their personal lives.

The lack of control over personal time was mostly attributed to demanding working hours as well as always being on call 24 hours a day, and contributed to most police members leaving

the police service: “...murder that was committed, public unrest that was committed here in Ikageng over the weekend. And, then I had to leave the function to come and do my work, because that is what I am there for, I am 24 hours available for service to the state”. Even when trying to prevent the conflict between their work and personal lives, they found it difficult, as they always had to be available for work. They also reported that even when performing office duties, they were sometimes called on to perform fieldwork.

In addition, participants saw their work as having an influence in their personal lives, mainly because they are most of the time away from family members (e.g., wives/husbands and children) and loved ones due to the demanding working hours: “...you can be told today, ‘look, tomorrow you are leaving’. Then suddenly have to organise for the children, it is not always easy for them because now suddenly they must be dropped off at grandma and they do not like it because there might have been some other plans, perhaps we would have gone somewhere tomorrow or went fishing or something, and now suddenly it changes, and they do not understand it”. Frone, Russell and Cooper (1992) substantiate this finding and pointed out that job stressors of this kind are directly and positively related to work-family conflict.

Participants also saw themselves as unable to protect their family members and loved ones whenever they were away on duty and away from home: “... to some extent it influences (my personal life) because she is now alone at home, and to be a woman alone at home is not always nice, and one does not know what can happen these days to a woman alone at home”. These demanding working hours prevented them from spending quality time with their families. Furthermore, the varying working hours had an effect in performing household duties and the activities that they enjoyed (e.g., sport, gym, fishing etc.), particularly as they were on standby most of the time. In this regard, interaction between work and family arise when work activities impede performance of family responsibilities (e.g., long working hours prevent the performance of duties at home; Duxbury, Higgins, & Lee, 1994; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991; MacEwen & Barling, 1994).

Working shifts

Participants experienced working shifts as disadvantageous as it influenced time spend at church, time spend with family (husband/wives, children, etc.) as well as time spend away on holidays: “...*I do not go to church regularly, some times I only go once a month, some times I do not go to church for two months because of the shifts. Yes definitely, because, for example the children on public holidays, everyone on the shift cannot get leave. So it influences your holidays especially because then I have to work*”. In their study of antecedents and outcomes of work-family conflict, Kinnunen and Mauno (1998) also substantiated this finding by reporting that shift work created difficulties in dealing with family matters.

In addition, participants saw their shift work as long and difficult: “...*the shifts, I have been working shifts for 20 years, yes, I worked shifts for 20 years, it is a bit difficult, it is a bit difficult man, one must get a break, one must get a break because if one works from half past seven till four o'clock ... there must be a change, you can not put someone on shifts for so long. Twenty years is a bit long*”.

The nature of police work, dangerous circumstances and pressure

Participants experienced their work as stressful because of the nature and circumstances that surrounded their work environment. They saw circumstances such as crime and seeing a colleague die as major stressors in their lives and found it difficult to handle. In this regard, Oliver and Meier (2004) asserted that police officers that work, particularly in urban areas, may face greater danger at work due to the higher levels of violent crimes, calls for service, and social disorder and these contextual differences could contribute to their levels of stress. As such, the level of crime and disorder and the characteristics of departments might contribute to police stress (Morash, Kwak, & Haarr, 2006). The following quotation is applicable in this regard:

“So, agh, and the things one see when you work on the street. We have already lost three guys here at the canine unit through death. So, it can be difficult at times”.

Some participants reported that they where unable to take love home as they were pushed to their limits because of the work that they did: “...*look, I am now working at the cells, and I*

work with 100 to 200 people, OK, and shucks, and sometimes it is very difficult here at work and then sometimes you do not have time, if you get home and you do not have that love that you should take home, then you take your anger home". In addition, police officers felt that their families should always be prepared to make sacrifices for them.

Furthermore, participants saw their work pressure and stress as having health implications over a period of time. They also saw their work as stressful in that it drove them to smoking and drinking in order to cope with it: *"...yes, it gets rough. You should have come to see. It would have been interesting to look from a psychological perspective. If for example, you could come on a Friday or Saturday evening and sit in the radio control room, and look at the pressure under which these people are working, and to see what effect it has on them. That is why many policemen drink. I smoke myself to death. And I think that if I did not have this distraction I would probably also start drinking now and then"*. This finding was substantiated by Burke (1994) who found that police officers were more susceptible to negative effects from stress, which is also associated with work-family interaction.

Some participants expressed concern regarding the issues that their children had with the police work as being a calling for their parents. Children attached negative emotions to police work, the clothes of police officers as well as their general feeling of safety. The following quotations are applicable: *"...and with my children, I have four children. The eldest two children's dad was also a policeman ... he committed suicide. The youngest two's dad is in the army – he has also passed away. So my eldest two especially has a big issue with the fact that I am in the Police. You will also see that I work in private clothes, because my children can not accept it if I wear a uniform, the moment I put on a uniform then my children are hysterical and very nervous"*. In addition, because of the dangerous working circumstances that their work entails, their families were in constant worry for their spouses who are police officers. Some participants saw themselves as becoming less emotional and hard on the job because of the things that they saw at work.

Domains in the personal life which are influenced by work stress and pressure (Theme 2)

Most participants saw their work as having a great influence in some of the domains in their personal lives. This influence was seen as having negative implications in their lives in general (e.g., finances, church life, sporting activities and health), in their individual self as well as in their families and children. The sub-themes that were identified are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Domains in the personal life which are influenced by work stress and pressure

Sub-Theme	Description of sub-themes	N = 10
Sub-Theme 1	Domains in the general personal life	5
Sub-Theme 2	Domains in the life of the individual	6
Sub-Theme 3	The influence on family and children	9

Domains in personal life in general

Participants reported some aspects of the stressors experienced at their work as having an influence in their personal lives in general. They felt that a lack of advancement opportunities in their work had some financial implication in their personal lives. This financial implication restricted them from living their lives in terms of the life style they would have loved to live: “...if it comes to promotion - we are not even promoted. You must apply for it; you just do not get it. Yes, and promotion means a higher salary income, it eases your and your family’s life”. In addition, working hours conflicted with the time spend on activities outside the working environment (e.g., sport, gym, etc.): “...man, it also happens with my sport involvement, I am heavily involved in sports. I would for example decide now that I must participate in a match, and then suddenly, before the match or so we are called out”.

Furthermore, they also perceived their work as having a great impact on their health (e.g., sleep deprivation, headaches, etc.), particularly as they work under a great amount of stress

and pressure: “...and the doctor gave me pills, and I drank those pills, fortunately it helped. If I feel so down then I drink it and sleep enough, and when I get to work again I am a little all right, but I do get headaches now and then, but I just drink the pills”. In this regard, job stressors have been implicated in the aetiology of psychological health, physical health, and health-related behavioural outcomes (e.g., Beehr & Newman, 1978; Cooper, Russell, & Frone, 1990; Ganster & Schaubroeck, 1991; Harris & Heft, 1992; House, 1974; Jex & Beehr, 1991; Sullivan & Bhagat, 1992).

Domains in the life of the individual

Participants saw their work as having a negative influence on themselves as individuals because of the frustrations and anger they brought with them from work to their homes: “...especially if you now had a day off, for example, especially if I had a day off work and you then get home then you carry, how can I say, if you carry it with you to your house then it influences it negatively”. They reported that they usually became temperamental and grumpy at home because of the difficult circumstances and situations that they encounter at work.

In addition, because they are on call 24 hours a day, they often became irritated and grumpy. As a result, they felt like not being around other people at those times: “...an effect is that when I am on standby, then I get a bit grumpy and then the people at home leave me alone and I worry on with my standby”. Some participants became less emotional and hard towards people because of the things they have seen at work. These influences were perceived to be negative, particularly as the participants’ family members and friends excluded them in conversations and in partaking in activities that they performed together.

Family and children

Most participants experienced their shift work as having an influence on the quality time they spend with their family members, particularly during holidays, and feel that it has a negative impact on the children. Some participants reported being unable and too tired to look after their families and children because of the long working hours. In this regard, several researchers support this finding by reporting that job demands (i.e., hours worked per week, inflexibility of work schedule, timing and location of work, pressure to produce quality work, co-ordination between work hours and family members’ schedules) have been linked to

work-family interaction (Galinsky & Hughes, 1987; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Voyandoff, 1989; Warren, & Johnson, 1995). The following quotation is applicable:

"Yes definitely, if for example it comes to children on holidays or public holidays, I cant, sometimes we can not all get leave on a shift. December, I do not know when last I was off in December. It has been many years, about ten years last since I have been on holiday, so it influences especially your holiday time, especially in December, for then my family wants to take a holiday, then I have to send my wife, because then I have to work. And that influences a lot, it is not, the children want the dad, this is actually one of the disadvantages".

Furthermore, less time spend off from work limited the quality time that participants spend with their families. As such, they were always trying to make up the time lost with their families: *"...but it is important that you spend the little time that you have, you must definitely try, to spend absolute quality time with your wife, or with your family or your children".* Shift work was also experienced as a contributing factor to the conflict that arose between the participants and their spouses, as their spouses did not understand the shifts that they had to work: *"...actually it is only because I work shifts the whole time, because my husband was there, you know, but he has been there since last year, so each time he comes home then I have to come to work and that he does not understand. Sometimes he wants to understand, but I do not know if he wants to understand or if he does not want to understand but I worked my shifts".*

Demands in the personal life influencing work (Theme 3)

Participants experienced some demands in their personal life as having an influence on their work. They reported that a lack of support from both work and family life influenced their performance at work negatively. Other personal factors that the participants mentioned as having an influence on their performance at work included the obligations that they had towards their children, obligations that they had towards their household situation as well as family crises that often lead to the participants' not being able to pursue their careers as they would have wished to do. The sub-themes are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Demands in the personal life influencing work

Sub-Theme	Description of sub-themes	N = 10
Sub-Theme 1	Single parents, lack of support from work and spouse being away from home	4
Sub-Theme 2	Obligations in the household and family crises	3
Sub-Theme 3	Obligation towards children and their activities as well as illnesses of children and attention that they require from their parents	4
Sub-Theme 4	Lack of understanding from work for household circumstances and lack of support from home	2

Single parents, lack of support and spouse being away from home

Participants reported that being a single parent or being separated from their spouses lead to them working under stress at work: “...at this stage I work a lot under stress, because my husband is not with me, he is at our home in Oudshoorn. I am here in Potch so I work a lot under stress”. Research showed that married parents rely on their spouse for support (e.g., Burden, 1986; Shipley & Coats, 1992), whereas single parents, in contrast, lack spousal support, compounding the challenges of managing work and family roles (Greenberger et al., 1989). Participants also feel that a lack of support (either from spouses or family members and friends) at difficult times (e.g., when their children are ill), lead to them being absent from work as a result of having to take care of their children. The following quotations are applicable: “...I do not even have someone and I have four children. So, many times there are problems. Say in the winter months and all four of them get ill, what do I do? Okay, they do not all fall sick at the same time, but every day you have to take one to the doctor and that they do not understand. I do not have anybody else whom I can ask, my child is ill and I have to go to work, I do not even have family in Potch. So, if my children are ill I have to stay at home”.

Furthermore, they saw their personal lives influencing their work in that, firstly, they became unable to pursue the careers that they would have loved to pursue, and secondly, that their household situation contributed to increased stress in their lives, which lead to feelings of helplessness at work: “...but because of the circumstances that I am a single mother and so, I can not work as I would like to work, even though I choose to work outside’ ‘actually you know, I stress so much, I think too much, then it makes that I do not concentrate, and so then I am just disheartened and all but it does not really influence my work but I just stress a lot and then I do not feel like working”.

Obligations in the household and family crises

Participants’ obligations towards their personal lives (e.g., farm, household duties, etc.) were seen as influencing their work, which resulted in them arriving late at work because of the obligations that they had in their personal lives: “...there are sometimes things on the farm that I, when my shift starts, first have to finish on the farm before I can go to work, so it happens that I am sometimes perhaps late on duty, not that it is intentionally so, but there are things that I firs have to finish quickly before I start my shift”.

Some reported that they used to be able to enjoy their work at some stage; however, they are unable to enjoy it because of the household situation. Furthermore, family crises such as death in the family and funerals where seen as contributing to the crises and stress at work: “...listen, it is sometimes difficult when people have crises in their family like death, especially here where people have their funerals on weekends so people cannot attend the funerals during weekends. Eventually there is personnel shortage especially on weekends when there are special services and you have to substitute for the absent people”. Frone et al. (1997) support this finding and maintained that family demands (household maintenance tasks, childcare responsibility etc.) are positively related to family-work interference.

Obligation towards children and their activities as well as illnesses of children and the attention that they require from their parents

Because the participants’ children were seen as always coming first in their lives, their children’s needs at times influenced their work as they required attention from them and

exerted great expectations of their parents (particularly in times such as attending the children's activities such as sport, choir, etc.): "...but I had to give it up, I had to make a choice, either my work or my children, well, my children did eventually win. Yes, my circumstances at home do influence my work". They also felt that their children limited their career opportunities as they were unable to spend as much time as they would have wanted at work because they had to come back early from work to look after the children: "... I had to make a choice between my children and my work, but eventually my children won, so I can say that my family life influence my work".

Furthermore, participants reported that they were unable to rest adequately at home during their time off from work because of the attention that their children require from them. Several researches showed that parental demands (e.g., number of hours devoted to tasks such as transportation, supervision, school-related activities, cooking, shopping and responsibility to stay at home with or locate additional care when the children became ill) interfered with daily job activities (e.g., Brett & Yogev, 1989; Crouter, 1984; Izraeli, 1993; Marshall, 1992), and occupational achievements (Glover, 1994).

Lack of understanding from work for household circumstances and lack of support from home

Few participants mentioned this sub-theme. However, those who mentioned it felt that a lack of understanding from work (i.e., people who do not have children and some of their colleagues), made it difficult for them to work adequately at work: "...it is difficult for the people to understand, our acting commanding officer does not have any children. If you say that you can not special services on weekends because you do not see your children or my children are ill I am not coming in today, it's a big issue for them, they do not understand it, they do not understand it and that makes it difficult".

In addition, they reported that their colleagues did not have any interest in their household circumstances (e.g., illness of children, etc.). As such; they had to endure stress at work, which made them unable to perform adequately at work: "...I mean my little girl was very ill lately and I was constantly at the doctor or the paediatrics. But now they cannot understand, you have just been to the doctor, why are you going again. Why can you not come today, because your child is ill, you must go to the doctor to get medicine and get well. And many

times they think that you use your child as an excuse not to come to work or not to work over weekends. It is difficult”.

Aspects positively influencing the interaction between work and personal life (Theme 4)

This theme was identified as a major theme that positively influenced or bettered the interaction between work and personal life. Most participants reported that there were certain strategies that they used in order to cope with the interaction, which in turn, made their work and personal lives better. The strategies used that were identified involved the following sub-themes presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Aspects positively influencing the interaction between work and personal life

Sub-Theme	Description of sub-themes	N = 10
Sub-Theme 1	Receiving support from your spouse	5
Sub-Theme 2	Communication	5
Sub-Theme 3	Participation in activities outside the work environment	4
Sub-Theme 4	Spending less time with work colleagues outside the work environment	2
Sub-Theme 5	Separating work from home	5
Sub-Theme 6	Seeing police work as a calling	4

Receiving support from your spouse

Participants reported that it was important to choose the right spouse in marriage and to have someone that understood the circumstances that are associated with police work: *“...that is why it is so very important that you choose the right person. If you choose a life partner ... that you choose a person that understands what it is all about”*. In addition, they experienced that spouses who were in the same type of working environment were better fitted together because they are aware of the working situation and are also able to talk to

each other about the day that they had at work: *"...and that is why you get it so often that policemen marry nurses, because nurses work in the same type of environment? The work pressure we have and what they have is very much the same"*.

Furthermore, they believed that having a supportive spouse as well as having a spouse that is in the same career, helped them to cope better with the work circumstances because they understood the type of work: *"...you must have a woman that understands you, someone that can sit with you, understand you and chat with you, because it is a stressful job"*. In supporting this finding, research showed that the various types of support received or offered by spouses or family members (e.g., emotional, social, instrumental and financial) are associated with less work-life conflict and an increase in job satisfaction (Adams et al., 1996; Greenberger et al., 1989; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; MacEwen & Barling, 1994; Voyandoff, 1989).

Communication

Participants saw that problems either at work or home begin when they keep their problems inside by not talking about them. Therefore, they saw communication as an important tool that they used to cope with the interaction between their work and personal life. They reported that it was important to be able to identify negative things (either at work or home) so that it can be easier to talk about them: *"... a person has to be able to identify the negative things, then it goes much better", so I talk about everything, if I have a problem I will talk about it"*. In this regard, Clark (2000) asserted that communication was a tool that individuals use to attain better work-family balance and could create awareness by regularly talking about what they do at other times (e.g., sharing some of the challenges and successes at work with family members).

Participants reported using communication with other people as a way of receiving support from them. They also saw keeping the communication lines open within their families and with friends as important because, if they did not communicate the problems that they have encountered at work (e.g., problems that had upset them), their work turned to influence their personal lives. The following quotations are applicable: *"...yes, then there is something that happened at work and then you are unhappy, and if you do not go and talk about it and tell your partner. Ok, but that is what bothers me, then it will come to a stage that you will not be*

communicating any more". " *In my home life I have now come to a decision that a person talks about things, and if there is something that is wrong – you talk about it. The best way is to talk. If you do not talk you will experience tension and stress*". As such, participants reported that communicating about work and home problems (either to spouses, family members and friends), released their stress and made them become more relaxed at work and at home.

Participation in activities outside the work environment

Participants created their own time and opportunities to be able to "get away" from work. As such, participation in activities outside the work environment (e.g., sport, cycling, gardening, etc.) was a way of relaxation, which kept them busy, made them sane and distracted their thoughts from work circumstances: "... *I am president of North-West bolls, it gives me a chance to get away from the work, to switch off and that is why it is so very important that you try when you get a chance*". Some reported that they used sport and playing games as a mechanism that prevented them from giving themselves over to alcohol. Other saw their personal lives and time as a tool that helped them to focus on something different, which in turn lead them to become motivated at work: "...*to do something that takes away your brain, so that you do not wake at two- three o'clock in the morning about something that must happens tomorrow, It helps me at least to focus a little on something else, if I come back I am a little more motivated to do my work than that I would be normally. You know if you had to work all the time you had to do something else*".

Spending less time with work colleagues outside the work environment

Participants reported that socialising with people that are not in the same working environment was a good coping mechanism that they used: "...*I do not make friends with policeman in the police force. I am friends with the people I work with but I do not laze around after hours with any of my colleagues. I do not like it and I just do not do it*". Therefore, they only spend their times with selective friends outside their work environment.

Time spend with colleagues outside the work environment was seen as bad, because it made them unable to switch off from their work situation and made them feel as if they were still on duty: "...*if a lot of policemen visit together it is absolutely just police. I feel that when my*

working day is over, I do not need tonight when I am home to chat about the police because you can talk about it. If a lot of policemen visit together it is only police, it is all they can talk about". Participants suggested that it was better to keep work, friends and colleagues separate from each other because their lives were made easier in that way: *"...I basically do not have police friends who go home with me and "braai" and do things like that. So I have my private friends and then I have my colleagues at work".*

Separating work from home

Switching off from work in their minds after working hours made the participants' lives better at home and made them become more focused and involved in their relationships with their families and children. They also reported that they made a choice to work hard during the day so that they did not have to bring work home after work. Therefore, they saw this solution as a tool that made their work not influence their personal lives: *"...you get used to it, but I say, I have experienced that I do not have that problem any more, I do not take my workload home. No, I shut off completely. If I get from work I shut down completely, I start another, new page if I get home', 'because I do it at work. I do not take lunch and such things so I get my work done when I am at work".*

Seeing police work as a calling

Participants reported that they saw their work as a calling regardless of the salaries that they received, because they were in the police service for the passion and to help their communities' combat crime. The following quotations are applicable: *"...I would say that the police is a good occupation, it's a good, occupation, yes, it's a good occupation, one just has to hold tight and do your work". "Policing is not a job it is a calling. If you came to the police thinking that you are going to have a peaceful life, then you make a very big mistake', You did not join the police for money".*

In addition, their families had to realise early in life that the police service was a calling for them. Some reported ignoring the pressures that they felt from their work because they believed that things would become better over time. However, others reported that they remain with the police service because of the lack of work opportunities in the country: *"...but the things in the police is, let me say, we have to hold on tight, there is no other work. The work*

outside is also very scarce; you cannot just leave it and think that you will get work outside, in the private sector. We have to hold on tight and hope for the best”.

DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study was to determine how Afrikaans-speaking police officers experience the interaction between their work and personal lives. Stressors experienced at work were seen as one of the major factors that influenced or affected the personal life in a negative way. Such stressors included lack of advancement opportunities or promotions, long working hours, a lack of control over working hours, shift work, the nature of the police work, as well as the pressure endured at work. Participants reported that they were unable to receive promotion opportunities (regardless of the amount of times they applied for the promotions), and that this lack of promotions affected their financial situations tremendously. In addition, lack of control over working hours and the nature of the work itself (such as seeing a colleague die, combating crime, etc.) was also experienced as stressful.

According to Morash et al. (2006), workplace problems include those related to how the organisation functions, for example the promotion process and work climate issues like hostility or isolation of workers. Studies have documented that workplace problems are the strongest, if not the only predictors of occupational stress for police (Crank et al., 1995; Hurrell, 1995; Kirkcaldy et al., 1995; Brown et al., 1996; Juniper, 1996). Work pressure was also perceived to be leading to health implications over a period of time in that it drove the participants to smoking and drinking in order to cope with it. Therefore, high job demands and low job control have been reported in connection with comparatively high indices of physical and psychological symptoms (Larsson & Setterlind, 1990) and mental health (Calnan, Wainwright, Forsythe & Wall, 2001).

Furthermore, work stress and pressure was experienced as influencing certain domains in the participants' personal life. The domains in personal life that were influenced by such work stress included the participants' life in general (e.g., finances, church life, sporting activities and health), the individual self, as well as their families and children. Participants' reported that they were unable to spend adequate time with their families and children because of the work pressure and stress. Furthermore, they couldn't fully enjoy the activities that they

participated in (e.g., attending church services, sporting activities, etc.) because of the demanding working hours.

Job demands (i.e., hours worked per week, inflexibility of work schedule, timing and location of work, pressure to produce quality work quickly, co-ordination between work hours and family members' schedules), have been linked to increased work-family interaction (Galinsky & Hughes, 1987; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Voyandoff, 1989; Warren & Johnson, 1995). According to Allen et al. (2000), work-family conflict is associated with less job satisfaction and greater intention to quit, with lower levels of family satisfaction, and with higher levels of emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic symptoms. As such, work-family conflict emerged as a major concern for individuals and families (Burke, 2004).

Some aspects in the participants' personal lives were experienced as having an impact on their work. Such aspects included a lack of support from the spouse and being a single parent, a lack of support from work or home, obligations towards children, and household and family crises. Participants reported that at times they arrived late at work and that they were unable to pursue their careers further because of family demands (e.g., household duties, family crisis and obligations towards their children). Family demands (i.e., household maintenance tasks and childcare responsibilities), have been found to be positively associated with family-work interaction (Frone et al., 1997). Furthermore, participants asserted that lack of support from spouse and family members lead them to working under stress. Previous reports suggested that family-work conflict is more apt to exert negative influences in the home domain, cause more internal conflict in the family unit, and contribute to less life and job satisfaction (Netemeyer et al., 1996).

Finally, participants saw communication, receiving support from the spouse, participating in activities, spending less time with work colleagues outside the work environment, viewing their work in a positive manner (i.e., seeing police work as a calling), and separating work from home, as good mechanisms or strategies that they used to better cope with the interaction that they experienced between their work and personal life. They mentioned that they talked more to their spouses and family members in order to reduce the stress that they experienced at work. Furthermore, they mentioned that having a supportive family and spouse that understood the type of work that they did, helped them in being able to be more open in their communications.

LIMITATIONS

The first limitation of this study is that the sample consisted of individuals from a specific organisation (i.e., the SAPS) in the Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp areas. These police areas probably have some unique characteristics, such as the specific organisational culture, that could have influenced the participants' experiences. Furthermore, the participants consisted of a group of Afrikaans speaking individuals. As such, until additional research is conducted using samples from a variety of organisations, languages and cultures, the results cannot be generalised to other areas, provinces, contexts or organisations. The second limitation of this study is the sample size and the lack of stratification of the sample. As such, with a larger sample size and proper stratification of relevant factors (e.g., gender, marital status, parental status, rank, experience, regions) the information or results obtained from the participants could have enriched the study field. Finally, it is possible that some officers who participated in this study did not totally trust the confidential statement that was communicated and provided to them prior and during the interviews. Therefore, this could have influenced some of the results obtained.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of company initiatives have shown promise on the work-family challenge. These include flexible work arrangements, reduced workload arrangements, onsite child-care facilities and extended maternal leave options. Some organisations have also examined the support provided by managers to their employees desiring unique work-family arrangements (Burke & Nelson, 2002). In addition, efforts to examine more directly the way work gets done, the norms governing job behaviour, activities and priorities, have been identified as ways to both make the workplace more productive and reduce levels and intensity of work-family conflict. It is also important to focus on police officers coping strategies. The assessment of coping strategies might be efficaciously incorporated into personnel selection procedures and individual stress coping training might be beneficial. However, a more desirable strategy is to make the organisation inherently less stressful. Furthermore, organisation-based strategies should oversee the implementation of family-supportive programmes (FSP), as it has been proved to be an effective stress releaser for employed parents (e.g., Friedman, 1990; Friedman & Galinsky, 1992; Kraut, 1990; Lewis, 1992; Thompson, Thomas, & Maier, 1992).

Several suggestions for the research are derived from the present findings. Firstly, job stress was one of the major themes that most participants experienced in this study. Future research should focus on the consequences associated with job stress. As such, several findings indicate that a job stressor may be related to elevated levels of alcohol consumption if it impedes successful role performance among individuals (Cooper et al., 1990; Harris & Heft, 1992; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1995). Furthermore, recent theorising in the lifetime on alcohol consumption suggest that it is precisely such a situation that may maximise the likelihood of using alcohol instrumentally in an effort to escape self-awareness or stress (Baumeister, 1991; Hull, 1987).

Secondly, quantitative research should be conducted, using a questionnaire, to assess the intensity of police officers experience towards viewing work-personal life interaction. The themes identified in the present study could be used in the construction of valid and reliable questionnaires. It is also advised to explore differences (through the use of quantitative research) in attitudes in the various police stations in South Africa by means of a valid and reliable questionnaires based on the themes identified.

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, conclusions are drawn regarding the results obtained from the themes in this study. The limitations of the research are discussed, followed by recommendations for the organisation (SAPS) and future research.

3.1 Conclusions

The main objective of this study was to determine how Afrikaans-speaking police officers experience the interaction between their work and personal lives. Stressors experienced at work were seen as one of the major factors that influenced or affected the personal life in a negative way. Such stressors included lack of advancement opportunities or promotions, long working hours, a lack of control over working hours, shift work, the nature of the police work, as well as the pressure endured at work. Participants reported that they were unable to receive promotion opportunities (regardless of the amount of times they applied for the promotions), and that this lack of promotions affected their financial situations tremendously. In addition, lack of control over working hours and the nature of the work itself (such as seeing a colleague die, combating crime, etc.) was also experienced as stressful.

According to Morash, Kwak, and Haar (2006), workplace problems include those related to how the organisation functions, for example the promotion process and work climate issues like hostility or isolation of workers. Studies have documented that workplace problems are the strongest, if not the only predictors of occupational stress for police (Crank, Regoli, Hewitt, & Culbertson, 1995; Hurrell, 1995; Kirkcaldy, Cooper, & Ruffalo, 1995; Brown, Cooper, & Kirkcaldy, 1996; Juniper, 1996). Work pressure was also perceived to be leading to health implications over a period of time in that it drove the participants to smoking and drinking in order to cope with it. Therefore, high job demands and low job control have been reported in connection with comparatively high indices of physical and psychological symptoms (Larsson & Setterlind, 1990) and mental health (Calnan et al., 2001).

Furthermore, work stress and pressure was experienced as influencing certain domains in the participants' personal life. The domains in personal life that were influenced by such work stress included the participants' life in general (e.g., finances, church life, sporting activities and health), the individual self, as well as their families and children. Participants' reported that they were unable to spend adequate time with their families and children because of the work pressure and stress. Furthermore, they couldn't fully enjoy the activities that they participated in (e.g., attending church services, sporting activities, etc.) because of the demanding working hours.

Job demands (i.e., hours worked per week, inflexibility of work schedule, timing and location of work, pressure to produce quality work quickly, co-ordination between work hours and family members' schedules), have been linked to increased work-family interaction (Galinsky & Hughes, 1987; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Voyandoff, 1989; Warren & Johnson, 1995). According to Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, (2000), work-family conflict is associated with less job satisfaction and greater intention to quit, with lower levels of family satisfaction, and with higher levels of emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic symptoms. As such, work-family conflict emerged as a major concern for individuals and families (Burke, 2004).

Some aspects in the participants' personal lives were experienced as having an impact on their work. Such aspects included a lack of support from the spouse and being a single parent, a lack of support from work or home, obligations towards children, and household and family crises. Participants reported that at times they arrived late at work and that they were unable to pursue their careers further because of family demands (e.g., household duties, family crisis and obligations towards their children). Family demands (i.e., household maintenance tasks and childcare responsibilities), have been found to be positively associated with family-work interaction (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1997). Furthermore, participants asserted that lack of support from spouse and family members lead them to working under stress. Previous reports suggested that family-work conflict is more apt to exert negative influences in the home domain, cause more internal conflict in the family unit, and contribute to less life and job satisfaction (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996).

Finally, participants saw communication, receiving support from the spouse, participating in activities, spending less time with work colleagues outside the work environment, viewing their work in a positive manner (i.e., seeing police work as a calling), and separating work

from home, as good mechanisms or strategies that they used to better cope with the interaction that they experienced between their work and personal life. They mentioned that they talked more to their spouses and family members in order to reduce the stress that they experienced at work. Furthermore, they mentioned that having a supportive family and spouse that understood the type of work that they did, helped them in being able to be more open in their communications.

3.2 Limitations of this research

The first limitation of this study is that the sample consisted of individuals of a specific organisation, that is, the SAPS in the Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp areas. These police areas probably have some unique characteristics, such as the specific organisational culture, that could have influenced the participants' experiences. Furthermore, the participants consisted of a group of Afrikaans speaking individuals. As such, until additional research is conducted using samples from a variety of organisations, languages or even cultures, the results cannot be generalised to other areas, provinces, contexts or organisations.

The second limitation of this research is the sample size and the lack of stratification of the sample. As such, with a larger sample size and stratification (in terms of gender, marital status, parental status, and rank order, the information or results obtained from the participants would have enriched the study.

The third limitation is the possibility that some officers who participated in this research did not totally trust the confidential statement that was communicated and provided to them prior and during the interviews. Therefore, this could have influenced some of the results obtained.

3.3 Recommendations

Next, recommendations for the organisation as well as for future research are made.

3.3.1 Recommendations for the organisation

A number of company initiatives have shown promise on the work-family challenge. These include flexible work arrangements, reduced workload arrangements, onsite child-care facilities and extended maternal leave options. Some organisations have also examined the support provided by managers to their employees desiring unique work-family arrangements (Burke & Nelson, 2002). In addition, efforts to examine more directly the way work gets done, the norms governing job behaviours, activities and priorities, have identified ways to both make the workplace more productive and reduce levels and intensity of work-family conflict.

Although individual interventions and coping strategies are important for reducing police officer stress, changes in the organisational context also deserve attention. There is a need to develop and test interventions to provide police with an increased sense of control over their work. Furthermore, the effective implementation of interventions on job stress should be made. Three levels of intervention strategies (Kompier & Cooper, 1999) involve the following:

- **Primary level interventions.** Primary level interventions are concerned with modifying or eliminating the stressors inherent in the workplace in order to adapt the environment to better fit the individual (Rothmann, 2003). However, the effectiveness and potential cost benefits of primary level interventions have not been rigorously evaluated (Kompier & Cooper, 1999). The few rigorous studies that were conducted showed significant improvements in employee satisfaction and motivation levels, but productivity outputs improved minimally.

Since job stress plays a central role in the process that might lead to health problems, reducing those stresses seem to be warranted. Many preventive organisational-based strategies should be designed and used to tackle high job demands that lead to job stress, such as job redesign, flexible work schedules and goal setting. Increasing job resources (e.g., through participative management at the job, increasing social support and team building), on the other hand, would eventually lead to more motivation at work, all of which would influence the interaction between work and personal life in a positive way.

- **Secondary level interventions.** Secondary level interventions focus on the individual and are concerned with increasing awareness and extending the physical and psychological resources of employees to enable them to minimise the demanding effects of stress and to manage stress more effectively (Rothmann, 2003). Stress-management programmes that use a cognitive-behavioural approach are effective in reducing stress reactions (Schaufeli & Enzmann, 1998). Based on self-report measures, stress management activities would seem to have a modest effect in temporarily reducing experienced stress (Kompier & Copper, 1999). Organisation-based programmes should be integrated with individual-based programmes in order to be effective in the long run (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2002).
- **Tertiary level interventions.** Tertiary level interventions are targeted at individuals, but their role is recuperative rather than preventative (Rothmann, 2003). As such, counselling is known to be effective in improving the psychological well-being of employees and has considerable cost benefits in terms of reduced absence due to sickness (Kompier & Cooper, 1999).

These different levels of interventions should also be applied to promote healthy interaction between the work and personal life. Organisation-based strategies should oversee the implementation of family-supportive programmes (FSP), as it has been proved to be effective stress releasers for employed parents (e.g., Friedman, 1990; Friedman & Galinsky, 1992; Kraut, 1990; Lewis, 1992; Thompson, Thomas, & Maier, 1992). The major programmes that should be discussed in the work-family literature are flexitime, compressed workweek, job sharing, child-care assistance, work at home, and reduced work hours (e.g., Friedman, 1990; Friedman & Galinsky, 1992; Goodstein, 1994; Lewis, 1992; Morgan & Milliken, 1992; Paris, 1990; Thompson et al., 1992). It is also important to focus on police officers coping strategies. The assessment of coping strategies might be efficaciously incorporated into personnel selection procedures and individual stress coping training might be beneficial. However, a more desirable strategy is to make the *organisation* inherently less stressful.

3.3.2 Recommendations for future research

Despite the limitations of this study, the present findings may have important implications for future research and practice. Firstly, job stress was one of the major themes that most participants experienced according to this study. Future research should focus on the consequences associated with job stress. As such, several findings indicate that a job stressor may be related to elevated levels of alcohol consumption if it impedes successful role performance among individuals (Cooper et al., 1990; Harris & Heft, 1992; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1995). Furthermore, recent theorising in the literature on alcohol consumption suggest that it is precisely such a situation that may maximise the likelihood of using alcohol instrumentally in an effort to escape self-awareness or stress (Baumeister, 1991; Hull, 1987).

Secondly, quantitative research should be conducted, using a questionnaire, to assess the intensity of police officers experience towards viewing work-personal life interaction. The themes identified in the present study could be used in the construction of valid and reliable questionnaires. It is also advised to explore differences (through the use of quantitative research) in attitudes in the various police stations in South Africa by means of a valid and reliable questionnaires based on the themes identified.

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