

**INTERACTION BETWEEN WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE OF
HIGHER EDUCATION STAFF IN THE FREE STATE
PROVINCE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY**

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COMMENTS

The reader is reminded of the following:

- The editorial style as well as the references referred to in this mini-dissertation followed the format prescribed by the Publication Manual (5th edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA). This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the North-West University (Potchefstroom) that all scientific documents must use the APA style 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 largely agrees with the APA style) is used, but the APA guidelines were followed in constructing tables.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Interaction between work and personal life of higher education staff in the Free State Province: A phenomenological study.

Key terms: Work, personal life, interaction, experience, dimensions, antecedents, consequences, strategies, cultural groups, higher (tertiary) education staff, phenomenological.

In South Africa, the staff of higher education institutions experiences several stressors in their work and home domains. Therefore, it is important to understand how these two life domains are in interaction with each other. The general objective of this study was to investigate how higher education staff experienced work-personal life interaction (WPLI). A sample of 24 higher education staff that was willing to participate in the study was taken from different faculties and departments from a higher education institution in the Free State Province. For the purpose of this research, a qualitative design from a phenomenological approach was used.

The specific objectives of this study were to determine the experiences, main dimensions, antecedents, consequences, and strategies in the lives of higher education staff. The results obtained indicated that Afrikaans and African women and men experienced time and strain-based conflict. Their work environment was characterised by a heavy workload, long working hours, resulting in work being taken home, and their home environment was characterised by a demanding family (spouses and children) and household duties. Men and women also thought about things in the family domain (e.g., when their children were sick) while they were at work. This caused a constant spill over, leaving employees tired and stressed.

Strategies (e.g., prioritising, planning and time management) and support (e.g., spouses, division of family and household duties, friends and colleagues, as well as the flexible working hours) helped them to cope with this interaction.

Recommendations were made for future research and the organisation.

OPSOMMING

Titel: Interaksie tussen werk- en persoonlike lewe van hoër onderwyspersoneel in die Vrystaat Provinsie: 'n Fenomenologiese studie.

Sleutelterme: Werk, persoonlike lewe, interaksie, ervaring, dimensies, antesedente, gevolge, strategieë, kulturele groepe, hoër (tersiêre) onderwyspersoneel, fenomenologies.

Die personeel van hoër onderwysinstellings in Suid-Afrika ervaar verskeie faktore wat spanning in hulle werk- en huisdomein veroorsaak. Daarom is dit belangrik om te verstaan hoe hierdie twee lewensdomeine in interaksie met mekaar verkeer. Die algemene doelwit van hierdie studie was om ondersoek in te stel na hoe hoër onderwyspersoneel werks-persoonlike lewe interaksie (WPLI) beleef. 'n Steekproef van 24 hoër onderwyspersoneellede aan 'n hoër onderwysinstelling in die Vrystaat Provinsie is gebruik vir die studie. Die personeellede was van verskillende fakulteite en departemente en hulle het vrywillig aan die studie deelgeneem. Vir die doeleindes van die navorsing is 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp van 'n fenomenologiese benadering gebruik.

Die spesifieke doelwitte van die studie was om vas te stel wat die ervarings, hoofdimensies, oorsake, gevolge en strategieë in die lewens van hoër onderwyspersoneel is. Die resultate verkry het aangedui dat Afrikaans- en Afrikataalsprekende vrouens en mans tyd- en spanninggebaseerde konflik ervaar. Hulle werksomgewing is gekenmerk deur hoë werkslading en lang werksure wat daartoe lei dat werk huis toe geneem is. Die huisomgewing is gekenmerk deur 'n veeleisende familie (huweliksmaats en kinders) en huishoudelike verpligtinge. Beide mans en vrouens dink ook aan faktore in die familie domein (bv. wanneer hulle kinders siek is) terwyl hulle by die werk is. As gevolg van hierdie konstante oorfloei ervaar werknemers uitputting en spanning.

Strategieë (bv. prioritisering, beplanning en tydsbestuur) en ondersteuning (bv. huweliksmaats, verdeling van familie en huishoudelike verantwoordelikhede, vriende en kollegas, en fleksie werksure) help hulle om hierdie interaksie te hanteer.

Aanbevelings is gemaak vir verdere navorsing en vir die organisasie.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this mini-dissertation is to focus on the interaction between work and personal life of higher education staff. This chapter presents the problem statement and a discussion of the general and specific objectives of this study. The research method is explained and an overview of chapters is given.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In modern society, work and home represent the two most significant domains in the life of a working individual. It is therefore important to understand how these two life domains interact with each other. In fact, the interaction between these life domains has become an important topic in political, public and academic debate for a considerable period of time (Geurts & Dijkers, 2002). The growing importance of the work/non-work interface is predominantly a consequence of the increasing number of women entering the paid labour workforce and hence the growing number of dual career and dual earner families (Geurts, Kompier, Roxburgh, & Houtman, 2001; Janssen, Peeters, De Jonge, Houkes, & Tummers, 2004). Organisations must therefore be aware that employees with many demands, both in the work and home domain, are at risk of work interfering with home and vice versa (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Demerouti, Geurts, & Kompier, 2004; Geurts & Dijkers, 2002; Geurts et al., 2005; Kotzé, 2005; Montgomery, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Den Ouden, 2003). Furthermore, employees need time as well as flexibility to take care of their children at home, especially when their children are sick. The number of children people have, contributes to the extent that domestic obligations grow. Literature suggests that employed parents of young children and parents of large families experience more work-family conflict (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This challenges organisations to provide services that will enable employees to manage their work-personal life interaction (WPLI) better and also to reduce conflict between these two life domains (Thompson et al., 1999).

The recent dramatic changes in family structures (e.g., dual career families) and technological changes (e.g., mobile phones and portable computers) that enable job tasks to be performed

in a variety of locations have blurred the boundaries between work and home (Geurts et al., 2001; Janssen et al., 2004). Employees in today's workforce have to occupy a number of different roles in life, resulting in a greater proportion of workers that experience a greater challenge in their roles as employee, parent and spouse (Mageni & Slabbert, 2005; Montgomery, Panagopoulou, Peeters, & Schaufeli, 2005). The life stage and career stage of workers will also influence their lives and careers in terms of general characteristics, life tasks, needs and problematic issues (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). The family life stage often parallels the career stage of the individual, where the demands made in the work domain, as one progresses through career establishments, occur concurrently with demands made in the family domain, such as when children are born and start school (Wrobel, Raskin, Maranzano, Frankel, & Beacon, 2003). According to Wrobel et al. (2003), the impact of family responsibilities on career stages needs to be studied. Therefore, the varied career stage patterns of women (because of the unique needs of women) and the effect of the modern family structure (dual-career families) on men's career stages must be investigated.

Difficulties in the work-home interface include the challenge to combine domestic responsibilities and work obligations (Bakker & Geurts, 2004). However, real challenges emerge when there are role pressures from the work and family domains that are contradicting each other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). These pressures are often described as inter-role conflict (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Demerouti et al., 2004; Geurts & Dikkers, 2002; Rotondo, Carlson, & Kincaid, 2002). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work-family conflict (WFC) as something occurring when a person's efforts to fulfil a role at work meddled with efforts to fulfil roles outside of work and vice versa. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) also identified three dimensions of WFC, namely time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based conflict. Time-based conflict arises when time spent on activities in one role hampers the execution of responsibilities in another role. Strain-based conflict arises when pressure from one role interferes with fulfilling the requirements of another role. Lastly, behaviour-based conflict arises when behaviours performed in one role are difficult to adjust in order to be compatible with behaviour patterns in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Contributing to the increased difficulty to balance work and family demands are the increasing pressure that South African companies are facing, specifically as a result of international competition. Through experience, organisations have learned that they must still

cater for the unique circumstances in South Africa, although the country is operating in a globalised, integrated economy (Mageni & Slabbert, 2005). South African companies are also involved in a process of large-scale organisational change because companies demand more knowledgeable workers, the diverse workforce (workers with different ethnical backgrounds) and changes in the value systems and beliefs of the workforce. South Africa is still struggling in the second decade of freedom (Nzimande, 2005). Consequently, most of the challenges facing the South African labour markets include high levels of unemployment, massive retrenchments, absenteeism and a lack of twenty-first century competencies (Lilford, 2006; Mageni & Slabbert, 2005; Nzimande, 2005).

Several organisations have to face transformation as a result of external environmental changes (Viljoen & Rothmann, 2002). In the recent past, higher education institutions in South Africa have been subjected to major transformations because of several external factors, including the business environment, globalisation and competition, political forces, legislation and technological changes (Viljoen & Rothmann, 2002). Transformation means that staff has to adapt to new ways of doing things, including changes in values, norms, attitudes, perceptions and behaviour (Viljoen & Rothmann, 2002). According to Coetzee and Rothmann (2005), this restructuring includes challenges like equity, diversity, resistance and the establishing of an organisational climate and these challenges can make staff feel powerless, pessimistic, fearful and anxious.

Apart from the transformation process, staff in higher education institutions also experiences stressors such as working overtime, which prevents employees from taking adequate care of home responsibilities, resulting in WFC (Aryee, Fields, & Luk, 1999). Recent changes in technology (e.g., mobile phones, emails, laptops) enable higher education staff to have more autonomy in their life's, although this results in unclear boundaries between their work- and family life. Another challenge that employees face is the downsizing of companies in order to reduce costs. This leaves survivors to press on harder and longer, thereby minimizing their personal time (Stoner, Robin, & Russell-Chapin, 2005). Higher-education institutions are also urged to assist the government and private sector in solving community problems. With stressful circumstances such as these, the interaction between work and personal life can be influenced.

International research regarding WPLI has increased over the last years (Geurts, Rutte, &

Peeters, 1999; Janssen et al., 2004). Due to the multicultural and diverse nature of the society and workforce as well as the different economical, political and societal factors that can influence WPLI in different ways, international research is however not necessarily applicable to the South African context. In general, there are a relative limited number of scientifically sound studies regarding work-home interaction and several limitations characterising WPLI studies in South Africa. These characteristics include poorly designed and controlled studies and a lack of sophisticated statistical analyses. Most of the scales used had poor reliability coefficients and few scales were validated for different demographical groups, especially for different language and racial groups. There was also a lack to include all cultural groups in most studies and international measuring instruments were used without determining the equivalence and bias thereof for different cultural or language groups (Mostert, 2006).

In South Africa, diverse cultural backgrounds may attach unique meanings to certain aspects concerning WPLI. It is also possible that different cultural (language) groups of South Africa will have different antecedents and consequences of work-personal life interaction than individuals in other countries. Therefore, it is important to study different language groups in order to see how they experience the interaction between their work and personal lives and which strategies they use to deal with work-personal life interaction. Different ethnical and language groups are concentrated in different areas of South Africa, where Afrikaans and Setswana, Sesotho and Xhosa (African languages) speaking people are mostly located in the Free State. The focus of this study will therefore be on the experience of work-life interaction among Afrikaans, Setswana, Sesotho and Xhosa speaking employees working in a higher education institution in the Free State area.

Gender is another important aspect to consider when WPLI is investigated. Women continue to be responsible for the majority child and household duties (Thompson et al., 1999; Wrobel et al., 2003), resulting in women experiencing greater conflict between their work and family life responsibilities. Statistics revealed that female executives are more likely to take leave of absence during their careers than male executives are. Men are also beginning to get more involved in caring for their children and striving towards achieving a balance, but are still giving the impression that they are reluctant to amend their work schedules in order to achieve this balance (Thompson et al., 1999). Wrobel et al. (2003) state that the work/family domain in general becomes less gendered and that progressively more men are discussing

how their family demands affect their career development and therefore their career stages.

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

- How does higher education staff experience work-personal life interaction?
- What are the main dimensions in the lives of higher education staff that are in interaction with each other?
- What are the major antecedents and consequences of work-personal life interaction for higher education staff?
- Which strategies do higher education staff use to deal with work-personal life interaction issues?
- Do language groups differ with regards to the experience of WPLI?
- Do males and females differ with regards to the experience of WPLI?
- Which recommendations can be made regarding work-personal life interaction of higher education staff?

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives can be divided into a general objective and specific objectives.

1.2.1 General objective

The general objective of this research is to investigate how higher education staff experience work-personal life interaction.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this research are the following:

- To determine how higher education staff experience work-personal life interaction.
- To determine the main dimensions in the lives of higher education staff that are in interaction with each other.

- To determine the major antecedents and consequences of work-personal life interaction for higher education staff.
- To determine which strategies higher education staff uses to deal with work-personal life interaction issues.
- To determine if language groups differ regarding certain aspects of work-personal life interaction (in terms of the experience, dimensions, antecedents, consequences and strategies).

1.3 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method consists of a literature review and an empirical study. The results obtained will be presented in the form of a research article. The literature review focuses on WPLI in broad. The focus is on a brief history of WPLI, the importance of investigating this phenomenon and major limitations in the field, specifically in the South African context. The empirical study consists of the research design, participants and procedure, data collection, data analysis and ethical aspects that must be considered.

1.3.1 Research design

For the purpose of this research, a qualitative design from a phenomenological approach is used. In this approach, the researcher is interested in the meaning a person attributes to his or her experiences of reality, world and relationships. The person's cognitive experience must be understood and defined because it is only through this that the true essence of the person's experience can be realised (Rothmann, Gerber, Lubbe, Sieberhagen, & Rothmann, 1998).

Qualitative research makes it possible to determine the subjective experiences of higher education staff that has different ethnical backgrounds. Qualitative research is defined as the study of people in their natural environments as they go about their daily lives (Bailey, 1994). Despite the negativity surrounding the use of qualitative research, Woods and Catanzaro (1988) indicated that the validity of qualitative research is one of its biggest advantages. More advantages of qualitative research are flexibility, in-depth analysis, and the ability to observe a variety of aspects. Through developing and using questions on the spot, a qualitative researcher can gain a more in-depth understanding of the respondent's beliefs,

attitudes, or situation. The respondent's body language is also an important indicator of whether the respondent's words and body language are contradicting each other. Therefore, it is important to observe the respondent's mood, bodily expression, voice intonation and environmental factors that may influence the respondent's responses (McRoy, 2006).

1.3.2 Participants and procedure

A non-probability purposive voluntary sample is used to reach the objectives of this study. The population is stratified in terms of language (Afrikaans and African languages), different career phases, including growth (4-13), exploration (14-24), establishment (25-44), maintenance (45-65) and disengagement (65 and over) marital status (married vs. unmarried), parental status (parents vs. non-parents) and position (mostly academici, but also support personnel) of higher education staff at a higher education institution in the Free State Province (Super, 1980). The size of the samples in the research is determined by the number of participants who was willing and accessible to participate. Data was collected until data saturation was reached. Fourteen people in the Afrikaans group and ten people in the African language group (Setswana, Sesotho and Xhosa) were accessible and willing to participate, rendering a total sample of 24 participants.

The following selection criteria were used to determine which participants to include in the sample:

- Higher education staff in the Free State Province.
- Higher education staff from four main language groups (i.e., Afrikaans, Setswana, Sesotho and Xhosa).
- Higher education staff working in a work environment for at least two or more years.
- Higher education staff who was willing to participate in the research (and who gave written informed consent) after having been informed about the purpose and procedures of the research.
- Higher education staff who was able to understand and communicate in either Afrikaans or English and who was prepared to have a tape-recorded interview with the researcher.

The following procedure was followed in order to find participants who were willing and available to participate in the study:

The researcher requested to conduct a study at a higher education institution, where the Vice Rector of Academic Planning requested the approval of the research protocol and the clearance by the Ethical Committee of the North-West University. After the university received the requested information, they approved the study and provided the contact number of the research department to identify possible participants. The research department identified the six different faculties in the university and provided the contact numbers of the dean of each faculty. The deans identified possible participants in their faculties. Participants who were willing and available to participate were called in order to schedule interviews.

1.3.3 Data Collection

The measuring instrument used in this research was an unstructured interview, based on the phenomenological paradigm. The researcher studied the phenomenon without predetermined expectations of categories and tried to understand the data from the perspective of the participant.

A workshop regarding interviewing skills and techniques used during interviews was presented by an expert and attended by the researcher. During this workshop, interview questions that were not clear were refined and adjusted accordingly with the help of the expert. The interview took place where it best suited the participant. Attention was given to the climate or atmosphere of the room, to ensure that the participant was at ease. A 'do not disturb' sign was put outside the door to ensure that the interview would not be interrupted. The researcher introduced herself in a friendly and warm manner. The researcher then explained the context of the interview, and tape-recorders were used with the permission of the participant. The participants were informed that all the interviews would be recorded in order to recall the conversation. These tape-recorded interviews were only available to the researcher and the promoter and the information on the tape was treated confidentially and anonymously. The participants were also informed that the tapes would be terminated after it had been transcribed and the study had been completed. It was emphasised that the participant could withdraw from the study at any time.

All the participants were asked the following three standard 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 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?”

In order to ensure that the participant was comfortable during the whole interview, the researcher faced the participant squarely in a relaxed way, had an open body posture and leaned slightly forward. The researcher also kept eye contact with the participant at all times. Non-directive dialogue techniques like minimal verbal responses (e.g., “mm-mm, yes, I see”), paraphrasing (stating the participant’s words in another form with the same meaning), clarification (e.g., “Can you tell me more about...” and “You seem to be saying...”), reflection (e.g., “So, you believe that...”), reflective summary (“so what you’re saying...”) and silence were used to assist the participants to share their experiences.

After the interview, the participants were asked to complete a short biographical questionnaire that included race, language, gender, marital and parental status, position as well as career phase.

1.3.3.1 Pilot study

A pilot study allows the researcher to try out the interviewing design with a small number of participants (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delpont, 2002). A pilot study is a prerequisite for the successful execution and completion of a research project. It allows a researcher to acquire thorough background knowledge about a specific problem that the researcher intends to investigate. The purpose of the pilot study is to improve the success and effectiveness of the investigation (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, Poggenpoel, & Schurink, 1998). In this study, a preliminary pilot study was used to identify the possible unexpected problems, which could have emerged during the main investigation. The pilot study did consist of the first three available higher education staff. The pilot study was a valuable way to gain practical knowledge of and insight into the problem. The pilot study assisted in making the necessary

modifications in the data-gathering instrument. Before the main investigation proceeded, an expert evaluated the interview schedule for appropriateness.

1.3.3.2 Field notes

Immediately after each interview, the researcher transcribed the impressions of the interview (De Vos et al., 2002). The field notes included aspects the researcher heard, saw, experienced and thought about during the course of the interview and these aspects were written down afterwards. The field notes included the empirical observation and interpretations thereof. The researcher wrote down her emotions, preconceptions, expectations and prejudices so that they could be developed into the final product.

1.3.3.3 Trustworthiness

The facts of a study must be accurate, consistent, clear, relevant and objective (De Vos et al., 2002). 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 descriptions 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 and conformability (which were accomplished by using the criterion of neutrality or freedom from bias), by keeping an appropriate distance in order not to influence the research.

1.3.4 Data analysis

Data was transcribed verbatim and checked by independent researchers. A vital aspect of understanding the meaning that people attach to work-personal life interaction is the understanding of the data from the perspective of the participants' work and personal lives. In this study, the results of the interviews were analysed by using content analysis.

The content analysis consisted of the following steps (Giorgi, in press; Kerlinger, 1986):

- The first step in the content analysis was to define the universe of content to be analysed and categorised (for example the entire set of verbal answers of the participants).
- The second step was to identify individual units (themes). The researcher read the responded notes in order to form an overall image. Afterwards, the researcher once again read it in order to identify the themes. The words that were used by the participant were the smallest analysis that could be made. A sub-theme is usually a sentence and is more difficult but also more useful to analyse. Sub-themes can be combined in order to determine the themes. The analysis of the information was persistent until repeated themes were identified.
- The third step was to free the data from unnecessary information and to determine the meaning of the rest of the subunits by linking it to the whole picture.
- The fourth step consisted of the conversion of the concrete language of the participants, into scientific language and concepts. The precise words of the participants were used in support, based on gained insights, integration and synthesis was then done.

The number of objects per category was counted and placed in order of preference. The credibility of the content analysis was promoted by the coding that was done by the researcher and an Industrial Psychologist with a comprehensive background based on content analysis. A literature-control was done to investigate relevant research in order to determine the comparativeness and distinctiveness of the current research (Krefting, 1991).

The researcher strived to promote the validity by spending enough time with the participant in order to establish rapport. Social-desirable responses were minimised by making use of dialogue techniques. Rephrasing and repetition of questions were used in order to gain credibility of information. The researcher made use of a diary to highlight the ideas and feelings of the respondents throughout the research process. These notes consisted of information about the problems and frustrations that were experienced (Krefting, 1991).

1.3.5 Ethical aspects

Conducting research is an ethical enterprise. Research ethics provide researchers with a code of moral guidelines on how to conduct research in a morally acceptable way. The following were applicable at all times to remain an ethical climate (Struwig & Stead, 2001):

- The researcher was honest, fair and respectful towards the participants and did not attempt to mislead or misinform the research participants.
- The researcher respected the rights and dignity of others. This included respecting the privacy, confidentiality and autonomy of the research participants. The researcher was also mindful to cultural and individual differences among people and was sensitive towards aspects such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, language and socio-economic status. The researcher did not knowingly discriminate against people on the basis of such factors.
- The welfare of others was of foremost concern. The researcher avoided or diminished any harm that could occur to the research participant as a consequence of the interaction with them.

1.4 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

In Chapter 2, the interaction between work and personal life of higher education staff is discussed in the form of a research article. Chapter 3 deals with the conclusions, limitations and recommendations of this research.

1.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the problem statement and the general and specific research objectives of this study. The data collection and the research method used in this study were explained, followed by a brief overview of the chapters that follow.

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CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH ARTICLE

INTERACTION BETWEEN WORK AND PERSONAL LIFE OF HIGHER EDUCATION STAFF IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

ABSTRACT

The general objective of this study was to investigate how higher education staff experienced work-personal life (WPL) interaction. A sample of 24 higher education staff that was willing to participate in the study was taken from different faculties and departments from a higher education institution in the Free State Province. For the purpose of this research, a qualitative design from a phenomenological approach was used. The results indicated that higher education staff experienced time and strain-based conflict. Participants also experienced a heavy workload, long working hours (taking work home) and a constant spill over between their work and home domains. This had several negative consequences, including fatigue, a lack of energy and stress. However, positive aspects that helped them to cope with the interaction were flexible working hours, support from their spouses, sharing of family- and household duties, friends and colleagues.

OPSOMMING

Die algemene doelstelling van hierdie studie was om ondersoek in te stel na hoe hoër onderwyspersoneel werks-persoonlike interaksie (WPI) ervaar. 'n Steekproef van 24 hoër onderwyspersoneel wat bereid was om aan die studie deel te neem is van verskillende fakulteite en departemente van 'n hoër onderwysinstelling in die Vrystaat Provinsie geneem. Vir die doeleindes van hierdie studie is 'n kwalitatiewe navorsingsontwerp van 'n fenomenologiese benadering gebruik. Die resultate het aangetoon dat hoër onderwyspersoneel tyd- en spanninggebaseerde konflik ervaar. Die deelnemers het ook hoë werkslading, lang werksure (vat werk huis toe) en 'n konstante oorspoel tussen die werk- en huisdomeine ervaar. Dit het verskeie negatiewe gevolge, insluitende moegheid, stres en 'n tekort aan energie. Positiewe aspekte wat onderwysers wel help om die interaksie te hanteer is fleksietye, ondersteuning van hulle huweliksmaats, deel van familie- en huishoudelike verpligtinge, vriende en kollegas.

In modern society, work and home represent the two most significant domains in the life of a working individual. It is therefore important to understand how these two life domains interact with each other. In fact, the interaction between these life domains has become an important topic in political, public and academic debate for a considerable period of time (Geurts & Dijkers, 2002). The growing importance of the work/non-work interface is predominantly a consequence of the increasing number of women entering the paid labour workforce and hence the growing number of dual career and dual earner families (Geurts, Kompier, Roxburgh, & Houtman, 2001; Janssen, Peeters, De Jonge, Houkes, & Tummers, 2004). Organisations must therefore be aware that employees with many demands, both in the work and home domain, are at risk of work interfering with home and vice versa (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Demerouti, Geurts, & Kompier, 2004; Geurts & Dijkers, 2002; Geurts et al., 2005; Kotzé, 2005; Montgomery, Peeters, Schaufeli, & Den Ouden, 2003). Furthermore, employees need time as well as flexibility to take care of their children at home, especially when their children are sick. The number of children people have, contributes to the extent that domestic obligations grow. Literature suggests that employed parents of young children and parents of large families experience more work-family conflict (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This challenges organisations to provide services that will enable employees to manage their work-personal life interaction (WPLI) better and also to reduce conflict between these two life domains (Thompson et al., 1999).

The recent dramatic changes in family structures (e.g., dual career families) and technological changes (e.g., mobile phones and portable computers) that enable job tasks to be performed in a variety of locations have blurred the boundaries between work and home (Geurts et al., 2001; Janssen et al., 2004). Employees in today's workforce have to occupy a number of different roles in life, resulting in a greater proportion of workers that experience a greater challenge in their roles as employee, parent and spouse (Mageni & Slabbert, 2005; Montgomery, Panagopoulou, Peeters, & Schaufeli, 2005). The life stage and career stage of workers will also influence their lives and careers in terms of general characteristics, life tasks, needs and problematic issues (Schreuder & Theron, 2001). The family life stage often parallels the career stage of the individual, where the demands made in the work domain, as one progresses through career establishments, occur concurrently with demands made in the family domain, such as when children are born and start school (Wrobel, Raskin, Maranzano, Frankel, & Beacon, 2003). According to Wrobel et al. (2003), the impact of family responsibilities on career stages needs to be studied. Therefore, the varied career stage

patterns of women (because of the unique needs of women) and the effect of the modern family structure (dual-career families) on men's career stages must be investigated.

Difficulties in the work-home interface include the challenge to combine domestic responsibilities and work obligations (Bakker & Geurts, 2004). However, real challenges emerge when there are role pressures from the work and family domains that are contradicting each other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). These pressures are often described as inter-role conflict (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Demerouti et al., 2004; Geurts & Dijkers, 2002; Rotondo, Carlson, & Kincaid, 2002). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work-family conflict (WFC) as something occurring when a person's efforts to fulfil a role at work meddled with efforts to fulfil roles outside of work and vice versa. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) also identified three dimensions of WFC, namely time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based conflict. Time-based conflict arises when time spent on activities in one role hampers the execution of responsibilities in another role. Strain-based conflict arises when pressure from one role interferes with fulfilling the requirements of another role. Lastly, behaviour-based conflict arises when behaviours performed in one role are difficult to adjust in order to be compatible with behaviour patterns in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Contributing to the increased difficulty to balance work and family demands are the increasing pressure that South African companies are facing, specifically as a result of international competition. Through experience, organisations have learned that they must still cater for the unique circumstances in South Africa, although the country is operating in a globalised, integrated economy (Mageni & Slabbert, 2005). South African companies are also involved in a process of large-scale organisational change because companies demand more knowledgeable workers, the diverse workforce (workers with different ethnical backgrounds) and changes in the value systems and beliefs of the workforce. South Africa is still struggling in the second decade of freedom (Nzimande, 2005). Consequently, most of the challenges facing the South African labour markets include high levels of unemployment, massive retrenchments, absenteeism and a lack of twenty-first century competencies (Lilford, 2006; Mageni & Slabbert, 2005; Nzimande, 2005).

Several organisations have to face transformation as a result of external environmental changes (Viljoen & Rothmann, 2002). In the recent past higher education institutions in

South Africa have been subjected to major transformations because of several external factors, including the business environment, globalisation and competition, political forces, legislation and technological changes (Viljoen & Rothmann, 2002). Transformation means that staff has to adapt to new ways of doing things, including changes in values, norms, attitudes, perceptions and behaviour (Viljoen & Rothmann, 2002). According to Coetzee and Rothmann (2005), this restructuring includes challenges like equity, diversity, resistance and the establishing of an organisational climate and these challenges can make staff feel powerless, pessimistic, fearful and anxious.

Apart from the transformation process, staff in higher education institutions also experiences stressors such as working overtime, which prevents employees from taking adequate care of home responsibilities, resulting in WFC (Aryee, Fields, & Luk, 1999). Recent changes in technology (e.g., mobile phones, emails, laptops) enable higher education staff to have autonomy that is more personal. This, however result in unclear boundaries between work and family. Another challenge employees face, is the downsizing of companies, in order to reduce costs, leaving survivors to press on harder and longer, thereby minimizing their personal time (Stoner, Robin, & Russell-Chapin, 2005). Higher-education institutions are also urged to assist the government and private sector in solving community problems. With stressful circumstances such as these, the interaction between work and personal life can be influenced.

International research regarding WPLI has increased over the last years (Geurts, Rutte, & Peeters, 1999; Janssen et al., 2004). Due to the multicultural and diverse nature of the society and workforce as well as the different economical, political and societal factors that can influence WPLI in different ways, international research is, however, not necessarily applicable to the South African context. In general, there are a relative limited number of scientifically sound studies regarding work-home interaction and several limitations characterising WPLI studies in South Africa. These characteristics include poorly designed and controlled studies and a lack of sophisticated statistical analyses. Most of the scales used had poor reliability coefficients and few scales were validated for different demographical groups, especially groups with different language and racial groups. There was also a lack to include all cultural groups in most studies and international measuring instruments were used without determining the equivalence and bias thereof for different cultural or language groups (Mostert, 2006).

In South Africa, diverse cultural backgrounds may attach unique meanings to certain aspects concerning WPLI. It is also possible that different cultural (language) groups of South Africa will have different antecedents and consequences of work-personal life interaction than individuals in other countries. Therefore, it is important to study different language groups in order to see how they experience the interaction between their work and personal lives and which strategies they use to deal with work-personal life interaction. Different ethnical and language groups are concentrated in different areas of South Africa, where Afrikaans and Setswana, Sesotho and Xhosa (African languages) speaking people are mostly located in the Free State. The focus of this study was therefore on the experience of work-life interaction among Afrikaans, Setswana, Sesotho and Xhosa speaking employees working in a higher education institution in the Free State area.

Gender is another important aspect to consider when WPLI is investigated. Women continue to be responsible for the majority child and household duties (Thompson et al., 1999; Wrobel et al., 2003), resulting in women experiencing greater conflict between their work and family life responsibilities. Statistics revealed that female executives are more likely to take leave of absence during their careers than male executives are. Men are also beginning to get more involved in caring for their children and striving towards achieving a balance, but are still giving the impression that they are reluctant to amend their work schedules in order to achieve this balance (Thompson et al., 1999). Wrobel et al. (2003) state that the work/family domain in general becomes less gendered and that progressively more men are discussing how their family demands affect their career development and therefore their career stages.

The objectives of this research were to determine 1) how education staff experienced WPLI; 2) the main dimensions that were in interaction with each other; 3) the major antecedents and consequences of WPLI; 4) which strategies higher education staff used to deal with WPLI; and 5) if language groups and / or males vs. females differed in how they experienced WPLI.

METHOD

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

Research design

For the purpose of this research, a qualitative design from a phenomenological approach was used. In this approach, the researcher was interested in the meaning a person attributed to his or her experiences of reality, the world and relationships. The person's cognitive experience had to be understood and defined because it was only through that, that the true essence of the person's experience could be realised (Rothmann, Gerber, Lubbe, Sieberhagen, & Rothmann, 1998). Qualitative research made it possible to determine the subjective experiences of higher education staff with different ethnical backgrounds.

Participants and procedure

A non-probability purposive voluntary sample of higher education staff at a higher education institution in the Free State Province was used to reach the objectives of this study. The size of the sample in the research was determined by the number of participants who were willing and accessible to participate. Data was collected until data saturation was reached, resulting in a sample size of 24. The population was stratified in terms of language (Afrikaans vs. African languages*) and gender (males vs. females). Fourteen people in the Afrikaans group (five females and nine males) and ten people in the African language group (seven females and three males) were accessible and willing to participate. Although the sample was not stratified in terms of marital and parental status (two variables that can play an important role in the experience of WLI), an effort was made to ensure variation of employees who were married vs. employees who were single, as well as employees who had (young) children vs. employees who had no or older (18+ years) children.

The selection criteria used to determine which participants should be included in the sample were 1) higher education staff in the Free State Province; 2) higher education staff from four main language groups (i.e., Afrikaans, Setswana, Sesotho and Xhosa); 3) higher education staff employed in a work environment for at least two or more years; 4) higher education staff who was willing to participate in the research (and who gave written informed consent) after having been informed about the purpose and procedures of the research; and 5) higher

* Three major African language groups were included in this study, namely Setswana, Sesotho and Xhosa.

education staff who was able to understand and communicate in either Afrikaans or English and who was prepared to have a tape-recorded interview with the researcher.

The researcher requested to conduct a study at a higher education institution, where the Vice Rector of Academic Planning requested the approval of 1) the research protocol and 2) clearance by the Ethical Committee of the university conducting the research. After the participating university received the requested information, the study was approved the contact number of the research department was provided to identify possible participants. The research department identified six different faculties in the university and gave the contact numbers of the dean of each faculty. Thereafter, each dean identified possible participants in the faculty. Individuals who were willing and available to participate were called in order to schedule interviews. After the interview, the participants were asked to complete a short biographical questionnaire that included race, language, gender, marital and parental status, position as well as career phase. The characteristics of participants are given in Table 1.

Table 1

Characteristics of Participants (n = 24)

Item	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	12	50,0
	Female	12	50,0
Language	Afrikaans	14	58,3
	Setswana	5	20,8
	Sesotho	3	12,5
	Xhosa	2	8,3
Marital Status	Not married	6	25,03
	Married	15	62,5
	Divorced	3	12,47
Parental Status	No children	6	25,0
	With children	18	75,0
Number of Children	1 Child	5	20,8
	2 Children	8	33,3
	3 Children	5	20,8
	Not applicable	6	25,0
Career Phase	Growth (4-13 years)	0	0
	Exploration (14-24 years)	0	0
	Establishment (25-44 years)	18	75,8
	Maintenance (45-65 years)	6	25,0
	Disengagement (65 years and over)	0	0
Position at work	Administration officer	1	4,2
	Administration administrator	1	4,2
	Personal assistant	1	4,2
	Co-ordinator	1	4,2
	Lecturer	15	62,5
	Associate professor	2	8,3
	Head of department	1	4,2
	Programme director	1	4,2
	Dean	1	4,2

According to Table 1, an equal number of males (50,0%) and females (50,0%) participated in the study. The majority of the participants were Afrikaans-speaking (58,3%), married (62,5%), with children (75,0%) and had 2 children at most (33,3%). The most participants

were in the establishment phase of their careers (25-44 years) (75,8%), and most were lecturers (62,5%).

Data Collection

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

Pilot study

The goal of a pilot study is to experiment with the interviewing design with a small number of participants (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, & Delpont, 2002). A pilot study is a prerequisite for the successful execution and completion of a research project. It allows a researcher to acquire thorough background knowledge about a specific problem that the researcher intends to investigate. The purpose of the pilot study is to improve the success and effectiveness of the investigation (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, Poggenpoel, & Schurink, 1998). In this research, a pilot study was used to identify the possible unexpected problems, which could emerge during the main investigation. The pilot study consisted of the first three available higher education staff. The pilot study was a valuable way to gain practical knowledge of and insight into the problem and assisted in making the necessary modifications in the data-gathering instrument. After the pilot study, interview questions that had not been clear were refined and adjusted before the main investigation proceeded. An expert with a knowledgeable background of qualitative interviews and work-life interaction evaluated the final interview schedule for appropriateness.

Interview

The measuring instrument used in this research was an unstructured interview, based on the phenomenological paradigm. When this type of interview is used, the researcher studies the phenomenon without predetermined expectations of categories and tries to understand the data from the perspective of the participant. The interview took place where it best suited the participant. Attention was given to the climate or atmosphere of the room, to ensure that the participant was at ease. A 'do not disturb' sign was put outside the door to ensure that the

interview would not be interrupted. The researcher introduced herself in a friendly and warm manner and explained the context of the interview. With the permission of the participant, tape-recorders were used. The participants were informed that all the interviews would be recorded in order to recall the conversation. These tape-recorded interviews were only available to the researchers involved in the study and therefore the information on the tape was treated confidentially and anonymously. The participants were also informed that the tapes would be terminated after it had been transcribed and the study was completed. It was emphasised that the participant could withdraw from the study at any time.

All the participants were asked the following three standard 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 major 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?”

In order to ensure that the participant was comfortable during the whole interview, the researcher faced the participant squarely in a relaxed way, had an open body posture and leaned slightly forward. The researcher also kept eye contact with the participant at all times. Non-directive dialogue techniques like minimal verbal responses (e.g., “mm-mm, yes, I see”), paraphrasing (stating the participant’s words in another form with the same meaning), clarification (e.g., “Can you tell me more about...” and “You seem to be saying...”), reflection (e.g., “So, you believe that...”), reflective summary (“so what you’re saying...”) and silence were used to assist the participants to share their experiences.

Field notes

Immediately after each interview, the researcher wrote down the impressions of the interview (De Vos et al., 2002). Field notes included aspects the researcher heard, saw, experienced and thought about during the course of the interview and included the empirical observation and interpretations thereof. Therefore, the researcher wrote down her emotions, preconceptions, expectations and prejudices so that they could be developed into the final product.

Trustworthiness

The facts of a study must be accurate, consistent, clear, relevant and objective (De Vos et al., 2002). 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 descriptions 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 and conformability (which were accomplished by using the criterion of neutrality or freedom from bias), and by keeping an appropriate distance in order not to influence the research.

Data analysis

Data was transcribed verbatim and checked by independent researchers. A vital aspect of understanding the meaning that people attach to work-personal life interaction is the understanding of the data from the perspective of the participants' work and personal lives. In this study, the results of the interviews were analysed by using content analysis. Content analysis consisted of the following steps (Giorgi, in press; Kerlinger, 1986):

- The first step in content analysis was to define the universe of content to be analysed and categorised (for example the entire set of verbal answers of the participants).
- The second step was to identify individual units (themes). The researcher read the responded notes in order to form an overall image. Afterwards, the researcher once again read it in order to identify the themes. The words that were used by the participant were the smallest analysis that could be made. A sub-theme is usually a sentence and is more difficult but also more useful to analyse. Sub-themes can be combined in order to determine the themes. The analysis of the information was persistent until repeated themes were identified.
- The third step was to free the data from unnecessary information and to determine the meaning of the rest of the subunits by linking it to the whole picture.

- The fourth step consisted of the conversion of the concrete language of the participants, into scientific language and concepts. The precise words of the participants were used in support, based on gained insights, integration and synthesis was then done.

The number of objects per category was counted and placed in order of preference. The credibility of the content analysis was promoted by the coding that was done by the researcher and an Industrial Psychologist with a comprehensive background based on content analysis. A literature-control was done to investigate relevant research in order to determine the comparativeness and distinctiveness of the current research (Krefting, 1991).

The researcher strived to promote the validity by spending enough time with the participant in order to establish rapport. Social-desirable responses were minimised by making use of dialogue techniques. Rephrasing and repetition of questions were used in order to gain credibility of information. The researcher made use of a diary to highlight the ideas and feelings of the respondents throughout the research process. These notes consisted of information about the problems and frustrations that were experienced (Krefting, 1991).

Ethical aspects

Conducting research is an ethical enterprise. Research ethics provide researchers with a code of moral guidelines on how to conduct research in a morally acceptable way. Several aspects as suggested by Struwig and Stead (2001) were considered in order to retain an ethical climate. The researcher was honest, fair and respectful towards the participants and did not attempt to mislead or misinform the research participants. The researcher also respected the rights and dignity of others, and this included respecting the privacy, confidentiality and autonomy of the research participants. The researcher was also mindful to cultural and individual differences among people and was sensitive towards aspects such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, language and socio-economic status. The researcher did not knowingly discriminate against people on the basis of such factors. The welfare of others was of foremost concern. Finally, the researcher avoided or diminished any harm that could occur to the research participant as a consequence of the interaction with them.

RESULTS

The results obtained are shown in Table 2, 3, 4 and 5. Each table shows the themes with sub-themes and the total number of males or females in their specific culture/language group that supports these themes and sub-themes. Each main theme has supporting sub-themes. The total frequency of responses of the themes and sub-themes are shown in the last column. The results of the interviews with Afrikaans-speaking females are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

The Experience of Work-Personal Life Interaction of Afrikaans Females (n = 5)

Theme and sub-themes	Frequency
Theme 1 Time and / or strain-based conflict between work and personal life	3,25
a) Experience of constant conflict between work and home roles	4
b) Family life	4
c) Work life	4
d) Feelings of fatigue	1
Theme 2 Women attach value to spending time with their family	3
a) Children come first	3
b) Time with children and husband are important	3
Theme 3 Consequences of work and personal life	1,5
a) Work influences personal life	3
b) No time for self	1
c) Less time to sleep	1
d) Personal life influences work	1
Theme 4 Aspects making it easier to cope with the interaction between work and personal life	4,5
a) Support from husband, colleagues and housekeeper	5
b) Flexitime at work	4
Theme 5 A choice to be a mother and to have a career although it is difficult	2
a) Need to be exposed to things outside home	2

Theme 1: Time and / or strain-based conflict between work and personal life

Women, especially women with children, experienced that they had different roles and responsibilities at work and at home and they were to be both at work and home the whole time: "...it is not to say that I am only here from eight until one and then at home for the rest

of the afternoon. I must be present at both places the whole day". This is consistent with the time-based conflict that Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identified namely that conflict arises when time spend on activities in one role hampers the execution of responsibilities in another role. Afrikaans-speaking women also experienced strain-based conflict because they had absolute responsibilities in both the work and home domain, resulting in constant conflict between their role as a mother and their careers: *"...the role of a mother in a career and her work have incredible conflict, it is conflict from the morning until the evening"*. Literature confirmed this finding through stating that strain-based conflict arises when pressures from one role interferes with fulfilling the requirements of another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). These pressures are often described as inter-role conflict (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Demerouti et al., 2004; Geurts & Dijkers, 2002; Rotondo et al., 2002).

Several studies have documented that women continue to be responsible for the majority of child and household duties (Thompson et al., 1999; Wrobel et al., 2003). Consistent with this finding, a participant stated: *"Even though I receive help from my husband, who I think sometimes goes overboard when helping me, there are just primary responsibilities, which will always stay yours"*. Working mothers could not for example work late like their husbands, because they had responsibilities at home. It was clear that these home responsibilities were on top of the responsibilities they already had at work. Sometimes women felt they would rather stay home and care for the children, but then it would have financial implications: *"So sometimes you feel that you don't want to work. I would rather stay at home and give attention to my family, but the financial implications are the other side of it, it requires you to work"*.

Children, especially young children, were the biggest determining factor that made the interaction difficult, which subsequently affected the work domain in such a manner that they could not give the work outputs that they wanted to because of the responsibilities towards their children: *"...and have children, it is the children that make the difference. Married women who I talk to, I see my colleagues in the hall who don't have children, they definitely deliver more academically outputs at this stage than what I can deliver..."*. Consistent with this reasoning, literature suggests that employed parents of young children experience more work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Thompson et al., 1999). Consequently, working mothers could not separate work and home, because sometimes they could not give all their attention at work because of something happening at home or vice versa: *"It is*

difficult for me to separate the two; it is not easy for me. If I had a bad day at work then it would go to my home, or if I am worried about my children, I will have more stress at work and I will think about it at work”.

The end result of constant demands made in the work and home domains are chronic tiredness and stress: “...*I don’t feel that I am functioning at peak level at this stage, I feel really tired, chronically tired, chronically a little bit of underlying stress...*”. These findings support the dual-process model of work-home interference (WHI) which suggests that job demands (mental and physical) are primarily related to feelings of exhaustion (Bakker & Geurts, 2004).

Theme 2: Women attach value to spending time with their family

Women attached a lot of value to spending time with their family and therefore they chose to put their family first, giving them a great deal of their time and making many sacrifices for them. When children were little, they always came first. Most working mothers did not want to take work home because they felt it was their time with their family and if they did take work home, they only worked once the children were in bed. They wanted to spend time with their children and their activities: “*Let me define it, more time with my children means that I am not a fulltime mom who can be with her children the whole day, but I still have the need to if my son who is in grade one plays his first hockey game, I would love to attend it*”. They chose not to take time for themselves in order to spend more time with their children. They also wanted to spend time alone with their husbands: “... *and then my husband and I make a point of it to go and drink coffee somewhere in order to bond a little bit*”. They tried to use their time as effectively as possible in order to spend the most time they could with their families.

Theme 3: Consequences of work and personal life

There is a constant spill over between the work and home domains (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Demerouti et al., 2004; Geurts & Dijkers, 2002; Geurts et al., 2005; Kotze, 2005). Results obtained from the interviews with participants confirmed this statement: “...*we have pressure times, especially during test and exams when the marks must go in, so when we work against time, and sometimes because of our administrative duties, then some of your work is left and*

then you must work at home". This resulted in having no time for themselves (taking care of their physical appearance – beauty treatments and going to the gym), they only had time for their families and their work: *"...I don't spend any time on myself, I only spend time with my family and my work"*; *"...I don't have the time to go for a pedicure or a facial"*; *"...I can't gym, I don't have time for it, I would have liked to do it, but I don't have time for it"*.

Apart from this, they did not get enough sleep because of children and because of work that had to be done at home: *"...I definitely sleep less than I need to, I don't feel like I could go and run a comrades marathon, because I would fall asleep somewhere within the first hour"*. It was also more difficult to work at home with little children because the children did not like it when their mothers worked at home: *"...my son doesn't like it at all when I for example sit at home and work..."*. Personal life also influenced work life because mothers had to take more time off work to fulfil responsibilities towards their children: *"... because you must take off from work to sort things out with the teachers at school regarding the children"*; *"...if the children are sick I must get them at school and take them to the doctor"*. This is in line with statistics stating that females are more likely to take leave of absence during their career in order to fulfil their family responsibilities (Thompson et al., 1999; Wrobel et al., 2003).

Theme 4: Aspects making it easier to cope with the interaction between work and personal life

Several aspects made it easier for working women to cope with the interaction between the work and family lives. Husbands who supported their wives, husband and wife in the same career, partnership between husband and wife (how they divided the household tasks), housekeepers that helped with the caretaking of the children and the household tasks, personality, prioritising, friends and colleagues and taking a break and go out for lunch: *"...it is nice that we are both in the same career, he understands very well what frustration I experience when I tell him that my article was not accepted"*; *"...then I have a fulltime maid who is my next support system, she is my children's mother in the afternoon when I am not there"*; *"...I have one or two good friends that work with we me in the department and I find that we talk about the same stuff, we try to support and help one another"*.

As mothers, they tried to balance these two domains in their lives through working half-day or flexi hours. Flexible working hours were very important to working mothers, because they felt they had more control over their time and because they had time for things resulting in a quality personal life: *"...on the one side, I think the quality of your personal life is better, because you have time for it, if you make time for it"*. They were also responsible and made sure that their work was up to date: *"...we work flexi hours, I am not one of the administrative people who must work from eight until half past five. We have certain hours that we must be in the office, but it is more about your responsibilities. You must make sure that you fulfil your responsibilities"*. This led to careful planning in terms of time to fulfil responsibilities at work and at home (children).

Theme 5: A choice to be a mother and to have a career although it is difficult

The dual-process model of WHI claims that when employees leave work and go home cheerfully after a successful day at work, they experience a positive influence on their private lives (Bakker & Geurts, 2004). As indicated by the interviews, these women chose to be a mother and to work because they got so much satisfaction from their work and they knew they could be there for their children because of the flexitime they worked: *"It is my decision and in the second place it is so satisfying. I feel so fulfilled, as I am sitting here, because I know my children are happy and I spend more time with them than a mommy who has an eight to five work"*; *"...in order for me to have interests outside home, because I think you can get dulled at home"*; *"I must frequently be stimulated through people"*.

They also felt like they were sacrificing for their children now, but they kept on working because one day when their children were independent of them, they would still have a career because they stayed in the job market: *"That I see with my friends who decided to be a fulltime mom, in ten years' time my children are going to be independent of me and they are going to have their own lives and then I can go on with my career fulltime, because I kept my foot in the door the whole time. But I don't know what that people are going to do. I don't know what women are going to do because they don't have something to fall back on. And the other thing is you know how technology changes. If you are out of the technology milieu only one year, then there is an I-pod or a thing on the market and you don't know how it works and those women would probably be able to go back and work again if they wanted to. But I don't think in a very specialised, fulfilling career, it would be a type of, maybe an*

administrative work, it sounds as if I am against it and that is not my intention". These women did not want to give less attention to one of the domains (work or home), but they would make sacrifices in all the areas in their lives, but they would not sacrifice their family lives. The results of the interviews with African females are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

The Experience of Work-Personal Life Interaction of African Females (n = 7)

Theme and sub-themes		Frequency
Theme 1	Characteristics of the work environment	2,75
	a) Heavy workload and long working hours	4
	b) Demands from lecturing, research and students	3
	c) Accommodating work environment	3
	d) Positive aspects	1
Theme 2	Personal life	3,5
	a) Time for self to recharge and to rest	3
	b) Studies	4
Theme 3	Consequences of interaction in personal life	3
	a) Family	4
	b) Friends	3
	c) Self	2
	d) Taking work home	3
	e) Personal life also influences work life	3
Theme 4	The role of a woman and the demands and resources in her personal life	3,5
	a) Various roles and responsibilities	4
	b) Children and husband	3
	c) Cooking, cleaning and other household chores	5
	d) Things that help in the home situation	2
Theme 5	Strategies that help with the interaction	1,7
	a) Personality	2
	b) Time management and planning	2
	c) Experience	1
Theme 6	Interaction between work and personal life	6

Theme 1: Characteristics of work environment

African women's work environment was characterised by a heavy workload and long working hours. As a result of time demands and deadlines they felt that they could not do quality work because there was no time, which led to getting no or little job satisfaction: "...you are just running to meet deadlines, you know you are just rushing to make deadlines, and there isn't quality time to do one thing, you know, that you get job satisfaction, that I have done this to the best of my ability, you know, you just rush everything". Another consequence of the heavy workload was that they had to work long hours and spend extra time at the office or take work home over weekends and holidays: "...over the weekends, over the holidays, we don't even have a holiday. I was here on Women's Day I was in this office, on 16 June, I was in this office". Other work demands they had were lecturing, research, demanding students and compiling study guides.

The academic environment were very accommodating for women who had ambitions and wanted a career and who also wanted to be a mother: "I think it is better especially when one is a mom, you know, your kid, actually I think every mom would love to be home with the children, I mean that is ideal, but then we've got ambitions and careers to pursue so I think this environment accommodates you". This work environment also gave them security and enabled them to make career decisions with their family in mind because they were able to make decisions that could enhance their family: "I know I will never be told, there is a promotion for you, you have to move to Johannesburg or you've got to move to Cape Town and stuff. I want to be settled with my family, you know, I don't want my husband and baby to be there. So that kind of security is important to me, because I am a family person. Everything, everything I do must be to enhance my family, I don't want to do anything at the expense of my family and some careers people experience that".

It is also an extremely accommodating work environment for women with family obligations because of flexible working hours. The flexible working hours supported mothers in taking care of their children, especially when their children were sick: "...my baby was sick the other day, and I was able to leave the office at 11am, because there was something urgent at the hospital, I was there for about one and a half hours and then I came back and I started to work at 2 o'clock in the afternoon. It wasn't a big hassle because my lectures were done, I have marked whatever was supposed to be marked and everything was submitted so I could

have that time to focus on the child's health. I don't know what the case would be in the private sector, I didn't have to fill out and say this is how many hours and it cost me this much...". They could use their time as they saw fit, because their work got evaluated according to the outputs. The outputs included that their work were done and delivered on time and their research were evaluated according to the output. This environment also gave them a chance to accommodate their studies, but the flexible working hours also had to be managed well: "It is very flexible; sometimes I am even scared of the flexibility, because you are given a long rope to hang yourself".

These women also enjoyed positive aspects in the work environment: *"The positive side is I really do enjoy lecturing, that is the part I like the most, and more so to have this multicultural setup"; "...the emotional aspect is that I really enjoy the atmosphere here, I enjoy my colleagues and although the workload kind of dampens the spirit, but otherwise we interact very well and I think it is okay, I enjoy it here".*

The results obtained in this theme supports the dual-process model of WHI that states that job characteristics can be categorised in two broad categories, namely job demands and job resources (Bakker & Geurts, 2004). The model suggests that job demands (mental and physical demands as mentioned above) are primarily related to feelings of exhaustion, whereas job resources (colleague supports, flexible working hours as mentioned above) are primarily related to the flow of work.

Theme 2: Personal life

They had hectic schedules at work and that was why it was important to them to have time to themselves after work and time to take care of themselves: *"...and start like eating healthy, healthy you know we ignore that, you know you can work for so many hours and we even neglect to eat and when you eat, you're eating the wrong stuff, you just want something, a pack of chips, quickly, so that you can get back to your work and that is not good for one's health, so that's important, exercise, healthy eating, it's a foundation for being a successful career woman and wife or mother or whatever you know, your body must physically be well taken care of, because if your body fails you enough, you end up in the hospital, you know in ICU, the risk of losing your own life and when that happens, then you are no longer a career woman everything is just gone, so one's physical well-being is very important so I try to eat*

healthy, and I am learning that now". Some women, mainly single or divorced women, with or without children bettered their qualifications.

Theme 3: Consequences of interaction in personal life

Work could influence home in such a way that time with the family was not enjoyed as it should be enjoyed: *"...when I get home and I am suppose to be with my son and my husband I am feeling guilty because I didn't submit something and then as a result I am not enjoying this role of being a mom and that means I am not participating, I am not contributing because I am feeling guilty because of something I didn't do, so that means I should do what I should do when I said I would do it. Then I am happier when I move to the next role, finding that balance and that discipline, it's very challenging as we are emotional beings."*

Some women coped by putting themselves last, work first and family second which resulted in not attending the children's activities, especially during the week. They did not get time for friends and they became anti-social because they felt that their career took up so much of their personal lives that there was no time for a personal life: *"...I really become sort of anti-social, you know to me fun it is part of my agenda and it shouldn't be, I'll get older faster than I can think."; "...you get tired, you get to a point where you realise your life is not about academic work only, it's boring, it is definitely boring, I am not doing anything that I like anymore, and I think I have done that to my daughter, I have done so much harm, to her, because she is expected to be as anti-social as I am, because you get so busy, you cannot, find time to go to a movie and one could do that actually, and still enjoy your work, that's the thing, being a mother, and being a single mother, complicates the whole thing..."*

Work influenced personal lives because they thought about the problems at work when they were at home and it influenced their behaviour at home. They were also exhausted when they got home because of the constant pressure to meet deadlines. Another negative consequence was that if they failed to get enough rest, they got headaches, they could not concentrate and then fainted: *"If you are neglecting yourself that means you neglect to rest enough, we need to rest, but I am so focused on doing everything that I have to do for everyone else, for my boss at work or for my career, for my husband or for my son and their well-being and all that, and at the end of the day it is 10:00 0'clock at night, and I have not had enough time to just do something for me, stay in the bath or pamper myself"*

They must also spend extra time at the office or bring work home in order to finish their work. When there is something wrong with their husbands or children, they worry about it at work, resulting in them not doing their work as effectively as they would like to. When their children are sick they must take off from work to take care of their children, but because of the flexible working hours they work it is not a problem. Then another problem arises when the mother is trying to work at home but her children makes it difficult for her to work there or they don't like it when she works at home. Therefore, she can only work at home while the children are sleeping. It is clear that there is a constant spill-over between their work- and home domain (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Demerouti et al., 2004; Geurts & Dijkers, 2002; Geurts et al., 2005; Kotzè, 2005).

Theme 4: The role of a woman and the demands and resources in her personal life

Employees in today's workforce have to occupy a number of different roles in life, resulting in a greater proportion of workers that experience a greater challenge in their roles as employee, parent and spouse (Mageni & Slabbert, 2005; Montgomery et al., 2005). This finding was substantiated by the following quotation: *"As women we play so many roles, you play a role of a wife, as I have just mentioned and you play a role of a mother and you play a role of a daughter, you play a role of a colleague and all that, so all that coupled with your workload, makes your life hectic"*. Most participants perceived it as challenging to work and to take care of a husband, children, parents and household chores (cooking and domestic obligations).

There were also two support systems for women, their husbands and the housekeepers: *"I think I am blessed to have my husband, because he is involved in everything, actually he prefers to do the grocery shopping, let's say I am lecturing till late, he doesn't mind, he will go on a ride with my son and then he does the grocery shopping, we cook together, if our helper is on leave, we will clean the house together, he will be scrubbing the floor, and I will be doing the dishes, so he is not a typical, traditional guy, he is involved as a family person, I mean our well-being is very important to him, so he is equally involved"*.

Theme 5: Strategies that help with the interaction

Personality, time management and planning, and experience were strategies used by these women to cope with the interaction between their work and personal lives on a daily basis. If some aspects of their personality was not effective to deal with the demands in their work environment they adapted to the demands in the work environment: “...*you have to have your policies in place and a principal that guides you, but then still have room to open for things that don't go right, you need to be committed, basically you have to learn to be like that, you have to change your personality, you have to change the way you are doing things to rethink the whole thing*”. They did their planning by prioritising in order to achieve balance between their work and personal lives and if something unforeseen upset their planning, they learned to be flexible: “*you can either decide to go with the flow, or you can stress and make everybody else miserable, so I have learnt to go with the flow, this is a way of surviving*”. Experience made it easier to adapt to situations. They had good interpersonal relationships with the people at work and they had to be disciplined to manage their time.

Theme 6: Interaction

The interaction between their work and personal lives was difficult and challenging, but they tried to keep harmony and balance by prioritising. They tried to achieve balance in order to be successful in their work and personal lives, because they saw that it was important to keep a balance. Mageni and Slabbert (2005) state that, although there is a constant spill over between the work and home domains, effort must be made to keep these two domains in balance with each other. That was why they had to decide what was important in their work and personal lives and then live accordingly. Sometimes there was no balance between their work and personal lives, because the work took up all the time. However, they felt that it was better to separate their work and personal lives.

The results of the interviews with Afrikaans males are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

The Experience of Work-Personal Life Interaction of Afrikaans Males (n = 9)

Theme and sub-themes		Frequency
Theme 1	The work environment	3,7
	a) Heavy workload	4
	b) High work pressure	6
	c) Low salaries	4
	d) Work demands	3
	e) Work forms big part of life	3
	f) Positive aspects	2
Theme 2	Consequences of work on personal life	5,25
	a) Take work home	6
	b) Less time with family, friends, support groups, religion, hobbies and gym	8
	c) Difficult to "switch off"	4
	d) Stress and burnout	3
Theme 3	Components in personal life	3
	a) Family	6
	b) Recharging batteries	3
Theme 4	Aspects that enhanced coping with the interaction between work and personal life	2
	a) Sharing household tasks	1
	b) Communication	3
	c) Exercising	1
	d) Effective management of work	3
	e) Personality	2
Theme 5	Personal life influences work life	3
	a) Family	3
Theme 6	Interaction	7
	a) Roles must be balanced and lines must be drawn	7

Theme 1: The work environment

According to Bakker and Geurts (2004), the dual-process model of WHI claims that job characteristics can be categorised in two broad categories, namely job demands and job resources. The interviews made it clear that the most of the Afrikaans males identified the following as job demands; very heavy workloads, long working hours, expectations that had

to be fulfilled at work, they felt that they did not get paid enough, research, classes and demanding students: *"...there are certain expectations from work that you must fulfil and over that you don't always have control, it can be how you must work, where you must work, when you must work and how much time you must spend working"; "I think that people have the wrong perceptions that salaries of lecturers or professors are great, but I must honestly say to you, I have heard and I have experienced that third year students or honours students that leave the university receive a higher salary than some professors"*.

Work formed a great part of their lives, because work was important: *"...and now you also reasoned but I am the breadwinner of the family"*, and for some work was the most important aspect in their lives: *"...now at this stage, I am very honest with you, at this stage my work is more important to me than a marriage, because a marriage isn't going to bring money in for me, you understand, so my priority is to keep my work, because if I walk out of here, where am I going to get another job?"*.

They identified the following positive aspects or job resources: Flexible working hours (more quality time), the autonomy to do your own thing, working with students and the type of work they did was found rewarding: *"The reason why I walked away there, financially, those guys who are the same age I am, financially they are far ahead of me, but I knew it when I walked away there, I knew financially I won't stay with them, but that is not why I left, it is because of flexi time and quality time, and I can get involved with sport which those guys can't do"*.

Theme 2: Consequences of work on personal life

There was not enough time at work to complete work. This meant that either they had to work late or they had to work at home during the evenings and weekends. However, people at home did not understand this. This resulted in spending less time with their wives, children and their activities, friends, family, support groups and Bible study. There was not even time for a hobby, working in the garden or going to a gym; *"...you take work home because you have to prepare for work the following day"; "I think you don't give enough attention to your wife and your children because of the work that demand so much in terms of time..."*. It was also difficult to switch off from work because they were constantly thinking about it. It also affected their health, which led to stress and burnout: *"I think people in the academy are*

more inclined to have psychological burnout". This confirmed the results that Bakker and Geurts (2004) found that employees worrying about their work when they were at home ended up in being unable to fulfil their responsibilities at home.

Theme 3: Components in the personal life

According to Thompson et al. (1999), men are also beginning to get more involved in caring for their children and striving towards achieving balance. This is consistent with the results indicated by the respondents. They valued time with their family and therefore tried to make time for their families: *"...you must make time for your family, otherwise it won't be fair to them if you are only in the study the whole time"*. They also felt that their wives played an important role because they were responsible for the children and had to create a safe environment at home. Small children also required more time and attention than older children did and it placed additional stress on them. Working in the garden, watching sport on television and going to church were other important ways to recharge their batteries.

Theme 4: Aspects that enhanced coping with the interaction between work and personal life

Aspects that enhanced coping included sharing household tasks: *"...if I have more time then I do something at home, if she has more time then she does something at home, so we try to balance it, we are considerate of each other because both of us work, so you can't say it's just me or just her who is going to do something at home"*, communication with the wife: *"I love to discuss things with my wife"*, exercise: *"...and then to exercise, to go jogging and to play tennis, not necessarily to accomplish something, but just to relax and to discharge"*, effective management of work: *"...to work as effectively as possible and to say no for some stuff at work"*; *"...to do effective time management is really important to do all this stuff"*, and personality: *"I think I have relatively good interpersonal skills and I think in a way it helped to prevent conflict and then I think my humour is my saviour"*.

Theme 5: Personal life influences work-life

Their personal lives influenced their work lives: *"I think if things in your home environment, between you and your spouse, or between you and your friends or family aren't right, it*

definitely has an influence on your mood at work, your concentration, the quality of work you do, because you are preoccupied with what's going on at home... ”. If they spent too much time working it influenced the personal life and vice versa. This confirmed the negative antecedents of the work-nonwork interface identified by Geurts and Dikkers (2002).

Theme 6: Interaction

Sometimes the interaction between work and personal life was harder because of work pressure. However, they experienced that at other times it was easier to balance their work and private lives. Another important aspect that made it difficult to balance their lives was the incompatibility of the roles in the work place and the roles in the personal life, resulting in conflict between the two domains: “...*both of these different parts of your life, the work and the personal life have some expectations and certain roles that you must meet. And these expectations and roles aren't always compatible*”. This is in line with the research findings of Mageni and Slabbert (2005) and Montgomery et al. (2005) who stated that employees experienced a greater challenge in their roles as employee, parent and spouse. Most of the time, conflict flowed over from the work environment to the personal environment. Therefore, setting limits on the time spent in the work domain became important.

The results of the interviews with African males are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

The Experience of Work-Personal Life Interaction of African Males (n = 3)

Theme and sub-themes		Frequency
Theme 1	The work environment	1,6
	a) Heavy workload	2
	b) Long working hours	2
	c) Low salaries	1
	d) Work demands	2
	e) Positive aspects	1
Theme 2	Personal life	1
	a) Demanding personal life	1
	b) Financial problems and stress	1
Theme 3	Strategies to cope with the interaction	1
	a) Personality	1
	b) Communication	1
	c) Time management	1
	d) Support from spouse	1
	e) Sport	1
Theme 4	Consequences of interaction	1
	a) Difficulties	1
Theme 5	Consequences of work on personal life	2
	a) No time for family and friends	2
	b) Tiredness	2

Theme 1: The work environment

African males experienced a heavy workload. They felt that they had to take work home to complete it, and therefore they had long working hours: *"It is a heavy workload that is why I take some of my work home"*. Some of the respondents also felt that they did not get proper salaries: *"...you don't have a large salary, but we sacrifices ourselves for those children who are here, we know that even though we get less income, but we are professional people that are building towards the nation of the country itself"*. According to Bakker and Geurts (2004), there are job demands and job resources in the work environment. According to the respondents, job demands in their work environment sometimes made it difficult to teach their subjects to the students. Job resources or positive aspects in their work environment were: *"...if you interact on a more casual level, that's absolutely nothing to do with my job, if*

you enjoy such a relationship with your colleagues then it makes it a little bit easier for yourself”; “...so I think what actually works is making it as interesting as possible, there's no work that brings a little bit of growth, except if you make the job to bring growth to you, because the job expects so much from you, but why can't you just get as much from that particular job, create a symbiotic protocol relationship of what you are doing, then you are not just benefiting from the salary you get, you also get to grow and mature as an individual. And you see one thing I like in this institution is that it is so diverse, you never know what to expect”; “the flexible hours at times, with having to sacrifice some of my time for the good of social life and actually integrating my social life into my work and that...”.

Theme 2: Personal life

African male participants experienced their personal lives as demanding: *“I have a family, it is demanding, my wife is working, she leaves earlier, six o'clock in the morning, she returns after five, I have to take care of the kids”; “I am the one who is taking care of the kids, I am the one who is making sure that they eat, they do their homework, they wash before they go to bed, before she arrives, so you can realise how hectic it is, but we share our responsibilities”.* This statement of the respondent confirmed research that states that men are also beginning to get more involved in caring for their children and striving towards achieving a balance (Thompson et al., 1999). Finally, the participants also experienced financial problems and stress: *“...when you are married and working you have to take care of you have your own financial problems, that you have things that you have to pay, you have kids and they have needs you have your own life that you have to live that need money so there is financial stress, I can put it in that way, there is financial pressure and stress you have to plan financially”.*

Theme 3: Strategies to cope with the interaction

The strategies that participants used to cope with the interaction between their work and personal lives included personality, communication, time management and planning, sport as well as support from spouses. Wrobel et al. (2003) state that the work/family environment in general becomes less gendered and that progressively more men are discussing how their family demands affect their career development. The following quotes confirmed it because men also used strategies to cope with the demanding home and work environment, because

they were equally involved in both just as women were: *"...doing what I am doing at work and focussing on my family problems through planning, time management, communication, absorbing pressure and patience, I think those are the things that help me at the moment"; "...you have to understand our own work situation, our own life situation and our hectic time schedules and so on and we have to share, we have to as partners"; "I am an athlete, I do it daily, I go out and I train to keep stress levels down"*.

Theme 4: Consequences of interaction

They found it difficult to manage the interaction between their work and personal lives: *"It is not easy to work and on the other hand, enjoy your personal life, as I am married, I have to juggle around my work, a heavy schedule, and my family"*. This quotation confirmed research that states that there are demands in the work and home domains resulting in a constant spill over between these two domains (Bakker & Geurts, 2004).

Theme 5: Consequences of work on personal life

The men in this study found that because of work there was no time to spend with their families and friends and they were often tired: *"Sometimes it's difficult, you see, it's the result, sometimes you lose time with your family, but you try to make up over weekends"; "Sometimes you come home late and your children are asleep and you couldn't sit with them and talk to them and sometimes you wake up and you leave and they have to go to school just like that, so that is difficult"; "Sometimes when I leave I am very tired the following day I have to wake up again"*. This confirmed research done by Bakker and Geurts (2004) who found that feelings of exhaustion are caused by job demands and these feelings spill over to the private domain of the employee's life.

DISCUSSION

Afrikaans women and men, as well as African women and men from this study all experienced time and strain-based conflict. According to the literature, time-based conflict arises when time spend on activities in one role hampers the execution of responsibilities in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) and strain-based conflict arises when pressures

from one role interferes with fulfilling the requirements of another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Participants experienced their work as being characterised by a heavy workload and long working hours. Another consequence of the heavy workload was that they had to work long hours and spend extra time at the office or take work home during evenings, weekends and holidays. All of the participants confirmed that they found it difficult to separate the work and home domains, although they tried to set boundaries or to balance it. This confirmed literature stating that there is a constant spill over between the work- and home domains (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Demerouti et al., 2004; Geurts & Dijkers, 2002; Geurts et al., 2005; Kotzé, 2005).

Children, especially young children, were the biggest determining factor that made the interaction difficult, because they required more attention. Consistent with this reasoning, literature suggests that employed parents of young children experience more work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Thompson et al., 1999). The young children of participants also did not like it when their parents worked at home. The heavy workload left employees feeling tired and stressed which ultimately led to burnout. This correlated with research done by Bakker and Geurts (2004) who found that feelings of exhaustion were caused by job demands and these feelings spilled over to the private domain of the employee's life. All the groups experienced the above, but especially women (Afrikaans and African) complained that they did not sleep enough.

Afrikaans and African women also stated that they put their families first and that they would do nothing to sacrifice their family. They felt that they were still the primary caretakers of their families and that they were still responsible for the majority child and household duties, although their husbands helped them enormously with these duties. Several studies have documented that women continue to be responsible for the majority child and household duties (Thompson et al., 1999; Wrobel et al., 2003). It was also important to them to have a family and a career because it provided them with a feeling of fulfilment. The dual-process model of WHI claims that employees that leave work and go home cheerfully after a successful day at work, experience a positive influence on their private lives, they experience flow (positive WHI) (Bakker & Geurts, 2004). The female participants felt that although it

was every mother's dream to be with her children the whole day, it was their choice to pursue their careers because they were ambitious. Their choice also had financial implications.

The men (Afrikaans and African) felt that they shared the child and household duties with their wives. Research done by Thompson et al. (1999) confirmed that men were also starting to become more involved in caring for their children and striving towards achieving balance. Their work formed a big part of their lives but they also tried to spend enough time with their family. It seemed that their work and family lives were equally important to them, although some of the older Afrikaans-speaking men stated that their work came first because they were the only breadwinner in the family. Men from both groups did not mention, as the women did, where time for themselves fitted in with the work and family lives. The men also felt that their salaries are not enough.

Several aspects helped the participants with the interaction between their work and private lives, including support from spouses, division of family and household duties, friends and colleagues, and the flexible working hours. The women added that their housekeeper helped them a great deal while the men made time to exercise. Strategies that the participants used to cope with the interaction was (Afrikaans males) to decline work if they were already overloaded, (African language women), using their time as effectively as possible (Afrikaans-speaking females and males), prioritising (Afrikaans and African women), planning and time management (all four groups), and their personality (Afrikaans and African women and men).

LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is necessary to note some limitations of the current study. The first limitation of this study concerned the use of qualitative research. Qualitative research has its strong and weak points and the weak points of qualitative research was a limitation. Although qualitative research was the best way to examine the experience of work-personal life interaction in this study, there are some aspects that needed attention. For instance, no translator was used during the interviews in this study and some of the participants of this study needed to take part in this interview by using their second or third language. Although the participants participated successfully in the interview, the risk remained that the participants could not express themselves, as they would have in their first language. The second limitation was the

exclusive use of higher education staff at the same institution. The study was stratified in terms of language (ethnicity) and gender. Although the same number of males and females participated in the study, the different languages were not spread evenly. This was mainly because individuals participated willingly and the researcher did not have the power to control how many people of different languages participated.

To overcome the limitations in future research, certain recommendations can be made for future studies. In order to obtain quality results, attention must be given to the use of a translator during interviews with participants who speak a different language than the interviewer. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research can also be used in order to reduce the weak points of both research methods. When research is going to be done in a specific field, more than one institution in that field must be used in order to compare the results of the different institutions in the same field of expertise. Lastly, future researchers must make sure that once they have stratified their study, they must try to get the necessary amount of information in each specific stratified unit relative to the other stratified units of the study.

The organisation must be more aware of the difficulties that male and female employees encounter in their different roles as employee, parent and spouse. Although education institutions already give lecturers flexible working hours, they must also look at the workload and work pressure. Organisations must either recruit more lecturers or support personnel, or the organisation must have programmes in place to support the employees. Programmes must include aspects such as how to manage your time effectively, how to take adequate care of themselves to stay healthy in order to prevent burnout and ill health, educate them on what the signs of burnout are in order to prevent it or support programmes in order to help employees take care of their children. The organisation must make sure that employees' remuneration are what it is supposed to be because this also has an influence on they way people work and how they feel about their work.

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CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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

3.1 CONCLUSIONS

The first objective of this study was to determine how higher education staff experienced work-personal life interaction. The results obtained indicated that the Afrikaans and African women and men who participated in the study experienced time and strain-based conflict. According to literature time-based conflict arises when time spent on activities in one role hampers the execution of responsibilities in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) and strain-based conflict arises when pressures from one role interferes with fulfilling the requirements of another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The second objective of this study was to determine the main dimensions in the lives of higher education staff that were in interaction with each other. The findings suggest that the main dimensions in the work environment that were in interaction with the home environment of the participants included a heavy workload, long working hours and relationships with colleagues. In the home environment, the main dimensions that were identified included the family (spouse and children), household duties (housekeeper), friends and personal time. The results revealed that participants found it difficult to separate the work- and home domains, although they tried to set boundaries. This statement confirmed literature that stated that there is a constant spill over between the work and home domains (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Demerouti, Geurts, & Kompier (2004); Geurts & Dijkers, 2002; Geurts et al., 2005; Kotzè, 2005).

The third objective of this study was to determine the major antecedents and consequences of work-personal life interaction (WPLI) for higher education staff. The results showed that the heavy workload and long working hours resulted in males and females taking work home.

This meant spending less time with the family (their spouses and children). This especially had an effect on young children. Literature also confirms that employed parents of young children experience more work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). Mothers who participated in the study also did not work at home until their children were asleep at night. This resulted in conflict between the work and home domains because of the constant spill over between the two. The work domain was influenced by the home domain and vice versa. Men and women were thinking about things in the family domain (relationships, spouses, or sick children) while they were at work. Due to this constant spill over, employees felt tired and stressed, especially the women complained about not getting enough sleep. These results were in line with previous studies, which indicated that feelings of exhaustion were caused by job demands and these feelings spilled over to the private domain of the employee's life (Bakker & Geurts, 2004). Positive aspects that helped them to cope with the interaction, were flexible working hours, support from their spouses, sharing of family and household duties, friends and colleagues. The women also indicated that having a housekeeper helped them enormously.

The fourth objective of this study was to determine which strategies higher education staff used to deal with work-personal life interaction issues. Several aspects helped the participants with the interaction between their work and private lives, including support from their spouses, division of family and household duties, friends and colleagues, as well as the flexible working hours they had. The women added that their housekeeper helped them a great deal while the men made time to exercise. Strategies that the participants used to cope with the interaction, was to decline work if they were already overloaded, experience, using their time as effectively as possible, prioritising, planning and time management, and their personality.

3.2 LIMITATIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

It is necessary to note some limitations of the current study. The first limitation of this study concerns some aspects in the use of qualitative research. Although qualitative research was the best way to examine the experience of work-personal life interaction (WPLI) in this study, some aspects needed attention. Qualitative research makes use of in-depth interviewing and is an important research tool for data-gathering. The interview is also

flexible and dynamic and is known as non-directive, non-standardised, unstructured and open-ended. When the researcher encountered participants face-to-face, it was directed towards the understanding of the perspectives the participants had on their lives, and their experiences expressed in their own words (Botha, 2001). However, no translator was used during the interviews in this study and some of the participants of this study had to participate in this interview by using their second or third language. Although the participants participated successfully, the risk remained that they could not express themselves as they would have in their first language.

The second limitation was the exclusive use of higher education staff at the same institution. The study was stratified in terms of language (ethnicity) and gender. Although the same number of males and females participated in the study, the different languages were not spread evenly. This was mainly because individuals participated willingly and the researcher did not have the power to control how many people of different languages were willing to participate. Therefore, the study looked at the similarities and differences based on the two race groups that were interviewed namely white (Afrikaans) and black (Setswana, Sesotho, Xhosa) participants. The researcher could also, for the same mentioned reason, not control what the marital and parental status of the participants was, resulting in mostly married with children participants.

3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Notwithstanding these limitations, the current study has important implications for future research and the organisation.

3.3.1. Recommendations for future research

To overcome the limitations in future research, certain recommendations can be made for future studies. In order to obtain quality results, attention must be given to using a translator during an interview with participants who speak a different language than the interviewer. A combination of qualitative and quantitative research can also be used in order to reduce the weak points of both research methods. When research is going to be done in a specific field, more than one institution in that field must be used in order to compare the results of the

different institutions in the same field of expertise. Lastly, future researchers must make sure that once they have stratified their study, they must try to get the necessary amount of information in each specific stratified unit relative to the other stratified units of the study.

3.3.2. Recommendations for the organisation

The organisation must be more aware of the difficulties that male and female employees encounter in their different roles as employee, parent and spouse. This is particularly true for women, since they are most often the primary caretakers of the children, despite the perception that roles have changed with dual-earner couples. Parents with little children also experience more conflict between the work and home domain. Although education institutions already give lecturers flexible working hours, they must also look at the workload and work pressure. Not all, but some lecturers complained about a heavy workload, meaning they must take work home because there is not enough time at work to complete their tasks. Organisations can either recruit more lecturers or supportive personnel, or have programmes in place to support the employees. Programs must include aspects such as how to manage your time effectively, or supportive programs in order to help employees take care of their children. These programs can also teach employees to take adequate care of themselves in order to stay healthy. This will prevent employees from getting ill health and burned out. Employees must also be educated on what the signs of burnout are in order to prevent it. The organisation must make sure that remuneration is adequate because this also has an influence on the way people work and how they feel about their work.

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