

**WORK-LIFE INTERACTION AMONG SETSWANA-  
SPEAKING EDUCATORS IN THE NORTH WEST  
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 follow the format prescribed by the Publication Manual (5<sup>th</sup> edition) of the American Psychological Association (APA). This practice is in line with the policy of the Programme in Industrial Psychology of the North-West University (Potchefstroom) to use APA style in all scientific documents as from January 1999.
- The mini-dissertation is submitted in the form of a research article. The editorial style specified by the South African Journal of Industrial Psychology (which agrees largely with the APA style) is used, but the APA guidelines were followed in constructing tables.

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## **DECLARATION**

I, Lizelle Wentzel, hereby declare that “Work-life interaction among Setswana speaking educators in the North West Province: A phenomenological study” is my own work and that the views and opinions expressed in this work are those of the author and relevant literature references as shown in the references.

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

**LIZELLE WENTZEL**

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## ABSTRACT

**Title:** Work-life interaction among Setswana speaking educators in the North West Province: A phenomenological study.

**Keywords:** Work-personal life interaction, experiences, domains in life, antecedents, consequences, strategies, Setswana-speaking secondary school educators

In an ever-changing world, work and personal life are the main areas in which most employed adults spend their time. Today the essence of the relationship between work- and personal life is that these two domains overlap and interact. Consequently, an increasing number of employed adults are confronted with bigger demands in both their work and personal lives, and many of their daily hassles stem from job responsibilities that are incompatible with responsibilities in their personal lives. Educators' work has also become more intricate and demanding and may be one of the professions in which individuals find it difficult to combine their work and personal lives.

The objective of this study was to determine how Setswana-speaking educators experienced their work-personal life interaction (WPLI), and more specifically to determine the significant domains, antecedents, consequences and strategies associated with WPLI for the participants. A non-probability purposive voluntary sample ( $N = 10$ ) was taken of Setswana-speaking secondary school educators from the Potchefstroom and Klerksdorp areas in the North West Province. Data collection was done through a phenomenological method of semi-structured in-depth interviews. Data was analysed by the use of content analysis

The results indicated that educators experienced factors in both their work and personal lives to be demanding. In addition, work demands led to various time constraints and strain. However, factors were identified that made the demands less overwhelming and it was also found that educators valued certain things (family, friends, leisure time, church and personal time) in their personal lives. Educators nevertheless employed certain strategies to cope with this interaction, which in turn led to numerous positive outcomes. Lastly, an interesting finding relating to this study was that educators felt a responsibility towards the children.

Recommendations were made for the organisation and for future practice.

## OPSOMMING

**Titel:** Werk-lewe interaksie onder Setswanasprekende onderwysers in die Noordwes Provinsie: 'n Fenomenologiese studie.

**Sleuteltermes:** Werk-persoonlike lewe interaksie, ondervindinge, domeine in lewe, oorsake, gevolge, strategieë, beperkinge van gebalanseerde lewe, Setswanasprekende sekondêre skoolonderwysers.

In 'n veranderende wêreld is werk- en persoonlike lewe die hoof areas waarin werkende volwassenes hul tyd spandeer. Tans kan die verhouding tussen werk- en persoonlike lewe gesien word as betekenisvol omdat die twee domeine in wisselwerking is en oorvleuel. Gevolglik word werkende volwassenes toenemend met hoër eise in beide hul werk- en persoonlike lewe gekonfronteer en sodoende word baie van hul daaglikse probleme veroorsaak deur verantwoordelikhede in beide die werk- en persoonlike lewe wat onversoenbaar is. Die integrering sedert 1994 veroorsaak dat onderwysers se werk meer kompleks en veeleisend geword het. Hieruit kan afgelei word dat die onderwys moontlik 'n beroep is waarin individue dit moeilik vind om hulle werk- en persoonlike lewe met mekaar te versoen.

Die doelwit van hierdie navorsing was om te ondersoek hoe Setswanasprekende onderwysers werk-persoonlike lewe interaksie (WPLI) ervaar, en meer spesifiek om die betekenisvolle domeine, oorsake, gevolge en strategieë geassosieer met WPLI te bepaal. 'n Doelgerigte vrywillige niawaarskynlikheid-steekproef ( $N = 10$ ) is geneem van Setswanasprekende sekondêre skoolonderwysers van die Potchefstroom- en Klerksdorpareas in die Noordwes Provinsie. Datainsameling op grond van 'n fenomenologiese metode van semi-gestruktureerde in diepte onderhoude is gedoen. Inhoud-analise is gebruik om data te analiseer.

Die resultate het aangedui dat sekere aspekte in beide die werk- en persoonlike lewe as veeleisend ervaar is. Boonop is gevind dat werkseise aanleiding gee tot verskeie tydsbeperkinge en spanning. Nogtans is faktore wat die werkseise minder oorweldigend maak geïdentifiseer en is gevind dat onderwysers waarde heg aan verskeie faktore (familie, vriende, ontspanning, kerk

en persoonlike tyd) in hulle persoonlike lewens. Nietemin, maak onderwysers van sekere strategieë gebruik om hierdie interaksie te hanteer wat aanleiding gee tot verskeie positiewe uitkomst. 'n Interessante bevinding rakende hierdie studie is dat onderwysers 'n gevoel van verantwoordelikheid teenoor die kinders ervaar het.

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

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This mini-dissertation focuses on how Setswana-speaking secondary school educators in the North West Province experience work-personal life interaction (WPLI). This chapter contains the problem statement and a discussion of the research objectives, in which the general objective and specific objectives are set out. The research method is explained and a division of chapters is given.

### **1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

According to Van Deventer (2005), education is the key to the future and development and improvement, good health, liberty, security, economic well-being and involvement in social and political activities all depend on education. Education is also high on the agenda of national priorities almost everywhere in the world. In South Africa, acts ranging from protest marches to court cases stress the importance of education for the government, parents and students (Rothmann, Gerber, Lubbe, Sieberhagen, & Rothmann, 1998). Educators in South Africa are expected to show foundational, practical and reflective competence in multiple roles ranging from leader, administrator and manager through learning mediator and scholar, to researcher and lifelong learner (RSA, 2000). Furthermore, educators in South Africa are required to be systematic in their development of children's cognitive abilities and they are expected to engage with children in a manner that will help children understand the complexities of life problems so that, in time, they can learn skills to address problems actively and independently (Human-Vogel & Bouwer, 2005).

In a recent study, Hall, Altman, Nkomo, Peltzer, and Zuma (2005) found that a relatively large number of educators experience the teaching profession negatively, have low morale and experience little job satisfaction, with the result that they seriously consider leaving the profession. The main causes of educator dissatisfaction and low morale include remuneration, poor relations with the education department, a lack of respect for the profession from the community, as well as educators being directly affected by the HIV virus or indirectly affected because colleagues, learners and family members are living with HIV/AIDS (Horn,

2006). Chrisholm, Hoadley, and Wa Kivilu (2005) concluded that increased stress levels due to increased workloads caused the very low morale among educators. Reasons given for the increased workloads included bigger class sizes, several departmental requirements, the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), the new curriculum and its continuous assessment requirements, as well as a larger number of learning areas for which there were no resources or educators (Horn, 2006).

Many of these dissatisfied educators remain in the profession because of limited alternative job opportunities and the fact that their present education jobs provide them with a regular income as well as other financial benefits such as a retirement fund, medical aid and housing subsidy. This situation is detrimental to both the learners and the teaching profession, as it is doubtful that these educators will motivate and assist their learners to gain the necessary knowledge of job market requirements, and thereby improve their learners' chances of becoming employable. Negative educators with low morale and high stress levels may do only the minimum required of them to complete the syllabus, rather than actively preparing their learners for a career (Horn, 2006).

Smith and Bourke (1992) indicate stress as an unavoidable aspect of teaching. While educators are under stress, they are intolerant, impatient, less caring and not fully involved in their work. These negative behavioural characteristics are often caused by illness of varying degrees, for example headaches, backache, nervous tension, anxiety attacks, burnout, depression and in severe cases, heart attacks (Naicker, 2003). Potential stressors that exist in the individual educators' life, outside of the workplace, that affect the individual's behaviour at work must also be considered when assessing the sources and impact of work stress. Potential stressors include stressful life events, pressure resulting from conflict between organisational and family demands, financial complications and conflicts between organisational and personal beliefs. However, events occurring in the home domain may be both a source of stress and a source of support, and may also mitigate or exacerbate the effects of stressors experienced in the work environment (Van Wyk, 2004). Stress affects educators' personal and work lives to a greater or lesser degree and they are burdened with having to make numerous modifications in their personal and work lives (Jackson & Rothmann, 2006). Therefore, it is of great importance to look at not only the work lives of educators, but also at their personal lives and the interaction between the two domains.

Interest in the relationship between employees' work and home lives has grown substantially since the mid-eighties (Neal, Chapman, Ingersoll-Dayton, & Emlen, 1993). Traditionally, work and home have been considered separate domains. More recently, however, the interdependence between both domains has increasingly been recognised and has captured the attention of many researchers (Geurts, Rutte, & Peeters, 1999). This is a result of several socio demographic and economic trends in our society. Firstly, there has been a remarkable increase in the number of women joining the work force (Paoli, 1997). Associated with this development is an increase in the occurrence of employed adults who are part of dual-career families (Burke & Greenglass, 1987; Frone, Russel, & Cooper, 1992; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). Secondly, the nature of work has changed, particularly demanding more mental and emotional effort (rather than physical effort). Thirdly, due to, amongst others, the growing international competition (globalisation of the economy), the flexibility of work time schedules (e.g., 24-hour economy) and advances in technology (e-mail, mobile phones and lap top computers), a bigger appeal is made to employees' ability to work irregular hours and during 'unsocial' hours (i.e., in the evenings, nights, weekends and overtime) (Burke, 2004; Geurts et al., 1999). This may cause the boundaries between work and personal life to become blurred (O'Driscoll, Brough, & Kalliath, 2004).

Today many employees have difficulty combining work and domestic obligations (Van Hooff et al., 2005). Some people who have work and family roles, experience no conflict between them, whereas others experience a high degree of conflict. Work-family conflict is the term often used to characterise the conflict between the work and family domains (Carnicer, Sánchez, & Pérez, 2004). Work-family conflict was defined by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985, p. 77) as "a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect. Therefore, participation in the work (family) role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the family (work) role". This definition suggests that interference between the two domains can occur in both directions, that is, work-to family interference (WFI) and family-to-work interference (FWI) (O'Driscoll et al., 2004).

There has been a general consensus that work and family influence each other in a negative way where time, tasks, attitudes, stress, emotions and behaviour spill over between work and family (Carnicer et al., 2004). However, recent research suggests that work and family can also interact in a positive way (Geurts et al., 2005). Furthermore, recent empirical evidence

suggests that demanding aspects in the work or family domain (or both) are mainly related to negative spill over, but resources such as control and support are related to positive spill over (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000).

The latest organisational view of work and personal life indicates that these two domains are interdependent, and that this interdependence has a significant impact on individual behaviour in an organisational and private setting, and ultimately on organisational functioning itself (Greenhaus, 1988; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 1999). Poor interaction between work and personal life is associated with less job satisfaction and greater intention to quit, with lower levels of family satisfaction, and with higher levels of emotional exhaustion and psychosomatic symptoms (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000). As a result, work and personal life issues emerge as a major concern for individuals, families and organisations (Burke, 2004). Writing that is more recent has emphasised WPLI as a more useful statement of the problem.

As mentioned earlier, many employees have difficulty combining work and domestic obligations (Van Hooff et al., 2005). Individuals aspire to integrate their work and family (all aspects of their experience) in a more satisfying way. Individuals will also differ in the nature of this integration and may have different integrations at different life and career stages. Despite the organisational consequences of work-home interdependence, employers have not been quick to recognise the severity of the situation or to respond in a productive manner (Hall & Richter, 1988).

In a review of the literature on WPLI, Poelmans (2001) indicates the lack of empirical studies on this phenomenon from countries with cultures in which the family as an institution is very strong and female labour participation is on the rise. Unfortunately, South Africa is one of these countries where research on WPLI is limited. Although the understanding of WPLI has received much attention in the international arena, various limitations prevent us from applying this knowledge in South Africa. Firstly, measuring instruments are being used for South African employees that were developed in other countries. These instruments are not necessarily valid, reliable, unbiased and equivalent for all language groups in South Africa, considering that we have eleven different languages. Secondly, research in South Africa is characterised by several limitations, such as poorly designed and controlled studies, a lack of sophisticated statistical analysis and a lack to include all cultural groups in WPLI studies













































































































































